

# The Home Curriculum That Helps

## Five Lessons Your Children Will Carry Through Life

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Parents send their children to school for many hours each week, and they expect a lot from schools and teachers. Yet educators are convinced that home is still the best place to nurture successful students. Overwhelmed by information and expectations, parents often wonder what areas of education deserve their focus at home.

Should they be providing sports, music, or art lessons;

### **Five lessons from the home help children succeed in school and beyond.**

getting a computer with the latest educational software; or enrolling their children in enrichment classes?

There is something else, however, that complements the learning of specific skills and is often of greater importance. This is the development of habits and attitudes which children learn at home from parents, older

brothers and sisters, and extended family. Regardless of a student's natural talent or the quality of schools or teachers, these factors will make the biggest difference in a student's success.

First, in a home where knowledge is appreciated and respected, children learn its value. Parents don't need to be experts on all subject – all they need to do is acknowledge the skills of others. Parents can teach their children to appreciate the skills of a carpenter, enjoy the stories a neighbor tells about the old country, and value good literature and music.

Parents can also be learners themselves. When a child watches a parent enjoy reading a book, delight in playing the piano, or affirm knowledge in someone else, that child associates learning with respect, enjoyment and discovery.

Second, children need to be taught that for a dream to become a reality,

goals have to be set. What child has not dreamed of success, whether as an athlete, a musician, or a scientist? Parents can encourage children to dream and then teach them to set goals, but this requires listening rather than lecturing, guiding rather than telling, and providing a good dose of appropriate encouragement.

Third, parents must reinforce that success depends on effort. This can be a very difficult lesson. For the child- or adult-who believes that success is dependent on circumstances beyond his or her control, the dream is already lost. If we attribute the success of others to good fortune, connections, or appearances, a child may conclude that he or she does not fit the profile of success. However, once a child understands that effort matters, positive results can happen as the child learns to practice perseverance and self-discipline. Although not every child is going to grow up to become president, every child can learn to work hard and take initiative.

Forth, it is vital that parents teach children the importance of manners. It may sound old-fashioned to tell children to respect everyone, be polite, be on time, help others, and keep their commitments, but it works. Having success in friendships, school, and the workplace requires getting along and working productively with others. It is much easier to learn those lessons at home as children rather than later on in life.

The last important home lesson is accountability. Children don't like to have parents checking up on them, but let's face it: that is what makes all of us responsible. Parents should hold daily conferences with their child about school, do daily assignments checks, and verify completed assignments or chores before allowing extra activities. This follow-up is part of teaching children that they are going to be held accountable now and all the way through life.

