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Building Healthy Study Practice

Building study habits can be difficult and time-consuming and can cause big feelings in children and teens.

The first step to successful studying can include:

Finding a quiet place. It can be as little as only having a desk and some pencils or it can be as elaborate as taking a trip to the library for a couple of hours. For an elementary school student finding a quiet place can be easy. As little as making sure that there is time dedicated each night for reading, 15-30 minutes.

For our middle school students having a quiet place is important when working because it creates the mindset that work needs to be completed and needs to be completed well. A quiet place can be on the kitchen counter, the corner of a bedroom with a bean bag, or in the home office. Studies have also shown that playing study music can also support concentration and attention. Using a timer to take breaks during a study session can also help in supporting the mental stress that comes with test anxiety.

In order to successfully build a study routine it is important that students **break down assignments**. For example for middle school students, if a student has an essay due next Tuesday, for the next couple of days each day for about 15 to 30 minutes the student can dedicate time to planning, writing topic and closing sentences then adding detail and examples into each one of those paragraphs. One personal or cited example per paragraph can go a long way. Examples can include what they have learned or experienced at school, an after-school program or activity experience, or a family experience. Sometimes getting ideas going can be difficult for children but these three techniques can get their brain going for a successful writing experience. For our elementary students, working slowly on assignments is key. For example, you can say "Finish questions 1-3 then show me". This strategy motivates students. To make assignment completion more enjoyable at home, I notice that students always enjoy writing on a whiteboard. Having one handy can be fun. They can then transfer their answers to their original assignment.

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Having healthy conversations can support test anxiety as well. Reassuring the child that we all have to take tests at some point and go through tests during life. Building a growth mindset approach is healthy for children and helps their brains think about the positive approach to difficult situations. Some examples are below.

Examples they may say are:

Fixed

Growth

"I can't do that" - "I can't do that yet"

"This is too hard" - "What if I try a different strategy"

"I am not good at this" - "Struggling means I'm learning"

From the Cleveland Clinic they state:

Embracing a growth mindset lifestyle can help students mentally and physically.

Maintaining a healthy diet, "healthy diet, healthy brain". Getting enough sleep every night, it is recommended that school-aged kids get 6 to 12 hours of sleep each night, teens need 8 to 10 hours of sleep. Lastly, talking about school, showing interest, can help them get excited about what they're learning about.

Fun check-in tip: A rose, thorn, and bud check-in can increase conversation with your child. The "rose" represents the most enjoyable part of the day, the "thorn" represents the most challenging part of the day, and then the "bud" represents how you can change or work on the "thorn".

Helpful Website:

[Test Anxiety Strategies and Study Tips for Kids | Child Mind Institute](#)

Reference:

[How To Help Your Child Overcome Test Anxiety](#)

Cleveland Clinic. (2024, October 10). *How to help your child overcome test anxiety.*

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/9-ways-to-help-your-child-overcome-test-anxiety>.

Thank you, Mrs. Grijalva