

News & Announcements

Summer Studies

Our tutors keep tutoring through the summer months.

- ▶ Get ahead for next school year
- ▶ Review topics from this year
- ▶ Learn something completely new

Work one-on-one in your home with a professional tutor. Learning doesn't need to stop just because school does.

Contact us for more details.

Newsletter

Our tutors keep tutoring, but our writers take a break through the summer months. "The Smart Connection" will return in September with more great topics to support students, parents and educators.

Youth in Victoria

Here are a few websites targetted at youth in Victoria.

www.YouthVictoria.com

This website has been designed for youth with input from youth.

It describes youth programs, activities, services and events in recreation and community centres in Victoria.

The site also sports a gallery, forum, and links page.

www.YouthCentral.vic.gov.au

This is a government website with resources targetted at youth.

It describes information on jobs, education, services, travel, health, housing as well as youth rights.

Find useful tips on funding for youth services, among other things.

Supporting Good Study Skills in Your Child

by Dahlia Miller

"You have to do your own growing no matter how tall your grandfather was."

Abraham Lincoln

Helping your children to develop effective study skills is a challenging feat. What's that saying? You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Stephen Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, says something similar.

He asks us to consider the topic of control. Whose behaviour is outside our control? Whose behaviour can we influence? Whose behaviour is inside our control? The people we can't control are all those outside our circle of influence – basically anyone who isn't a friend or family. The place it gets a bit sticky is determining whose behaviour we can control and whose behaviour we can only influence. Having been the mother of a two year old throwing a temper tantrum on the grocery store floor, I bear witness to the fact that I cannot control even my own children's behaviour. The truth is, the only person whose behaviour we can control is ourselves.

With that in mind, it can be easier to approach our children to guide them in improving their study skills. Essentially, we need to remember that all we can do is offer suggestions; we cannot control how they use our advice, however sage it may be.

Students have a lot of responsibilities on their shoulders. Are you aware of what your child is expected to do on a daily basis at school? The first step in supporting your child in effective study skills is getting an accurate understanding of what is expected of him.

Answer these questions (on your own, or with your child's help if you don't know the answer):

- ▶ How many subjects per day does your child study?
- ▶ How are handouts/assignments expected to be stored (ex. in duotangs or binders), or is there no expectation?
- ▶ Where does your child store his/her materials between classes (i.e. in a desk or locker)?
- ▶ How many times per day is your child expected to return to this storage place to retrieve materials? How much time is given for this?
- ▶ Is there a system used by the school or individual teachers to track homework and assignments? What is it?

How effective are your child's current study habits? You could ask her to take the self-assessment in our February 2005 newsletter "Top 35 Study Habits". This can help you/her to determine what her weak points are in studying. If possible, discuss these weak points with your child. Keep in mind that effective studying requires balance. Studying three hours per day may look like effective studying, but it isn't if the student isn't studying the right material or if she isn't taking time to make friends, play sports or relax.

Organization

Students are essentially required to carry a portable office with them and to pack and unpack it several times per day – hundreds of times in a term. Could you do this and maintain a sense of organization?

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

*Superior private tutoring
matched specifically to
each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops
building skills in a practical
and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

We help students to achieve.

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

Contact Us

Managing Director

Registration

Dahlia Miller

250-995-2632

dahlia@SmartTutorReferrals.com

Mailing Address:

584 Niagara Street

Victoria, BC

V8V 1H7

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

Here are some quick tips for keeping bags/backpacks in order:

- ▶ Pull out anything that doesn't need to be there (out-dated notices, old lunches, etc.).
- ▶ Determine if anything doesn't need to be carried on a regular basis (ex. texts).
- ▶ Stack books in bag according to size.
- ▶ Put accessories into smaller compartments – let your child assign a place for everything.
- ▶ Keep water bottles in separate compartments.

Keeping on top of assignments, tests and projects is another major aspect of staying organized as a student. One way to help in this regard is to ensure that your child has all the stationary she needs. Some useful supplies include:

- ▶ White board with built-in calendar
- ▶ A variety of coloured markers (for white board and paper)
- ▶ Large, sturdy dividers with pouches (to be used as in/out boxes)
- ▶ or Plastic pockets for binders (to be used as an in/out box)
- ▶ Calendar or day-timer that she likes (the school may provide one)

Also, it's a good idea to check every month or so to be sure that your child is fully stocked for school supplies both at school and at home.

Time Management

Many children (and adults) do not have an accurate sense of time. They don't truly know how much they can or can't do in five minutes, in an hour or in a day. This lack of awareness can lead to all kinds of issues with time management: from not accurately judging how long it will take to complete a task (like an essay, for example) to not recognizing how much time has been put toward homework versus computer games in an afternoon.

This problem sometimes stems from not having enough experience with analog clocks (clocks with hands that move

around). Parents can also sometimes confuse their child's sense of time. How many times have you said you'll leave in five minutes only to take another twenty to get out the door? Over time, this leads to confusion about just exactly how long five minutes is.

It usually leads to a feeling of defeat and lack of purpose if the student feels that she is putting a lot of time into studying but with little return. Some students are surprised to realize that while they've been sitting at their desks for two hours, they've really only focused on work for about 30 minutes. Encourage your child to study in 45-50 minute periods and take short breaks. The brain and memory function most effectively when used in short spurts (ever noticed how you tend to remember beginnings and endings but often lose the middle parts of what you're focusing on?). If your child seems challenged with time management you might ask her to track her work for a week. Ask her to make a mark every 15 minutes on a page tracking focus or lack of focus.

Students often aren't sure how to break large tasks into more manageable chunks. They end up sitting at their desks feeling overwhelmed, uncertain how to start. Parents can help students stay on track by asking about their goals. I'm referring to small goals here. If they have an essay due next Friday, have they set goals for when they'll have the brainstorming, outline, and rough draft completed?

There are many aspects to study skills – too many to cover in one short article. Patience and understanding are virtues that parents can display when working with their children in supporting study skills. For more information, you could refer to some of our other articles on study skills: Nov. 2003 (writing tests); Feb. – April 2004 (study skills); Sep. 2005 (essay writing).

"Our insistence on hearing the answer we expect keeps us from asking the question we should."

Anonymous