Guiding a child in the right direction begins early. So much of their future depends on what you do in their first few years. It is your responsibility to put your child on a path to success.

**Elementary school lays the foundation for later learning.** The early school years are the foundation for future academic success. At this stage, children begin to develop the most important skills to succeed in school, that is, how to communicate by learning to read and write, and how to think logically by learning to solve math and science problems.

**Parents are the most important influence in a child’s life.** Many studies show that children, whose parents are involved in their education, do better in school. Set academic goals for your children, and actively work with them to meet those goals. Also, set fitness goals to encourage them to stay physically active and healthy. Make walking, hiking, or exercise a family activity.

**Monitor your children’s academic progress.** Build a relationship with your children’s teachers. Stay informed on their academic performance in school by communicating with their teachers regularly throughout the school year, and attending every teacher-parent conference.

**Make time to talk about school.** Talking to your children about school will let them know that what goes on at school is important to you. During family meals, ask them what they are doing in school, discuss the topics they are studying and talk about how they are handling the assigned projects. Compliment their success in school and/or extracurricular activities. When kids know parents have an interest in their learning, they will take school seriously.

**Talk to your children often, listening attentively.** If you are approachable and maintain great communication with your children, they are more likely to include you in their academic goals and meaningful life events. Excellent communication between you and your child can ensure that you have an active role in their education and life.

**Reading will boost your children’s learning potential.** Read to your child. Read with your child. Take them to the library. Have books at home for them to read. Those exposed to reading at a young age are more likely to do well at every level in school.

**Prioritize homework.** Let them know homework is a priority by setting aside a quiet (no distractions), comfortable, and well-lit study place. Set up a start and end time. Study with them to ensure they comprehend the material. Review their completed homework to ensure they are turning in quality work. Find them a tutor if they need help.

**Demonstrate relevance.** Talk to your children about the importance of education. Help them see that what they learn in school is useful and relevant in life. Discuss different kinds of jobs and careers in your community to help them understand that school prepares them for a career.

**Teach organizational skills.** When kids learned to be organized, they can stay focused. Have your kids create a to-do list to help them prioritize tasks to get things done. Organizational skills are not innate but rather need to be learned through practice.
Prepare them for tests. Studying the night before a test is not the best way to prepare for an exam. Know when a test is scheduled so you can help your child prepare ahead of time. Teach your child test taking strategies.

Support your children’s extracurricular interests. Helping your children develop their areas of interest builds up their self-esteem and keeps them motivated. Look for learning opportunities outside the classroom, like going to the zoo, the aquarium, the planetarium, or wherever their interest might be.

Enrolling your kids in extracurricular activities—like playing sports, learning a musical instrument, or developing a hobby—will also give them a break from school work. Even better, these activities encourage the development of good character traits such as leadership, athleticism, creativity, discipline, and responsibility.

Cultivate good habits for learning. This is important because habits are extremely hard to change. At an early age, children begin to develop behaviors and habits that will stay with them for the rest of their life. Parents have the responsibility of cultivating those behaviors and habits that will be helpful to children in their learning.

At home, parents have the greatest opportunity to make a contribution to their children’s future success. Raising them to be responsible and instilling in them a strong work ethic will benefit them beyond the classroom.

To succeed in school, kids need to develop good study habits. Developing strong habits for learning can be as simple as developing a daily routine. Every school day, have a consistent time of day set aside for working on homework. In contrast, allowing your kids to watch too much television, play too many video games, or use the computer too often at an early age can lead them to develop habits that keep them from focusing on their academic goals.

Kids do not just learn at school, they learn at home—they learn how to behave and what is permissible. You are ultimately responsible for what habits, good or bad, they develop as they grow up. Therefore, be conscientious about what you teach and how you raise your children. Always remember that your parenting has long-term consequences.

Teach by example. It is very difficult to get your kids to do something that you yourself are not willing to do. If you spend all your free time watching television, expect them to want to do the same. Remember that parents are a child’s first role model. Read to let your kids see that it is important to learn. Seek self-improvement and stay physically active, so they do too.

Conclusion. The early years of schooling are an important time for parents to be informed about and supportive in their children’s education, and to cultivate helpful habits for learning. It falls on you to ensure that your child is ready for the future.