



Guiding your Child to Better Study

This **FREE** 40 page easy to read guide for parents contains advice, exercises and ideas that can help your child improve their study performance and achieve better results at school.

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Mark Chamberlain

A FREE Guide
for Parents

- ✓ *Help your child improve their study routines*
- ✓ *Help your child develop more productive learning behaviours*
- ✓ *Easy to follow exercises and lists that will be useful in developing better skills and better habits*
- ✓ *Important advice and tools to develop deeper engagement with learning and more confidence with school assessment*

Guiding your Child to Better Study

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A Free Parent Guide



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All enquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

In preparing this publication, two reference resources were used to guide grammatical style and spelling.

They were:

- ❖ *Style Manual for authors, editors and printers*, 6th edition (2002) reprinted 2010, John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd
- ❖ *Macquarie School Dictionary*, 3rd edition 2010, John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd

From the Author

We have produced this free guide to assist parents who are looking for ways to help their child improve their study performance and achieve better results at school.

We believe that student achievement is linked to many factors and some of the most important factors relate to study routines and learning behaviours.

When students can improve their study habits and better understand what good learning behaviours are, we believe that they can get a positive edge and achieve better results. Material presented in this publication can also improve their work ethic and confidence at school.

This publication is free so we encourage you to share it with as many other family, friends and colleagues as you can.

This publication is relevant whether your child is just starting school or in their final years of secondary education.

This free guide outlines a number of important areas where your involvement can have a significant impact on your child's success and we have endeavoured to put exercises, lists, advice and ideas in this publication that you will find stimulating and helpful.

As teachers and parents ourselves, we trust that this will generate some productive discussion and that you and your child will get a great deal of benefit out of it as a result of your effort to help them improve.

Mark Chamberlain

Consider helping your child by purchasing two other publications from Red Tick Education's specially designed interactive workbooks for students:

7 Steps to Better Study and **7 More Steps to Independent Learning** are easy to follow interactive workbooks for students that contain many different activities that will help them identify different things they can do to develop better study routines and learning behaviours in order to improve their performance at school. Each interactive publication contains important planning tools, progress checklists and other valuable insights that will give your child an immediate edge.

Correct use of these tools will ensure students are better prepared, better organised and more efficiently focussed in their time management and commitment to improving their study routines and as a result, achieving better outcomes at school.



CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
Definitions	6
Your influence DOES matter	8
Reach agreement about room for improvement.....	10
Sorting out the good from the bad ... and the rest	11
How to set new goals	17
Sign it up	19
Establishing firm expectations	20
Constructive solutions to problems and excuses	21
Establishing and managing a helpful home learning environment	23
Measuring progress.....	24
Effective rewards.....	25
The value of regular positive feedback.....	27
Communication with the school and teacher.....	28
Maintaining balance (and your sanity).....	29
Becoming an independent learner	32
Parent/Teacher Interviews	34
EXTRA WORKING PAGES	35
ANSWER PAGES	38

Definitions

Before getting into the detail of this guide, it is important to define a number of important terms and phrases used in it. The authors have had the experience of discussing 'study', 'homework', 'learning' and other related terms with many parents, children and educators and have often found that problems arise from different understandings about the meaning of these common words.

In this opening section we define the terms that are used in this publication.

Study is routine activity that is performed in order to commit information, processes and skills to long term memory so they are retained and easily recalled when required.

Homework is work set by the class teacher. This might include learning weekly spelling words, learning times tables, completing work that was not finished at school, preparing for the next lesson by reading ahead or answering set questions, completing exercises on specific skills or units of work or regular reading time. Homework will vary from school to school and teacher to teacher according to different policies and practices.

Assignments are extended tasks (projects, research work, written tasks, oral tasks etc) with a start date and an end date. Assessment criteria are set by the teacher and are used to grade the work.

Study routines, study skills, learning behaviours and learning habits are other terms that are commonly used in this publication.

Study routines are patterns of behaviour that are regularly displayed, daily or weekly, that contribute to improving the retention of content or process or skills that your child is taught at school. Study routines are also characterised by behaviours that organise time (the days and the weeks), drive routines, set goals and measure progress.

Study skills are abilities that a student develops over time through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort.

Learning behaviours are a specific set of behaviours that students display that keep them strongly engaged in the learning process, deeply engaging their mind or their body. Learning behaviours enable students to absorb (learn) new things with great effectiveness and then use what they have learned to continuously develop their skills and abilities.

Learning habits are learning behaviours that are repeated consistently by students to the point where they become so familiar - they become a habit.

**With all the definitions provided in this section,
one very important point to appreciate is that
STUDY, HOMEWORK and ASSIGNMENTS
are all quite different from each other.**

Your influence DOES matter

As a parent, you matter because the habits that your child forms are heavily influenced by the habits that you display.

You matter to your child because you are an example to them, one way or another.

You are your child's first teacher in their early, formative years and you remain their teacher in many ways throughout life.

You are a powerful role model for your child.

Study routines and learning behaviours are important for your child to develop because those routines and habits provide a life-long benefit for them. They are invaluable at school and beyond the classroom into their working life.

In a constantly changing world good study routines and learning behaviours are instrumental to good academic development in your child.

You are in a unique position to influence the development of your child's study routines and learning behaviours.

The expectations you set combined with the positive reinforcement you provide will shape how well your child applies themselves to their learning and study activities.

As your child gets older, their habits can be influenced by many other things, but in those crucial school years, **you** have the best opportunity to set them on a productive path. While it is important that your child also finds their own path (and becomes an independent learner) it is equally important that they learn the value of good routines and habits from you in their early years and throughout their lives at school.

Good study routines and learning behaviours are strongly influenced by a number of factors that you as a parent have direct influence over. Some of the most important ones are shown in the figure below:



As a parent, you have direct influence over all of these factors and how they can be used to develop good study routines and learning behaviours that will put your child on productive pathway to success at school, and in life.

Questions for you:

- Have you set firm expectations?
- Would your child be able to tell others what your expectations are?
- Have you planned a study routine with your child?
- If you have developed a plan, can you both record and measure progress on how well the plan is being followed?
- What things are you doing to provide positive reinforcement when your child makes good progress?
- What does your child do to regularly review and practice (study) their school work at moment?
- Can their current routines and behaviours be improved?

Reach agreement about room for improvement

While you may identify problems with your child's study effort, your child may not agree.

It is important to have agreement between both of you that there is room for them to improve. In discussing the situation with your child, explain to them that you are keen to help them tackle any problems they may have. To have any prospect of success in changing their current routines and habits, you will need their agreement about the focus of any improvements. Children really need to 'own it' before they can 'improve it'.

You can discuss a number of aspects with your child such as:

- Which of their current routines and habits are helpful for study?
- Which ones are unhelpful?
- Are there new routines and habits that may be helpful for them?

To assist you and your child to focus on areas where improvements can be made, the next section provides a list of potential study routines and learning behaviours to help you to make your own assessment of how well your child is placed.

Questions for you:

- Do you think that your child could benefit from a properly organised study plan? (i.e. a timetable for homework, study and assignments)
- Do you think that your child could achieve better results by improving their study routine? Does your child believe this too?
- Is there more that you and your child can both learn from knowing the difference between good learning behaviours and bad ones?
- Is there more that you can do to set higher expectations of your child?
- Is there more that you can do to provide positive reinforcement for your child when they do improve their study routines and display the right habits?
- If your child is studying, doing homework or working on assignments, is a record being kept of the time spent on each subject on a daily/weekly/term basis?
- If your child is working each day/week, is a record being kept of the different amounts of time spent on homework, or study activity, or assignment activity?

Sorting out the good from the bad ... and the rest

Children can establish all kinds of routines and habits for study and learning. Not all of them are good routines and habits.

It would be helpful to establish a clear understanding with your child about what constitutes helpful study routines and learning habits and what does not.

It is important to discuss the following exercises with your child so you can understand what they think about their current study routines and learning habits.

Study Routines

What are study routines?

Study routines are patterns of behaviour that are regularly displayed, daily or weekly, that contribute to improving the retention of content or process or skills that your child is taught at school. Study routines are also characterised by behaviours that organise time (the days and the weeks), set goals and measure progress.

The development of good study routines is crucial to the achievement of better results. It is worthwhile to establish the current state of your child's study routines.

Work through Exercise A (following page) by looking at each potential study routine and

1. Determine firstly if it is a good routine for study (or not¹) and then,
2. Determine one of three possibilities:
 - a. My child does this already
 - b. My child should do this
 - c. My child should stop this

Use the additional pages at the end of this publication and get your child to work through the same exercise.

¹ Not all the routines listed are good ones. Refer to the answers at the back of this guide.

Exercise A

Potential Study Routine	Tick one only	
	This is a good routine for study	This is <u>not</u> a good routine for study
Doing the homework set for each subject		
Setting realistic goals for each subject		
Setting time each week for each subject		
Reading over daily notes for each subject		
Using a daily and weekly study timetable		
Studying at night after everything else is done		
Using a term planner		
Finding out how much time friends are spending on their homework and study		
Keeping a record of progress on time spent studying for each subject		
Always studying on the computer/laptop/tablet		
Asking teachers what they expect about time spent on study		

Tick one only		
My child <u>does this already</u>	My child <u>should do this</u>	My child <u>should stop this</u>

Learning behaviours

What are learning behaviours?

Learning behaviours are a specific set of behaviours that students display that keep them strongly engaged in the learning process, deeply engaging their mind or their body. Learning behaviours enable students to absorb (learn) new things with great effectiveness and then use what they have learned to continuously develop their skills and abilities.

As learning behaviours are repeated consistently by your child, they become learning habits.

Work through Exercise B below by looking at each potential learning behaviour, and

1. Determine firstly if it is a good behaviour for learning (or not²) and then,
2. Determine one of three possibilities:
 - a. My child does this already
 - b. My child should do this
 - c. My child should stop this

Exercise B

Potential learning behaviour	Tick one only		Tick one only		
	This is good for learning	This is <u>not good</u> for learning	My child <u>does this already</u>	My child <u>should do this</u>	My child <u>should stop this</u>
Writing out study notes in a different format					
Watching television or online movies					
Drawing diagrams or concept maps					
Playing computer games					
Saying things out loud					

² Not all the learning behaviours listed are good ones. Refer to the answers at the back of this guide.

Potential learning behaviour	Tick one only		Tick one only		
	This is good for learning	This is <u>not good</u> for learning	My child <u>does this already</u>	My child <u>should do this</u>	My child <u>should stop this</u>
not understood					
Drinking sugary drinks or energy drinks					
Immediately seek help from the teacher when a problem cannot be worked out					
Spending time listening to music					
Making a model					
Highlighting key words in a text					

Use the additional pages at the end of this publication and have your child work through the same exercise.

Now that you and your child have worked through Exercise A and Exercise B, you should have plenty of useful things to discuss, such as:

- The good learning behaviours they have;
- The bad habits they need to kick; and,
- Some new habits they need to develop.

Make a list of the good, the bad and the new challenges...

Write down the good (helpful) learning behaviours that your child already displays:

Write down the bad learning behaviours/study habits that your child needs to overcome:

Write down the new learning behaviours/study habits that your child needs to develop:

How to set new goals

A goal is a positive outcome that can be measured and is a result of a number of actions that require effort.

If you and your child are not aiming for something specific, then any result will do – and that is not healthy for your child’s success at school or beyond.

The practice of setting a goal is crucial to achieving or accomplishing anything.

When setting goals, be realistic about your child’s developmental level and work with them to set goals that are achievable. Unrealistic goals will set your child up for unfair failure.

Sometimes it is best to set a small number of goals. You can add more as your child gains confidence and experiences success.

Typically, a goal will involve setting a higher grade to aim for, but identifying or setting the goal is only the first step. It must then be followed with action. The action usually involves some kind of change in behaviour. After all, how can anyone hope to achieve a better grade by repeating the study routines and learning behaviours (or lack of) that led to the most recent result?

Examples that are NOT goals:

- *I will do better at my English oral presentations.* ✘ {Doesn’t mention a measureable result or specific action}
- *I will achieve a ‘B’ in English.* ✘ {While a measureable result is mentioned, there is no mention of any specific action}
- *I will stop handing my assignments in late.* ✘ {Expressed negatively and doesn’t mention a measureable result or specific action}
- *I will hand my assignments in on time.* ✘ {While now expressed positively, still doesn’t mention a measureable result or specific action}

An example that IS a goal:

I will achieve a 'B' in English by improving my assignment results. This will involve doing work on my assignments every week, handing drafts to my teacher well ahead of the due date and working through their feedback within two days of getting my drafts back.

- ✓ Positive
- ✓ Measureable
- ✓ Specific action outlined

Sometimes, a realistic goal may be to aim for the same grade that was achieved last time and look at improvements in other aspects of performance, or perhaps even just more repetition of the good habits that delivered good results last time.

Aiming for a realistic higher grade is a good goal to set because it can be measured, but it is also helpful to find a way to measure the change in **behaviour** that will be made to achieve that goal.

In setting goals:

- Consider your child's age and level of confidence.
- Consider that if you and your child set unrealistic or unachievable goals, you will be setting your child up for failure.
- Consider that if the goals are too easy or too simplistic, there is no challenge for your child and he/she will underperform and will have low expectations.

Sign it up

People sign contracts for all kinds of important things in life.

The act of putting your signature on something signifies personal commitment and ownership.

Once you and your child have written down a number of study routines and learning behaviours that need to change or be developed, you should ask your child to sign their name on that list.

This signifies their personal commitment to focussing on this new challenge.

The signed copy should be put in a prominent place so your child sees it regularly, reminding them about their commitment.

There are likely to be times when you will need to remind your child that they signed their name and committed to making changes to their routines and habits.

Re-signing

Make sure that goals are reviewed and renewed each term or semester as required and that each new set of goals are signed again.

Establishing firm expectations

In terms of expectations, your child will move to whatever level you set the bar.

If your expectations are too low, then your child can meet those and may not make any extra effort.

If your expectations are too high then you run the risk of your child giving up and becoming preoccupied with a fear of failing all the time.

The expectations and standards of others also matter (teachers, peers, coaches etc.) as does your child's attitude about being eager to achieve at a higher level.

Any child is capable of meeting higher expectations as long as there is a realistic way they can get there and as long as expectations are not lowered for the wrong reason.

It is not helpful to assume that your child always knows what is expected of them.

You will need to **tell** your child what your expectations are, you will also need to **write** them down, you will need to **remind** them and whenever possible even try to **model** them.

Constructive solutions to problems and excuses

Making changes to routines and habits is not easy as most people who make New Year's resolutions would attest. It can be hard work to stay on track.

There may be moments when your child genuinely struggles with developing better routines and habits.

There could also be moments when your child tries to make excuses in order to get you to 'lower the bar' on your expectations.

There are many excuses that your child might use as reasons why they cannot make changes or are struggling with change.

Making changes to ones habits and behaviour can often be more like a marathon than a sprint. It will take time and effort to see the results and on the way, it will hurt a bit (or a lot).

You should always take your child's concerns seriously and take time to discuss them with your child, but, expectations should not be changed without very good reason.

For some of the common problems and excuses that your child may raise with you, some responses are suggested in the following table:

Problem or excuse	Suggested response
I don't have time	You need to plan your time better – go back and revise your daily homework and study timetable
I can't fit everything in	You need to plan your time better – go back and revise your daily homework and study timetable
Study is too hard	Break it down into steps
I can't study for very long	Work in 10 or 15 min blocks (not 30 min or 60 min blocks) and remove distractions
There is too much content to study	Break the content up into smaller pieces
I just don't understand this	Try following the solution from a similar problem and if that doesn't work, ask your teacher for help
I just can't remember this	Prepare some flash cards OR write it out many times OR make a tape recording of it OR get someone to test you on it each day until you remember
It doesn't feel like I am getting anywhere	Mark off the time you spend studying
I don't feel confident	Mark off the time you spend studying so you can feel confident that you are putting the effort in
I don't like not being able to play my computer games	Use your games as a reward

Establishing and managing a helpful home learning environment

One of the tangible things you can do to assist your child's daily homework and study routine is to check their working area is adequate for their needs. The table below will help you do a check of the study area and other important issues.

My child:	Yes	No
Has an adequate work space on a desk or table, that holds books and study materials, and at which they can work.		
Has a chair that encourages good posture.		
Has suitable and flexible lighting, e.g. A desk lamp/sufficient room lighting.		
Has sufficient ventilation to provide fresh air.		
Can adjust the temperature in his/her study area to optimise learning conditions e.g. Fan/heater.		
Has sufficient shelving and storage for texts, files, equipment and stationery supplies.		
Has <u>NO</u> distractions such as computer, mobile, landline, TV/DVD etc.		
Has access to a computer in a public area where usage can be monitored.		
Has access to a printer, paper and ink cartridges.		
Has a pin board to display important dates/notes.		
Has a watch or clock to monitor time.		
Has a healthy, nutritious diet.		
Consumes sufficient water and liquid to maintain healthy hydration.		
Has adequate sleep suitable for his/her stage of development.		
Gets adequate exercise.		
Has a recreational interest that he/she enjoys.		
Has a written timetable for homework, assignment and study routine.		
Takes regular and reasonable breaks throughout his/her study time.		

Measuring progress

Organising a way to keep a record of the time spent on study for each subject is a good way to give your child confidence.

Maintaining a 'time log' of the time spent on various activities is a good way to give your child positive reinforcement about the progress they are making on the commitment they have made.

A time log should record time spent on different types of activities – homework, study and assignment work should all be recorded distinctly from each other AND be recorded for each subject over the days, weeks and months.

When problems arise with particular subjects, time management or other things, it can be useful to look back over the time that your child has been spending on various activities and determine if the use of their time is part of the problem.

Establishing a time log can be as simple as drawing up a tick box grid for each subject and each type of activity (homework, assignments, study, other).

Effective rewards

Rewards are an important source of positive reinforcement for your child.

If you can positively reinforce new routines and habits that your child displays, then they are highly likely to repeat them and ultimately reap the benefits of the better school outcomes that follow (better results, more confidence, improved development as a learner).

Rewards can be put in two categories; extrinsic and intrinsic.

An extrinsic reward is something that is tangible and visible to others. Extrinsic rewards are usually material things like toys, games, outings, treats, stickers, TV/computer/game time, or a favourite food. Even things like a written parent comment, a certificate on the wall, hugs and kisses can be regarded as extrinsic rewards (depending on the age and attitude of your child).

An intrinsic reward is something your child feels after he/she accomplishes something. These are feelings such as pride or joy. Such personal feelings are highly motivating and do not rely on the approval of others. Intrinsic rewards are very valuable because they sustain your child and encourage values that are more positive.

In general, try and encourage your child to value intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic ones, bearing in mind that younger children do require extrinsic rewards to begin with, but, as they mature, find intrinsic ones far more powerful and more motivating.

Make sure you have a healthy balance in the type of rewards offered and be aware of the values that you wish to encourage in your child.

Some helpful strategies in using rewards:

If your child has negotiated for a 'big' reward, like a bike or some other more expensive item, you could find a picture of it and then divide it up into smaller, more achievable 'chunks', rather like a puzzle.

In older children, who can defer gratification for longer periods of time, you can also extend the time required to earn the reward. Your child can then work to earn portions of the reward and can see that he/she is getting closer to the desired goal.

You are teaching your child that bigger rewards require more effort and more time, and you will avoid developing a very materialistic attitude in your child.

A word of caution:

What is earned should not usually be taken away as a punishment or consequence for poor behaviour unless circumstances really required that. If it was earned then it should be valued as such and only be removed in extreme circumstances.

Consequences for bad behaviour should revolve more around the delay of rewards a child is yet to receive or some other form of action that is about the child restoring their behaviour to the right level.

What else should be avoided in managing rewards well?

Other things that you should avoid because they really don't work are:

- ✘ Speaking negatively about the teacher, the school and learning in general (while teachers and schools can make mistakes it will not be healthy for your child to learn that every time something goes wrong, it is appropriate to blame someone or something else for it)
- ✘ Constant interruption to routines
- ✘ Setting vague, general goals that are hard to define and measure
- ✘ Embarrassing or humiliating your child
- ✘ Comparing your child with other siblings or children
- ✘ Having low or unrealistic expectations for your child
- ✘ Offering lots of extrinsic (material) rewards

The value of regular positive feedback

The power of regular positive feedback for your child to reinforce their good routines and habits cannot be underestimated.

You can rewrite the list of good/new routines and habits in a new table and provide room next to each entry for some boxes which can be ticked each time your child completes a routine or displays a habit. This is very effective for younger children.

The way you phrase your feedback is also important and powerful. Always aim to phrase your feedback in positive terms, rather than negative.

Negative feedback	Positive feedback
You're not spending enough time on your mathematics study!	Have a look at the amount of time you are spending on maths compared to other subjects and tell me why you think that is enough to achieve your goal in maths.
Your handwriting is messy!	To make your handwriting more even, slow down and make an effort to form each letter correctly.
You are too slow with your times tables!	We could try using a timer and see what your PB (Personal Best) is when you do your times tables. That way we can see how much you are improving when you practise.
You keep forgetting your books when you go to school!	Why don't you try putting all of your books in your bag each night as the last thing you do before bed.

Communication with the school and teacher

If you are investing significant time and effort in moving your child toward more productive study routines and learning behaviours, it makes sense to keep your child's school teacher(s) informed.

You should consider making a copy of the list of routines and habits that you have discussed with your child (and which they may have 'signed up' to) and passing this copy to your child's teacher(s) so they that can also be informed about your child's desire to do better.

You could also make a copy of the goals that you have worked with your child to set so that the teacher(s) understand what your child is aiming for and what action they will be taking to achieve their goals.

Maintaining balance (and your sanity)

While the primary focus of this guide is assist you (parents) in helping your child to develop better study routines and learning behaviours, there are several other related aspects that are important to good development.

Dealing with stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety are normal for parents and students when aiming to improve results at school.

Dealing with them well is what makes a difference.

The development of familiar routines is one important factor that can help manage the development of stress and anxiety in both parents and children. A lack of routine is a frequent source of anxiety.

If stress or anxiety is becoming overwhelming then reviewing the routines your child uses is an appropriate starting point.

Using the weekend well

Although weekends should provide more free time, they should not be without some structure.

‘Sleeping in’ is important and weekends are often a time when everyone catches up on the sleep they may have missed during a busy week. Having ‘restful’ expectations about the weekend can be helpful in ensuring everyone has a break.

Most weekends need some unstructured time for children to provide relaxation and ‘down-time’. Children are used to the structure of school and the busy timetable that comes with it. They need time to develop the ability to handle unstructured time.

Weekends are often the best time for children to have extended time with friends.

Extra time for children can be very good for their imagination and creativity.

Weekends are also good times for young people to pursue sport and other interests. Team sports and club activities are important as are the extra lessons for such activities as music, ballet, gymnastics, and so on. Older children (and even their parent(s)) may also work on weekends. For bigger families there can be many competing activities and interests on weekends. For some students, the weekend does provide an ideal time to catch up on school work or attend to areas of concern in their school work.

To ensure that **all** commitments can be met, make plans and develop routines to make activities enjoyable and stress-free for all concerned.

Managing time well

Managing time well is crucial to good balance. Your child is not born with time management skills. These skills must be developed as they grow.

Good time management skills are acquired over time and often through trial and error from an early age.

Time management is something that your child needs to learn.

Situations where parents micro-manage every aspect of their children's lives (sometimes referred to as 'helicopter parenting') is not helpful for children in terms of learning better time management. In fact this becomes counter-productive as children essentially learn to rely on someone else to manage everything.

The ultimate goal in time management is for your children to become independent and have all the skills necessary to manage the process themselves. Initially they will require parental support and help but ultimately they should have confidence in being their own judge of time and how they manage it.

Consider the following contrasts of effective and ineffective time management.

Children who manage time ineffectively:	Children who manage time effectively:
Rush homework and/or stay up late to complete it, are late for activities and leave basic chores undone or unfinished. They are often upset and stressed by this.	Manage school, social, extra-curricular activities and home responsibilities without being overwhelmed by stress.
Rarely plan their activities and frequently forget what needs to be done or what they have committed to do. They do not prioritise what they need to do and just deal with the most urgent or pressing task.	Are able to schedule and plan activities, assigning a realistic priority to them.
Have difficulty estimating the amount of time they need for their various activities, often compounding problems and difficulties.	Are able to estimate accurately the amount of time they need for various activities.
Often find they have not planned for the resources they need and get upset when such materials are not readily available or are difficult to acquire.	Are able to 'think ahead' and anticipate what resources they need to complete a task/project.
Often waste time or procrastinate over long term projects, leaving everything to the last minute and getting upset about it.	Manage long term projects and finish them in a timely manner and without undue stress, working from a plan.
Blame others or the lack of equipment/resources for the non-completion or late submission of work/projects.	Take responsibility for tasks and projects and communicate with the family about them.

Becoming an independent learner

As your child's study routines and learning behaviours improve and become ingrained habits, your child should steadily increase their level of independence as a learner.

The movement from a dependent learner to an independent learner is a very powerful and important transition.

By working through Exercise C on the following page, you can gain some insight into where your child is currently placed on the spectrum that ranges from dependence to independence.

The various transition aspects listed in Exercise C will give you and your child some other issues to focus on so that they can improve their understanding of the kinds of things they can focus on to become a more independent learner.

Exercise C - Assessing independence - where is your child on the journey toward becoming an independent learner?

Use the spectrum below to determine where your child is on their pathway toward becoming a more independent learner. Print this page and circle one score on each row. A total score that ranges from 10 to 20 indicates little or no independence, a score from 21-79 indicates some progress toward becoming an independent learner while a score of 80 or higher indicates a strong independent learner.

	←----- Little or no independence some independence strong independence -----→										SCORE	
Chooses easy tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Chooses challenging tasks	_____
Needs prompting to get started on tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Begins tasks without prompting	_____
Puts in minimal effort	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Shows serious effort	_____
Is easily side-tracked from the task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Concentrates on the task at hand	_____
Has a negative or apathetic attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Has a positive 'can-do' attitude	_____
Gets upset easily and has few coping strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Has coping strategies when facing difficulty	_____
Gives up easily or leaves task incomplete	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Perseveres until task is completed	_____
Readily believes things that others state	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Conducts own research	_____
Rarely sets goals and seems aimless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Sets clear goals for him/herself	_____
Is often overwhelmed by complexity of task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Breaks a complex task into smaller steps	_____
TOTAL											<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	

Parent/Teacher Interviews

One of the most important opportunities you get as a parent happens when you have a meeting with your child's teacher(s). This meeting provides an ideal opportunity for a number of things:

- You can hear directly from the teacher about your child's progress
- You can ask questions about anything related to your child's learning
- You can share concerns you may have about your child's learning
- You can develop a shared understanding with your child's teacher(s) about your expectations and efforts with their study routines and learning behaviours and what this means for their behaviour in class at school

Following is a list of aspects that you could raise with your child's teacher(s):

Participation

- Level of participation in class discussion/ Q&A
- Level of attentiveness in class
- Is participation constructive and positive?

Working with others

- Extent of contribution to group activities
- Does my child respect the views of others?
- Is my child helpful toward others?

Discipline

- Does my child show high regard for rules and key principles?
- Is homework always done?
- Are assignments completed properly?
- Does my child always bring the correct equipment and resources needed for each lesson?

Independence

- Does my child persist with difficult tasks by reviewing previous work first before seeking help from the teacher or classmates?
- Extent to which planning occurs on more complex tasks before starting on solutions
- Does my child show initiative?
- Does my child offer to help others when there is an opportunity?

EXTRA WORKING PAGES

Exercise A

Potential Study Routine	Tick one only		Tick one only		
	This is a good routine for study	This is <u>not</u> a good routine for study	My child <u>does this already</u>	My child <u>should do this</u>	My child <u>should stop this</u>
Doing the homework set for each subject					
Setting realistic goals for each subject					
Setting time each week for each subject					
Reading over daily notes for each subject					
Making a study timetable					
Studying at night after everything else is done					
Making a term planner					
Finding out how much time friends are spending on their homework and study					
Keeping a record of progress on time spent studying					
Always studying on the computer/laptop/tablet					
Asking teachers what they expect about time spent on study					

Exercise B

RECOPY FROM original Exercise B Potential learning behaviour	Tick one only		Tick one only		
	This is good for my learning	This is <u>not good</u> for my learning	<u>I do this already</u>	<u>I should do this</u>	<u>I should stop this</u>
Writing out study notes in a different format					
Watching television or online movies					
Drawing diagrams or concept maps					
Playing computer games					
Saying things out loud					
Reading					
Spending time on Facebook					
Asking questions in class or after class					
Checking setting out and neatness					
Talking or texting on the phone					
Participating in class discussions					
Eating junk food					
Asking the teacher to check essay drafts					
Cramming in a lot of study on the night before the test					
When uncertain of how to work out an answer, go back and look for a similar example and try again before asking for help					
Going to bed late at night					
Making a glossary definition page					

RECOPY FROM original Exercise B Potential learning behaviour	Tick one only		Tick one only		
	This is good for my learning	This is <u>not good</u> for my learning	<u>I do this already</u>	<u>I should do this</u>	<u>I should stop this</u>
Spend time practicing a musical instrument or singing					
Copying information from internet research					
Develop a 'Flash' card system					
Checking over work for careless mistakes					
Have a note book handy for writing down words or concepts not understood					
Drinking sugary drinks or energy drinks					
Immediately seek help from the teacher when a problem cannot be worked out					
Writing a list of things to do					
Spending time listening to music					
Making a model					
Highlighting key words in a text					

Check your responses with you parent's response.

ANSWER PAGES

Exercise A

CHECK AGAINST SECTION COMPLETED IN THE GUIDE

Potential Study Routine	Tick one only		
	This is a good routine for study	This is <u>not</u> a good routine for study	
Doing the homework set for each subject		✘	<i>Set homework is not study.</i>
Setting realistic goals for each subject	✔		
Setting time each week for each subject	✔		
Reading over daily notes for each subject		✘	<i>Reading over notes cannot be regarded as a very active form of study.</i>
Making a study timetable	✔		
Studying at night after everything else is done		✘	<i>Leaving study until the last thing is not productive.</i>
Making a term planner	✔		
Finding out how much time friends are spending on their homework and study		✘	<i>Using the commitment of others as a guide is not any guarantee of an appropriate standard for your child.</i>
Keeping a record of progress on time spent studying	✔		
Always studying on the computer/laptop/tablet		✘	<i>Always studying in one way is not effective.</i>
Asking teachers what they expect about time spent on study	✔		

Exercise B

CHECK AGAINST SECTION COMPLETED IN THE GUIDE

Potential learning behaviour	Tick one only		
	This is good for my learning	This is <u>not good</u> for my learning	
Writing out study notes in a different format	✓		
Watching television or online movies		✗	<i>Brain is not highly engaged during this kind of activity.</i>
Drawing diagrams or concept maps	✓		
Playing computer games		✗	<i>Brain is not highly engaged during this kind of activity.</i>
Saying things out loud	✓		
Reading		✗	<i>While reading is not a problem it is important to realise that it not necessarily an activity that guarantees a high retention rate of important information.</i>
Spending time on Facebook		✗	<i>Brain is not highly engaged during this kind of activity.</i>
Asking questions in class or after class	✓		
Checking setting out and neatness	✓		
Talking or texting on the phone		✗	<i>Brain is not highly engaged during this kind of activity.</i>
Participating in class discussions	✓		

Potential learning behaviour	Tick one only		
	This is good for my learning	This is <u>not good</u> for my learning	
Eating junk food		x	<i>Not good for sustaining energy levels and general health and well being.</i>
Asking the teacher to check essay drafts	✓		
Cramming in a lot of study on the night before the test		x	<i>Not effective for learning as only engages short term memory – risky.</i>
When uncertain of how to work out an answer, go back and look for a similar example and try again before asking for help	✓		
Going to bed late at night		x	<i>Not good for general well being, concentration and energy levels the next day.</i>
Making a glossary definition page	✓		
Spend time practicing a musical instrument or singing	✓		
Copying information from internet research		x	<i>Simply copying information is not an engaging form of learning</i>
Develop a 'Flash' card system	✓		
Checking over work for careless mistakes	✓		
Have a note book handy for writing down words or concepts not understood	✓		
Drinking sugary drinks or energy drinks		x	<i>May provide a short burst of energy but not good for general well being, concentration and energy levels the next</i>

Potential learning behaviour	Tick one only		
	This is good for my learning	This is <u>not good</u> for my learning	
			<i>day.</i>
Immediately seek help from the teacher when a problem cannot be worked out		✘	<i>Not good for developing persistence and independence with own ability when relying heavily on the teacher or others.</i>
Spending time listening to music		✘	<i>Brain is not highly engaged during this kind of activity.</i>
Making a model	✔		
Highlighting key words in a text		✘	<i>Useful to some degree but in the long term, not much better than reading.</i>

Consider helping your child by purchasing two other publications from Red Tick Education's specially designed interactive workbooks for students:

7 Steps to Better Study and **7 More Steps to Independent Learning** are easy to follow interactive workbooks for students that contain many different activities that will help them identify different things they can do to develop better study routines and learning behaviours in order to improve their performance at school. Each interactive publication contains important planning tools, progress checklists and other valuable insights that will give your child an immediate edge.

Correct use of these tools will ensure students are better prepared, better organised and more efficiently focussed in their time management and commitment to improving their study routines and as a result, achieving better outcomes at school.



Guiding your Child to Better Study

A free parent guide

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