

Five Tips to Help your Little prepare for High School

Think back to your high school academic workload. Remember all of the book reports, science labs and comprehensive exams? Now recall your social life. Recall all of the fuss over homecoming, the elation you felt after getting your license and how hanging out was a major part of the weekend? Let's face it, high school was definitely an exercise in striking the right balance. This balancing act can be accomplished with greater ease if the student has the right tools paired with good decision making. While decision making is largely based on values, it can be guided by the right habits. Here are five habits you can help foster in your middle school Little that will help them make the transition and have a more balanced high school experience.

1. Love learning or find a love in learning. Study after study shows that successful students have a connection with school. Help your Little to either develop a love for learning or connect with a particular aspect in learning. Probe for reasons he or she enjoys school. Is it a particular class, teacher or extracurricular activity that excites them about school? Maybe they like to write or draw or complete complex math problems? Whatever the answer, use this moment to encourage positive, self-fulfilling connections with school and build on that. Talk about how that individual love of learning or love in learning can lead to achieving their personal dreams.
2. Be the best reader possible. Confess to your Little that reading is a part of everyday life, even as an adult, but that it can be rewarding. Excellent reading skills increase vocabulary, help comprehension, improves logic and expands knowledge base. Students who already enjoy reading should be encouraged to read more difficult books and play with complex topics. Reluctant readers need to know that you don't have to like reading to be good at it. Excellent readers excel because they have a wider knowledge base. Knowing more creates more opportunities for oneself. Also reluctant readers can be encouraged to try new forms of media and technology to boost interest.
3. Time management. Encourage your Little to start being conscious of how long certain processes take. For instance, how does their morning routine take, how long does it generally take to do homework, how much time do they spend watching television? Being aware of time will help your little better allocate it. This will become more important as high school schedules will become demanding. Support this time consciousness by helping your Little locate a watch or use their cell phone as a time piece. Find out if they have an alarm clock too!
4. Organization. There are a number of middle schools that require students to have an agenda spiral and its use schoolwide. These are great tools to help students get in the habit of writing assignments down, keeping things categorized and learning how to use a calendar for organization. If agendas don't work for your Little, try helping them use their cell phone calendar. These calendars are on most phones and come with helpful alerts, reoccurring event options and an area for memos. There are lots of organizational systems out there, just select the one your Little is more likely to use.
5. Taking ownership and responsibility. Successful students don't get into the habit of blaming others for their failures, they take responsibility and they take action. When you talk with your Little about grades, use language like "earned and achieved" as opposed to "the teacher gave or

you received” Help your Little experience growth by encouraging them to take a harder class, manage their grades by checking them online frequently, be conscious of personal strengths through reflection and showing initiative by planning for their future.