

## Study Skills

### 1. Create A Reading Environment

Read to young children at least once a day. For younger children, use reading machines and "read-along" tapes to make reading fun. When children begin to read, have them read you a book. For reluctant readers, offer an incentive. For example, for every 15 minutes the child spends reading, they can watch 15 minutes of TV, or play 15 minutes of Nintendo.

**Levels: 1 2**

### 2. Use The Library

If you need to go to the library to research something - whether it is looking at *Consumer Reports* or investigating a place for a vacation - take your children and youth with you. They can help you as you do your research and learn how to use the library. Let them check out books they're interested in reading while you're there. **Levels: 1 2**

### 3. Learning Styles

Each youth learns a little bit differently. Ask your youth which subjects are easier for them and try to figure out if they learn better by seeing something (visual learner), hearing something (auditory learner), or doing "hands-on" activities (kinesthetic learner). One way to determine this is to watch them assemble something: do they look at pictures, read the directions, or just do it? Help them come up with ways to use their best learning styles as they study. For example, if they are auditory learners you could spell their spelling words aloud and then have them try it. Visual learners might learn words better by writing them out. A kinesthetic learner might need to arrange magnet letters. **Levels: 1 2 3**

**4. Study Environment**

Have the youth try reading or doing math problems in different environments (at a desk, listening to music, at the kitchen table, with the TV on). After 10 minutes in each locale, ask the youth to describe what it was like to do the task in the different environments and in which were they able to concentrate best. **Levels: 1 2 3**

**5. Get Involved In Education**

Sometimes the best way to help youth understand the importance of school is when their parents get involved in the school. Always participate in parent-teacher conferences, and invite your youth if possible. Volunteer in the classroom or at school events. **Levels: 1 2 3**

**6. Homework Motivation**

It can be really difficult to motivate youth to do their homework. Set up incentives for completing homework. For example, when the youth completes his/her homework, he/she gets to talk on the phone, watch TV, or do something enjoyable. Encourage the youth to design the incentive plan. **Levels: 1 2 3**

**7. Older Youth As Tutors**

Encourage older youth to help younger children - in your home or at school - with their schoolwork. This helps to reinforce what the youth knows and builds self-esteem. If possible, offer to pay the older youth something for the tutoring. **Levels: 2 3 4**

**8. Getting Help**

If your youth is having trouble in a subject, have them ask a school counselor or look in the Yellow Pages for tutoring help. If they are getting ready for a big educational test like the SAT or ACT, have them ask about test preparation courses through school or in the community. Offer an incentive for them to research the costs and availability of this kind of help. **Levels: 1 2 3**

**A Foster Parent's Story**

"When my foster son was young we sometimes had trouble getting him to read or do his homework. He just wasn't very interested in school. We discovered that he was really interested in snakes. I really don't like snakes, but I knew that if we could tap into that interest he might do some reading. So, we got a snake. Our son was responsible for reading books about caring for the snake and setting up a feeding schedule. He even joined a snake society. Because of that snake, he learned to like learning and to be curious about life."