As teens begin a new school year, we have the opportunity to help them start strong and stay on track toward academic success. We all know the importance of academic achievement in shaping the minds of our children, giving them a competitive edge to further their education and to better prepare them for future careers. In addition, research shows there are health benefits as well—as young people who achieve higher grades in the classroom also don’t use drugs.

A past national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) showed that students with higher grades were significantly less likely to drink, smoke marijuana, or abuse prescription drugs. This association doesn’t prove causation, but it certainly provides families even greater motivation to make academic achievement a priority as it further sets young people up for success later in life.

With that in mind, let’s kick off this school year right by helping our students strengthen and maintain these 5 Key Skills for Academic Success:

1. **Organization**: Sometimes academic challenges have more to do with organization than with intellect. Help your child get organized with these simple tips:
   - Have them make a checklist of what they need to bring to and from school each day, then post it on whatever door they head out of each morning.
   - Help them develop a system of keeping track of and organizing in-school and at-home assignments.

2. **Time Management**: This is the classic, “wait until the night before an assignment is due to begin working on it, even though they’ve had weeks to complete it” syndrome. Every student has likely been there at some point, but we want to guide our children toward better time management:
   - Have them track assignments on a monthly calendar and teach them to work backwards from the due date to break it down into smaller, nightly tasks.
   - Work with your child to figure out how much time is being
Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at: PreventionActionAlliance.org

It takes a combination of skills—organization, time management, prioritization, concentration and motivation—to achieve academic success. You know your child better than anyone. Work with them to identify problem areas, focus on the skills that need strengthened, and strive to help your son or daughter maintain the ones they’ve mastered. With your support and guidance, your child will be better prepared to start the school year off strong and remain on the road to success, both in and out of the classroom.
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