

# Parent *pages*

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## The more you learn, the more you earn ... how to be a good learner



The study skills your children learn now will benefit their learning for a lifetime. God created us to be learners. He has blessed us with the ability to learn, not only about our world, but also about our God and His will for us.

FOR SOME CHILDREN IT SEEMS TOO EASY; THEY READ A CHAPTER AND RETAIN ALL THE IMPORTANT FACTS. THEY STUDY SPELLING WORDS FOR A FEW MINUTES AND HAVE THEM LOCKED IN THEIR BRAINS READY FOR THE TEST, AND WRITING A PAPER IS LITTLE MORE THAN THE EFFORT OF TYPING. FOR MOST OF US, STUDYING IS WORK, AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THAT WORK DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS.

We typically think of intelligence as being *IQ*. Your *IQ* is a number that represents how easily you learn and solve problems. However, it is only a part of intelligence, and only a small part of successful learning. Other factors have an even greater influence on learning. *Attitude*, *evaluation*, and *strategy* are three areas that can improve learning beyond the ability level suggested by *IQ*. Using them to the best advantage will go a long way in promoting successful learning.

“Of making many books there is no end,  
and much study is a weariness of the flesh.”  
ECCL. 12:12

### Attitude

#### • *God blesses us with hope*

Hope is an important tool in aiding learning. Children who study in a state of fear or discouragement are much more likely to fail than those who study with a spirit of hope. Does your child approach studying with a groan? Does he expect to fail the math test? Does she worry that each failure will be the end of any possible success? Children who

approach studying with these attitudes are less likely to learn and retain what they study. Be aware of your child’s mood and talk about what goes on at school. Motivate your child by setting goals and celebrating their accomplishment. God cares about what is best for us, and we can learn something important regardless of the outcome.

#### • *Focus on ability*

We want to learn what we do not already know. However, this can prove to remind children of what they cannot do, especially if they struggle with learning. One way to counteract this is to encourage your child by showing progress he has made. Keep a list of spelling words that she has conquered. Point out how much easier long division is this year as opposed to last year. Record your child reading a story to play back later when the book has become an “easy” read. Children focused on studying do not necessarily realize how much they already have learned. Reminding will help them to focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities, or what they have yet to learn.

- *Delay gratification*

Does your child have 101 ways to delay studying? The inability to delay gratification can be a huge hindrance to the development of study skills. When a child can delay gratification, he can set and accomplish a goal, and then reap the benefits of the hard work. Help your child to set a time for homework and stick to it. Help her to realize how much more fun play will be when the worry of homework is gone. For younger children, there should be a time each day for checking the homework list with mom or dad and making a plan. Older children should be able to look at a weekly schedule and plan ahead to complete work and study efficiently for tests.

“Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.” **PROV. 1:5**

## Evaluation

- *Overcoming obstacles*

The way to wisdom is to consistently evaluate a situation and look for ways to improve. This is part of what the verse above encourages. We are to seek God in Scripture and do so with an understanding that God will increase our faith and work changes in our lives. We can apply this wisdom to any learning. What changes need to happen for your child to be a better learner? Is attitude in his way? Is she not motivated? Sometimes a child will get stuck at a certain skill level because he has not mastered previous skills. For instance, long division is much harder if the multiplication tables are not memorized.

- *Use strengths to support weaknesses*

Some people learn with a variety of methods but many of us have a learning preference. Some children learn better through sight (reading, computer), others through hearing (lecture, music), and still others through moving (building, art). If your child has a learning style preference, remember this when studying. An auditory learner may not learn spelling words

by looking at them but might be more successful practicing by spelling aloud or singing the spelling of the words. A visual learner might learn addition facts best by playing a computer game that shows the answer after each attempt. A kinesthetic learner may have more success reciting memory work while jumping rope or by using note cards, each with one word that can be rearranged to form the memory verse. If one method is not working; try another. Your child’s teacher is a great resource for ideas.

“What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” **PHIL. 4:9**

## Strategy

- *Environment*

Everyone accepts that a distraction-free environment is best for learning; however, not everyone agrees to the definition of *distraction-free*. A study area should be free of video games and television, but music can help some children focus. Encourage your child to try working with or without music to determine which works best. Create a study area free of television or toys, and set the space as off-limits for siblings. Watch for what works for your child and ask for her input.

- *Breaks and nourishment*

Depending on your child’s daily schedule, he may need a break after school and before study time. Likewise, an empty stomach can interrupt concentration. Stay away from sugar snacks, and look for something with protein.

- *Select and organize information*

It is easy to assume that reading a chapter in a text book guarantees the material is learned. Our brains constantly decide what information is important and what to discard. Help your child to select important information from reading and research. Ask her questions that make her evaluate what

is important to remember. Once important information is identified, look for a way he can organize the information: outlines, bullet points, charts, graphs, and drawings are all ways to organize information. These tools will help for test preparation later but will also give your child’s brain a way to understand what has been read.

- *Patterns and relationships*

New information and new skills more easily find a home in our brains when relationships between information are apparent. Help your child see the connection between what is learned now and what was taught previously. When learning subject matter that contains much factual information, help your child to look for patterns that can better organize the information.

## Review

Just as reading a chapter doesn’t guarantee learning, studying something once doesn’t guarantee it will stick. Lead your child to understand that review and practice are essential to learning new skills. If you help her review before a test, ask questions that encourage her to formulate an answer, rather than merely memorizing facts. Ask him to summarize information, and have him teach it back to you.

## For Discussion:

- ▶ What was the best way for you to study when you were in school?
- ▶ What were some of your bad study habits? Your good ones?
- ▶ How does attitude affect learning?
- ▶ How can you help your child develop study habits while encouraging responsibility?

## For Further Study:

- ▶ [www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/studytips.shtml](http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/studytips.shtml)
- ▶ <http://tinyurl.com/lgzlw2>
- ▶ <http://tinyurl.com/ysmo64>