

# THE Ultimate

GUIDE TO

## Stop Fighting with Your Kids About School **Forever**

PRESENTED BY SAOTG 



Let's face it. When it comes to raising kids, there are plenty of things to stress a parent out. It begins from the moment they are born and continues right on into adulthood. But nothing stresses parents out more than fighting with their kids about school, as skirmishes over late homework, missing assignments, low test performance, and subpar grades become the norm.

The tension that comes from fighting with your child about school spills over into daily life, eventually damaging your relationship with your child, possibly well beyond the schooling years.

The great news is it doesn't have to be this way. For most kids, the battle about school has nothing to do with you as a parent and everything to do with them establishing healthier habits and routines as students.

## START WITH the Basics

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It may seem like a no-brainer, but there are basic factors involved in every student's life, the importance of which can be frequently overlooked by parents and the students themselves when trying to solve school-related problems. Here are a few basics to get you started...



# #1

## Sleep

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Getting enough rest is an important part of being successful, and this is even more essential for students. According to the National Sleep Foundation<sup>1</sup>, students need 8-10 hours of sleep per day. Failure to get enough sleep can “limit their ability to listen, learn, concentrate, and solve problems.”

Help your student establish a good sleep routine that involves a regular bedtime (yes, even for teens!) and a regular wake time. Experts also recommend reducing caffeine intake and staying off devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

Easier said than done, for sure, but good sleep is foundational.



# #2

## Exercise

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Exercise improves blood flow and causes the brain to secrete hormones that aid in learning, data retrieval, emotional regulation, and critical thinking skills.



Twenty minutes of heart-pumping exercise each day is a perfect amount and will also aid in better sleep. In fact, according to multiple studies<sup>2</sup> conducted in several states, fit students score twice as well on academic tests as their unfit peers.

Additionally, in his book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*<sup>3</sup>, the author shares a case study in which students who started their day with 30 minutes of cardio saw an increase in their test scores of 25%."

## #3 Eat Right

During a regular school week, the diet of a student can typically be described with one word: hurried. They rush through breakfast, rush through lunch, and typically grab a snack on their way to after-school activities. This can lead to lots of prepackaged, processed foods rich with sugar and void of the good nutrients necessary for learning.



The brain needs protein, healthy fats, and good carbs (the kind that come from whole grains, fruits, and veggies) to work best. When we don't eat right, our brains begin to chemically go into what is essentially "fight or flight." That's why many kids are so oppositional after school. Their reserves are depleted, and they need a good, repowering snack.

# #4

## Hydration

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Equally important as all the other basics, students need water. Studies have shown that at the end of the average school day, a student is dehydrated. This leads to headaches, tiredness, mood swings, and an inability to focus. Make sure your student is drinking a minimum of 8-10 glasses of water each day.



## ESTABLISH Routines

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A healthy daily and weekly routine is crucial to success. Routines help students overcome forgetfulness, maximize preparedness, and feel in control of their own destiny. They also result in reduced stress, fewer meltdowns, and less overall conflict in the home. A healthy routine allows students to solidify good habits and start each day on the right foot. Here are a few ideas of things to incorporate into a healthy routine...



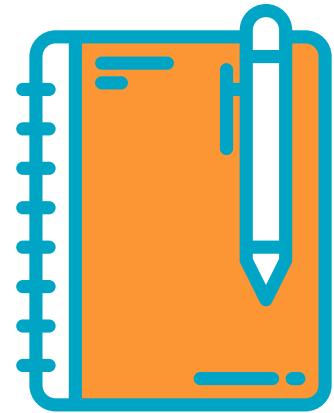
# #1

## Get Organized

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A place for everything and everything in its place! It's an old adage with modern day implications. Help your student get organized by beginning each semester with a trip to the office supply store. Students need a binder with dividers and subdividers. The key to getting organized is creating a place for everything that needs one. Be sure to stock up pens, pencils, highlighters, index cards, notebook paper, printer supplies, etc.

Don't forget a stapler, a hole-puncher, and a calculator. Help your student set up a dedicated homework area in the home with all the supplies you purchased nearby. This makes getting started on homework easier throughout the year. Additionally, knowing where everything is helps reduce stress and virtually eliminates the backpack becoming a black hole.



# #2

## Stay Organized

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It's much easier to stay organized than it is to get organized. A good checklist is a great place to start.

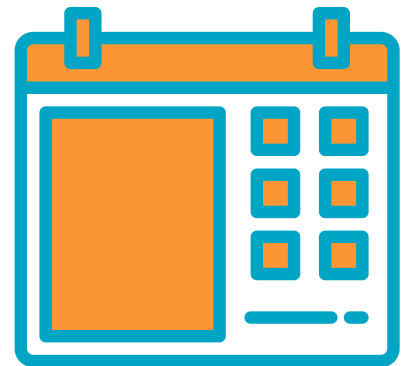




In his book, *The Checklist Manifesto*<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Atul Gawande studied the impact that a simple checklist can have on success and productivity. He says, "A good checklist isn't just a help, it's necessary to success." Students should plan to spend 5-10 minutes at the start of each homework session running through their checklist and tidying their binders. Students should hole-punch any papers they received at school that day and place them into the appropriate section of their binder. A small tidying-break also allows students to ease into their homework session in a routine way each day.

## #3 Quick Planner Check

When students are ready to begin their homework, they should make a plan based on the assignments they have recorded in their planner. Of course, this only works well if the student has written down all assignments throughout the day. Students should write "none" next to subjects where applicable so blank spaces can be indicators something may be due. Students should compare this information with their online school portal to check for discrepancies. This a great way to make sure nothing falls through the cracks.



## #4

## Have Dedicated Homework/Study Time

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Students benefit from having an established time set aside for completing assignments, as well as working ahead. If homework time is prescheduled, there is less temptation to get distracted and/or procrastinate. If there is less schoolwork than usual, this is a great opportunity to work ahead.



## #5

## Prepare for the Next Day

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Students should pack up their backpack as the final step in the homework process. It gives students one last chance to check that everything is finished BEFORE it is too late to get it all done. Additionally, it allows them to pack any extra items or supplies they may need for the next day, including items/clothing (e.g., sports equipment/jersey) for after-school activities. Students should even consider choosing and laying out their clothes for the next morning.





Routines are one of the easiest ways for parents to help their students be prepared each day, lessen the potential for last-minute panic situations, and encourage self-reliance as they grow and mature.



## KNOW WHEN TO Call in Reinforcements

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What's a parent to do if you know your student is hitting the basics and you've done your best to establish a good routine, but you are **still** finding yourself in the daily battle of school? What if students are struggling academically, and that struggle is having an ongoing negative impact on your home life?

There's no shame for parents or students in saying, "We need help!" Knowing when to call in reinforcements is an equally important step in ending the battle with your kids over school.

# #1

## Teachers

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Your student's teacher is always the first place to start. Teachers are often unaware of the struggles you and your student may be experiencing at home and are more than happy to offer some advice. When you meet with the teacher, be specific about the issue. Whether it is helping your student get a handle on writing down assignments, turning in work, test preparation, or other class-related issues, let the teacher know where your student needs help. Teachers can also give you great feedback about whether things are improving over time.



# #2

## School Counselors

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Your student's school counselor is also a great resource. Some schools even have other resources like specialized learning specialists. This may be your next line of defense, and they frequently have great ideas.



School counselors support lots of students, and they often support teachers as well. Their time is certainly limited, but they can carve out a few minutes here and there for a meeting and to do some extra check-ins for a limited period of time. Sometimes this is all a student needs to get back on track.



# #3

## Tutors

Sometimes when students struggle in one subject area, the stress of that struggle can carry over into other areas of school and life. Allow students to struggle long enough, and they can convince themselves they'll never be good at school. Even worse, this can lead to anxiety or depression that should be addressed with a mental health professional. Providing students with some additional academic support early in the process can help tremendously.



### A quick way to know if your child needs a tutor is to answer these questions:

- a Does your student struggle primarily in one subject area?
- b Does the student struggle primarily with a specific skill (e.g., memorizing math facts, balancing chemical reactions, diagramming sentences)?
- c Is your student working to improve a score on a specific exam (e.g., SAT/ACT, ISEE, AP Test, mid-term/final)?
- d Is your student able to easily locate needed materials, get started with work, meet deadlines, and sustain effort in all subject areas?



**If you answered yes to these questions, it sounds like a tutor could be the perfect solution for your student and your family.**

# #4

## Academic Coaches

An academic coach is similar to a tutor in many ways, but an academic coach goes beyond teaching students how to pass a class or survive the crisis of the day. They look beyond the subject area and teach students how to become more confident and independent learners.



In short, a good academic coach helps students develop their executive functioning skills, which provide critical supports for learning and development. They are the basis for everything we do, and they are essential to succeeding in school and beyond.

According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, executive functioning skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. Just as an air traffic control system at a busy airport safely manages the arrivals and departures of many aircrafts on multiple runways, the brain needs this skill set to filter distractions, prioritize tasks, set and achieve goals, and control impulses. Strong executive functioning skills help students to organize and plan their time, and then assess and revise their strategies as needed.

**A quick way to know if your child needs an academic coach is to answer these questions:**

- a** Does your student struggle across many subject areas?
- b** Does your student struggle with general school skills (e.g., planning, organizing, studying, note-taking, test-taking, self-advocating)?
- c** Does your student procrastinate, lose focus easily, or have trouble starting schoolwork?
- d** Does your student struggle to follow directions or prevent silly mistakes?



If you answered yes to several of these questions, it sounds like an academic coach could be the perfect solution for your student and your family. In fact, many academic coaches can also do some traditional tutoring as well.

# SAOTG

You downloaded this guide because you know something has to change for you, your student, and your family. The stress and tension that comes from fighting with your student about school has to end. The ultimate goal is to help your student grow and become a more successful and confident learner, which will benefit you, your student, and your family for a lifetime.

[GET STARTED](#)

