

7 Habits of Highly Responsible Students

1. **They set goals.** Goals keep kids focused on the future. That's why they are the foundation of responsible behavior and success in school. Help your child set goals. Talk to your child about: How much improvement would she like to see on this week's test? How would he like to improve his grades this marking period? What are two things she would like to accomplish this school year? What will be needed to meet those goals? Goals help students focus on what's important and what's not. If they have a vision of where they want to go, they're more likely to get there. Students with goals find it easier to say no to irresponsible behaviors, because they are saying yes to their vision of the future.

2. **They plan their time.** Responsible people meet their obligations, whether it's turning in a paper on the day it's due or having a report on the boss's desk when it's needed. It takes planning. (If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.) Use a big calendar to help teach your child how to organize her time. Write down all her commitments and use the calendar to plan time for homework each day.

3. **They study every day.** Responsible students set aside time for homework or studying every day. If there is no homework that day, review vocabulary words or notes.

4. **They take notes in class.** Teachers will almost always spell out what they think is important. Encourage your child to take notes while the teacher is talking.

5. **They have the tools they need.** A carpenter wouldn't think of showing up without a hammer. A nurse always has a stethoscope. A responsible student is always properly prepared for class.

6. **They keep their commitments.** Responsible people honor their commitments. They succeed in school by doing their assignments well and on time. They do their share of the group project. They go to soccer practice even when it's cold. Parents can set the example for their children. Talk about the commitments you have made to the family to provide meals, keep clothes clean, and care for anyone who is sick. Ask children to make their own commitments at home and feel the satisfaction that comes from meeting those commitments.

7. **They get ready ahead of time.** Some students start out every morning with a crisis. They can't find their homework. They don't have time to eat breakfast. The shirt they want to wear isn't ironed. Responsible students have learned that being late, or being early, is not something that simply happens; it is a choice they make. Teach your child to take 5 or 10 minutes before bedtime to get ready for the next day. Pack the backpack. Make lunch. Lay out clothes. Children will soon see that those few minutes will make the morning easier, and help him get to school ready to learn.