

## Mental Fitness News and Tips

### Self-esteem is linked to higher grades and improved attendance

Studies show that when youth do structured after school activities, their grades are likely to improve. They are also likely to have better attendance. *Why?* It may have to do with self-esteem. After school programs give kids chances to succeed at various activities, and those feelings of success may carry over into the classroom.

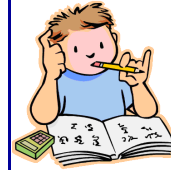
#### To create similar opportunities at home, focus on:

- **Homework time:** Take a “same time, same place” approach to homework on school days. For example, your youth might study at the kitchen counter each day after school. This encourages independence and responsibility.
- **Reading time:** Find creative, appealing ways to fit reading into your schedule. You might read at bedtime, take books to the park, act out a story or read a book and then see the movie version.
- **Academic activities:** Incorporate math, science, history, and more into everyday life. Help your child manage his allowance. Do a science experiment just for fun. If possible, visit a historic site. Show your child that learning is fun and useful!
- **Non-academic activities:** When kids make progress in sports, art, music, technology, and other areas, they gain confidence. This helps them become better students. Support and compliment all kinds of hard work.
- **Goal setting:** Ask your child what he/she would like to accomplish in and out of school. Set one or two reasonable goals. *“I want to read a chapter book this week,”* or *“I want to build a model plane.”* Make a step-by-step plan for success.



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### Do you know how to deal with a school problem?



Sooner or later, most children are likely to have a problem at school. The way

parents deal with it can affect the outcome. Answer *Yes* or *No* to the questions below to see if you are prepared to deal with school problems positively:

- \_\_\_1. Do you communicate regularly with your child’s teacher, whether there’s a concern or not?
- \_\_\_2. Do you keep an open mind when your child has a problem at school? Be open to the fact that your child may be helping to cause the situation.
- \_\_\_3. Do you contact your child’s teacher first if you have a concern, rather than calling the principal?
- \_\_\_4. Do you write down your thoughts and questions before meeting with the teacher?
- \_\_\_5. Do you ask for an action plan at the end of the meeting so you can work together to address the issue?

#### How well are you doing?

Each *Yes* means you are dealing with school problems well. Where could you try something new?

Adapted from The Parent Institute®  
[www.parent-institute.com](http://www.parent-institute.com)

This newsletter is provided by the School Community Partnership for Mental Health, of which MPS is an integral part.