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PARENT REVISION GUIDE:

How You can Help your Child in Exam Season



Exams are undoubtedly nerve-racking for both you and your children. You may well be wondering to what degree you should be involved and how you can support your child most effectively? Every child will have different approaches to learning that work for them, and what works for your child might not work for their friends and vice-versa.

However, there are things that we can do as parents to help our children get the most out of their revision, and most importantly help them go on to achieve the grades they deserve.

So, with that in mind, here are our tips on how parents can help their children to revise effectively.





Encourage your child to make a revision timetable – and stick to it

It is important when constructing a revision timetable to consider the following issues:

Be realistic - you will know how much your child can be put in on a single day, so build up their stamina over time

Short and sweet - sessions should only be for 30 - 40 minutes with 10 minute breaks.

Introduce variety - encourage them to schedule a range of subjects across each day - it stops any one day being a 'nightmare revision day'.



Review - Have they put in slots to review the learning of the day?

Rewards - Build in rewards for their efforts.

At first, the big picture may look and feel totally overwhelming to your child. Be as positive and as supportive as you can in helping them to prioritise their workload. But they also need to be aware of the fact that revision takes time and for a few months, the social life may have to give a bit. This can be alleviated slightly, if their friends schedule time out sessions in tandem



Make sure your child has a quiet space to work, with no distractions

The right revision space is really important. Help your child get set up so that the place where they are going to study provides the right environment for effective revision.

Declutter - an untidy desk or room presents too many distractions and opportunities to do something other than study. Make sure that the things that normally distract them, TV, phones, books, games etc are tidied away so that they don't present a temptation to do something else.

Think comfortable - make sure they have somewhere comfortable to sit so that they can focus on their work. They are likely to be sat for long periods so find a seat and desk arrangement that doesn't strain their back.

Ambience - make sure that there is enough light in the room - if it's too dark they may find that they are squinting at their books and notes which can be exhausting. Too bright and this can tire the eyes causing headaches. Natural light whenever possible is the best option.

Noise - it's also important to get the noise levels right. Some people will find that they need background noise to get any work done while others will benefit from perfect silence.

Revision techniques

Everyone will have a style of revision that works best for them, but whatever strategy your child uses, it's important that they actively revise. Here are a few tried and tested approaches for them to consider:

Past papers - just ploughing through past papers on their own is rarely a useful strategy. However, using them as a framework for study can work really well.

Teach someone else - you can't teach something until you know it well yourself. When you finish learning some content then find someone else to teach it to.



Revision cards - these force us to distil what we need to know into bite-sized chunks. Technology provides various options, in addition to the traditional physical cards, but whatever your child chooses to use, it is the process of thinking how to condense the information and actually writing it down which is the important part of the process.

Revision notes - have revision notes everywhere! If there are quotes, or formulae for example that they need to remember, then have them on post-it notes around the house.

There are also lots of revision aids online that your child can use, such as the videos produced for [Radio 1](#), and [BBC Bitesize](#) for example.



Be around for them

You don't have to be at their side 24/7 but children like parents taking an interest in their revision (but not taking over). A good revision strategy is to teach someone else what you have learnt, so give your child the opportunity to talk through the topics they have covered that day. You might even learn something new yourself!





Healthy body - healthy mind!

While they are exercising their minds, it's also important not to forget their bodies during this time.

Eating well - it reduces overall stress on the body and can also make a person feel good about themselves, so keep the kitchen cupboard stocked with food. When the going gets tough children really appreciate a cup of tea, a plate of biscuits or their favourite meal.

Encourage breaks - encourage them to take regular breaks in between revision sessions. Exercise and fresh air are a really good way of recharging their batteries and provides a way of releasing a great deal of the muscle tension which stress produces.

Make time to relax - it is also important that they do something when they have finished studying for the evening to help them relax such as catching up with friends on social media, watching videos/ TV, reading, listening to music, gaming etc

Don't forget sleep - having a good night's sleep is vital when studying hard, so having a regular time when they switch off the lights and go to sleep is important. Encourage them to relax in the last hour before bed and not to be doing revision during this time as it will make it harder for them to switch off.



Exam day

It's important to remove as much of the stress from the day as you can. Your child wants to be focusing on their performance, rather than what they might have forgotten to take with them.

The night before - encourage your child to have their bag packed and ready to go the night before the exam. This makes the morning less of a drama and helps to bring the stress levels down.

Get up early - make sure your child gets up in the morning at a sensible time so that they can have a good breakfast and get to the exam without having to rush.



Destress - exams are always a stressful experience, but talk to them about ways to destress. Whether it's focusing on their breathing, listening to their favourite music, or going for a walk, help them find a relaxation technique that works for them.

Set the tone - many children will take their cues from their parents. If you are calm and in control then this will set the tone for your child. Conversely, if we appear to be worried or stressed, then the child will pick up on this and start to worry as well.



Final thoughts

Most important of all, help your child to keep everything in perspective. Remind them that the better they prepare and the more confident they feel in their subject knowledge the less stressed they will feel when the exams start.

Whatever happens, stay positive. Remember, there is no such thing as failure - if they don't pass this time then they've learned what not to do next time. If your child has focused on their revision and done the best they could, then pat them on the back and tell them this is just one more step towards success.





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