

EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOL, REITERATED

School is starting! Everybody has a job to do: parents, children, teachers, and the community.

Parents in many school districts have already scurried around getting their children new shoes and clothes, picking out backpacks and school supplies, stocking up on foodstuffs for school lunches.

Your most important parental task is to have high expectations for your child at school. Not enough to feel this way, you have to communicate how you feel. Tell your children that school and learning is their JOB. You expect them to listen to the teacher, bring home assignments, do their homework, study for tests, strive for good grades, and prepare themselves for the competitive, highly technological world in which we live.

Once upon a time it was OK for the farmer's kids in the one-room schoolhouse to just master the three Rs: readin', writin', and 'rithmetic. Today EVERYBODY has to know how to use technology to their advantage and how to compete with kids in other countries who have longer school hours, more school days, and an ethic that makes parents and teachers push their youth to STRIVE to be the best they can.

Wait a minute, Dr. Heins, isn't school supposed to be fun? Yes, it's fun to be able to interact with peers and adults who are not your parents. But it's also serious. It's preparing your child and , hopefully, everybody's children for the world we live in. Fortunately normal young children are sponges, they want to learn. But the most important factor determining how well children do at school is the interest and expectations of their parents.

Check out the ParentTips section School and Learning for more.

Why am I so insistent on high parental expectations? Because, sadly, this task is not carried out by all parents. Teachers have told me that many parents today DO have high expectations but those expectations is that the school will do it all. Think of your child's learning as an equilateral triangle with one side labeled "teacher," another "child," and the third "parents." You can't have a triangle if your side is missing, right?

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