

Developing Study Skills

by Diane Trautman

Parents often complain that their children are lazy or disorganized or both. I think most kids would be inclined to put forth the effort if they knew how to get organized and how to get the most benefit from their work in the least amount of time. The laziness factor then can be remedied by teaching students strategies that are not typically taught in school.

In his book titled “The Everything Study Book,” Steven Frank asserts that many students take a passive approach to studying. They assume that by looking at their notes and reading their textbooks, they will somehow absorb and retain the information they need. Students are bombarded with information, however, and they need to develop skills that allow them to sort, record, analyze, and apply that information.

Students must become active learners. That starts in the classroom with active listening and effective note-taking.

Active listening requires that the student position himself in the classroom and in his seat so that he can clearly hear and see the teacher and minimize distractions from other students or outside noises. When distracted, he needs to know how to pull his focus back to the teacher.

Teachers convey the importance of concepts through body language as well as through the tone and volume of their voices. Students need to learn how to take concise and pertinent notes while observing the teacher.

To develop notes that will serve as an effective study guide, students need to improve their outlining skills and create their own shorthand system that allows them to record information while still actively listening and observing the teacher.

A skilled tutor can help your child develop learning strategies that work for her, and help to make her study-time outside of the classroom more effective.