

# Helping Your Child Stay on Track During the School Year

by Diane Trautman

Now that our children are back at school, we need to stay actively involved in our children's education and aware of their social lives.

"So what did you learn today?" is not enough, according to local junior high school counselor Bob Kerman. Ask your child specific questions. What book is he reading for English class? What is the plot? What period of history is she studying and who are the key figures? Studies have shown that children whose parents place a priority on education perform better in school.

Friendship issues are particularly important as kids get older. Get to know your child's friends and classmates. Ask your child how those relationships are going. He may not volunteer much information, but the day will come when he will speak up and he'll appreciate your interest in his life.

Students in the Hart District and some elementary students work with organizers they call "binder reminders," into which they are supposed to write down their assignments. Review the binder reminder regularly with your child. Ask your child if they have recorded and turned in all written assignments. Review their homework.

Make contact with your child's teachers. Help your junior high student learn to keep track of their progress by having her ask her teacher for regular updates. Follow up with your child and with the teacher as necessary.

Bob recommends we hold on to all graded papers, at least until the teacher says that the quarter is over. Teachers are only human and they may incorrectly record a grade. But if you've kept the papers, you'll have proof when a correction is needed. I would also suggest that your child might need to refer back to prior work as they move through the school year, and if you decide to bring in a tutor, the tutor may find it helpful to review past work to get a better idea of how to help you child.

Consider enrolling your child in an after-school instructional program, especially if you aren't available to help with homework. Some parents seem loathe to insist that their children participate, but we have to remind ourselves that we are the parents and we have to do what we believe is best for our children even when they can't immediately see the benefit of our choices.

Next month: Developing study skills