

IMPORTANT BULLETIN: ALL PARENTS MUST READ.

## **IMPROVE YOUR KIDS GRADES**

If you talk to any child about school, the majority of them will tell you that their **number one concern is making good grades**. Our children are told early on that good grades equate to getting a good job or getting into a good school. The following **community service bulletin** was created from many sources and a **panel of physicians** to assist you in parenting an A student. Whether your child is a **straight A student** or not, the following **11 Success Strategies** have been compiled to insure your child's ongoing **success in all academic endeavors**.

**#11-Track your child's behavior patterns:** What does your kid do? How many hours a night do they sleep? Do they snore? What did they have for lunch today? How much homework do they usually have on Tuesday night? When is their next math test? How many hours of television did they watch last week? How many hours did you spend with each of them last Thursday? Did you know the answers to all of these questions? Now look at it from your child's perspective.

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Your child wonders do I really have to go to bed at 8:00 o'clock tonight. If I hardly saw Dad today I can resist my bedtime and get some attention. I hope I can do well in school. The corndogs for lunch today were great. When can I go play with my friends? Etc...?

So you see, their world is a world of cause and effect to which most of the time they are not consciously aware. It is up to us as parents to mold and sculpt the life of each little person we bring into the world so that they can achieve their highest potential. Sometimes the cause is not as clear as the effect. It is easy to see when they are not living up to their highest potential. One easy way to assess their overall progress and happiness can be to simply look at their grades and conduct at school. Is your child cranky every Wednesday? When and how are they not showing up at their highest potential? Look for recurring patterns daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonally. From these patterns, if you have the right tools you will be able to discern how to circumvent

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the negativity and live a higher quality of life for yourself and your children. Knowledge is knowing what it is, wisdom is seeing it coming. Remember: Your kids are counting on you. Help is on the way. Read on!

**#10-The Old TV and Video Games Trick:** During the week use TV and Video Game time sparingly. Keep your children engaged around the house. My daughter used to try and say “Daddy, I’m bored”. A good response here is “O.K. what are you going to do about that?” or “Is your room clean?” in other words either give them the choice to create an opportunity to do something constructive or creative or they can help clean or cook etc.... We did not have TV and video games anywhere close to what is out there now when we were growing up yet I did not get bored. There was always something to do. **Studies show that children that watch TV and play video games during the week do not perform as well at school as those who do not.** The stats for weekend TV and video games report no change in grades if they are restricted to weekends. In other words guys, we have a great

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motivational tool here that we may or may not be using. TV and Video games are a privilege not a right (more on rewards systems later in this article), especially during the week. Don't let the inmates run the asylum. Your kids are counting on you to be involved (more suggestions about this later). Keep them on task and focused during the week. What happens at work the day after you stay up until 4:00 a.m. playing video games or watching TV? Kids are no different.

**#9-Be Involved At Your Childs School:** Everybody is always telling the kids about the importance of school. How seriously do you think they will take it if you can't show up? Try to eat lunch with your child at their school once a week during their elementary school years. Get to know their friends at school, their faces and names. That way if they are talking to you about a problem they are having you know better who and what you are dealing with. Know their teachers. Teachers tend to treat children whose parents are more involved differently. Now I know that a lot of teachers are going "Oh c'mon Chief that's not a fair statement!"

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O.K. but let's look at the two word definition of leadership- FOLLOW ME! Hey guys, show up for reading day. Read to the class. Develop a strong, communicative relationship with your children's teachers. Be certain your child knows that their teachers will be talking with you about them. Tell me your children won't behave differently. Go to a PTA meeting. Check their grades online weekly. Bookmark the school website and e-mail the teacher if something starts going bad. This goes back to TIP # 11. Track the patterns. If we truly have wisdom and see it coming we might be able to do something about the pattern of bad grades before it happens. Do not be afraid to ask questions about your students performance or if the teacher is doing a good job. You cannot fail with detail.

**#8-Maintain a Routine:** Now that you have created a map (Tracked the target patterns), cut a big chunk of time into each day by eliminating TV and video games, and gotten more involved in creating a positive relationship with the school environment, we can establish a more functional pattern that will assist our kids to

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create a continued pattern of success in their lives. Write down their schedule as you see it. Bounce your ideas off of other parents to be certain you are not killing your kids with your expectations. Talk to your kids and be flexible at first. Bend but do not break. Implementing a conscious routine should happen gradually, one step at a time. Change small things, one thing at a time. Once it is routine, add something else. There will be many suggestions on things you can incorporate into your routine in the rest of this bulletin. They will all contribute to the successes we are intending. People thrive on routines, especially kids.

Remember to write it down. A good habit to teach everyone is to write down what is going to happen. In other words, schedule it. You can consciously schedule good behavior and grades using less energy than the price we pay for unconsciously scheduling poor ones. It is a choice. Which will you choose?

**#7 Set Goals and Create Clear Agreements:** Many families suffer at homework times due to tensions that arise from miscommunication and outside distractions. Ease the

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communication woes by creating clear written agreements with your kids using a language of rewards and consequences that they can easily understand. Do any of these situations sound familiar:

-Your child asks for your help with a math problem. As you help them they get frustrated, you feel unappreciated, try to be patient yet at some point the whole thing explodes into a senseless conflict;

-Your student realizes at bedtime that they have a poster assignment due the next day in their first class and suddenly after a long day at work you find yourself at the second grocery store (the first one was sold out of poster board, guess why) only to be staring at another empty bin for poster boards feeling “somewhat disgruntled” (to put it politely);

-Your child sits down to do homework only to be agitated by another sibling to the point of retaliation, a fight ensues and

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now you have to get involved as judge and jury, wasting everyone's precious scheduled time;

-Your student sits down to do homework only to report that they forgot what their assignment was and did not write it down;

-You tell your child it is time for bed (which of course they know) and they say "but I haven't done my homework yet!"

No I have not been spying on you at home. You are not alone in your woes. A lot of the measures we have previously discussed will assist in curtailing these troubles yet try not to forget that you can create agreements with your kids. Do not bribe them to make good grades. The best thing you can do is do something that they like to do with them. Most kids like to spend time with their parents (contrary to popular belief) hopefully you know what they like. If you don't, ask them. Just remember that the sword cuts two ways. If they do not carry their weight then they get to clean, babysit, cook etc... spend time doing some household chores

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instead of other fun stuff. Write your agreements with them down.

Now you can be on their side in helping them follow through.

Review their agreements with them often. If you see them heading for disaster, steer them away from it. The point is not to facilitate their failure but their success. If your agreements are going bad, maybe, just maybe the agreements could be modified into a more workable solution. Reduce and simplify them until they do work, then head back toward the original goals. Do not expect success at first. The first pass at a working agreement is to realistically discover what is going to work. If it works, praise God and pass the gravy, it is time for some new agreements. Do you see it? Whether they are working or not, we can always be working for better agreements. Set a time frame with all agreements (1 week, 1 month, 3 months, 3 days, whatever).

Make an appointment with all involved to review and renegotiate at the end of all agreed upon time frames.

**#6-Sleep 9 (NINE) Hours on School Nights-** Yes! Sunday night is a school night unless Monday is a holiday. In many studies,

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amongst all the health problems investigated, poor sleep was among the most unexpected yet definitive causes of poor academic achievement. In one study of 132 third, fourth, and fifth graders, 43% had sleep difficulties lasting more than six months. The rate of failure compared to students with healthy sleep patterns was staggering. Another, study showed that students that snore loud enough to awaken themselves at night also had a significantly higher incidence of failure. Snoring can be attributed to many things. The top two are #1-not enough sleep (how about that!) and #2-allergies. To address allergic response read the bulletins on Springtime Wellness and on Antioxidants. Early start times mean early bedtimes. If your child has trouble going to bed it could be an indicator that they are not getting enough exercise during the day (more on this later). Interestingly enough, a study in which school start times were moved from 7:15 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. resulted in children getting an hour more of sleep each night, improved attendance and grades. More and more research studies demonstrate that daytime sleepiness from chronic sleep

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deprivation and poor quality sleep has significant impact on daytime behavior and academic performance as well as concentration, attention and mood. Even 20 fewer minutes of sleep may significantly affect behavior in many areas. One study showed that students with C's, D's, and F's got an average of 25 minutes less sleep and went to bed an average of 40 minutes later than A and B students. Here are more pediatric findings:

- Poor sleepers reported being significantly depressed, without energy, tired, tense, moody, stressed, irritable, and less alert than good sleepers. They were also more prone to having a negative self-image.

- Insufficient sleep has been associated with daytime fatigue, inability to control temper, ADHD, inability to concentrate, a tendency to doze off in class, problematic behaviors and lower levels of social skills.

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- Poorly performing first graders with sleep disorder breathing showed significant improvement in grades after receiving treatment

- Teenage insomnia has been related to anger, depression, difficulty with school adjustments, and stress. Studies suggest that insomnia begins early in life with accumulated sleep deprivation syndrome and persists into adulthood.

- Several studies reported that more total sleep, earlier bedtimes, and later weekday rise times are associated with better grades in school.

- In one study, nearly 40% of all elementary school students showed some kind of sleep problems.

Put the kids to bed. Studies also showed that parents involved in bedtime (reading a story, reading in the room until your child has fallen asleep etc...) had less resistance from children and the kids got better sleep. Again, consistency is the key.

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**#5-Nutrition:** Knowing what to feed the kids and when is very important. Sometimes there appears to be phases where they only want to eat Cheetos. Maybe the only thing they will eat for six months is rice. By the time most children reach school age they are eating well. Research shows that most poor eating habits for youths reside in the parents eating habits. Most kids need to eat every three hours. Newer research shows that three squares a day is not necessarily the best thing (see the Springtime wellness bulletin for tips on current seasonal diet). Be conscious of the effect certain foods have on your student during the day. Do corndogs for lunch induce a carbohydrate and sugar crash 45 minutes after eaten? Wow! That is right in the middle of math class. For more info on this see the bulletin on healthy eating for life.

**#4-Supplementation:** Scientists have found that sufficient amounts of vitamin B2 (Riboflavin) can improve memory. It's found in common things like milk, pasta, bread, and dark green vegetables. B6 has been shown to improve thinking capabilities.

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Zinc has also been shown to improve concentration. Zinc can be found in whole grains and seafood. Studies also show that iron deficiency is common in teenage girls. This can show itself as dizziness when standing, fatigue, and feeling cold when others are not.

Irritability can be caused by eating too much junk food!

Remember, most foods even healthy ones do not contain as many nutrients as they did twenty years ago. Proper nutrition and supplementation is a critical part of getting great performance out of your body. Omega 3 (fish oils) and Omega 6 (evening primrose oil) essential fatty acids (oils) have shown to improve mental functioning in students resulting in improved grades. O3 & O6 are found in oily fish, soy beans, and walnuts. One headline reads "Fish oil improves grades!" Yea! Have you ever had a fish oil burp? Look out! Thank God we now have better supplements than we had twenty years ago (Whew!). All joking aside, the results from daily O3 and O6 intake are very significant. One

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study showed that toddlers whose communication skills were well below average caught up in just a few months while supplementing O3 and O6 while others did not. Another study showed that disruptive behaviors by teenagers decreased with daily intake of O3 and O6. They were calmer and dramatically improved their ability to concentrate resulting in better grades especially at exam times.

**#3-Family Time:** Say what you want, just don't call me late for dinner. Time and time again in study after study, we see that kids who eat dinner with their families are better students, healthier people and less likely to smoke, drink, or use drugs than those who don't. One University of Michigan study found that meal time with the family was the single strongest predictor of better achievement scores and fewer behavioral problems in youths. Research shows that family dinner time is making a comeback. Some communities, schools, and even employers are pressing the idea knowing that healthier employee families mean less missed work and sick time from employees. Two months ago 400

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communities and 42 States proclaimed September 27<sup>th</sup> a day to eat dinner with your children. At our Kung Fu School we are putting together a kit to help families at meal times connect and bond beyond the standard “So what did you do at school today?” conversation. What if your dinner conversation began with “If you could be anyone from history, who would it be?” Actively engaging your family at dinner time is a skill that is not taught in our culture. Most of the time conversation is “Stop making faces at your sister!” “But she started it!” etc.... It just goes bad from there. If dinner is too much to start with, try breakfast. Whichever one you choose make it a non-negotiable family time. Nothing gets in the way of everyone eating together 2-3 times a week. Same bat-day, same bat-time.

**#2-Train the Body, Train the Mind:** Studies report that vigorous exercise 3 times a week improve grades on average by 10-14% (depending on which study you read). Part of our requirements in Martial Arts training is the continued maintenance of an A average. Students are rewarded for such behavior by their

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instructors and peers. If they are not maintaining an A average they get some coaching and extra help until they acquire the skills to do so. This is not an overnight process. It is a fact that the school system falls short in the physical Education curriculum. Some more elite Universities won't even look at a student's college application if they do not have at least a first degree Black Belt. A study of sixth graders found that vigorous physical activity improved their grades. Enrollment in P.E. alone did not improve grades. This one tip affects all of the other topics covered so far. It can help students sleep patterns, eating and health, and with focused activity, assist them to go from last in the class to the one who always gets picked first. Martial Arts is simply one of the best things parents can do for their children and their future. Martial Arts is not another activity like t-ball or soccer. A good Martial Arts academy provides a disciplined, measured transformational process that teaches success skills that will positively affect the rest of your child's life. Education means bringing out the best in someone. At our Kung Fu academy, we

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measure success by the number of qualified Black Belts we graduate. Success is measured by results. The essence of Martial Arts is learning the art of manifestation. Take an idea (like becoming a Black Belt) and make it so. Leadership and success go hand in hand. Both are skills that are trained. Leaders are not born, they are trained: trained in the crucible of transformation and challenge. Your ability to live your dreams in life is solely based on the skill you have to obtain results. You can train these skills in. Yes it takes time, energy, and money. Real education is based on real experiences, with real rewards and real consequences. I have never seen people so dramatically transformed as when they train the whole family, parents, kids, grandparents all together through Black Belt and continue to train with one another. No guff guys - the family that kicks together sticks together. At the school we have a saying, we either all win or all lose, either way, we don't leave anyone behind. A family is no different. Don't leave the kids behind. A Certified Martial Arts Instructor will never ask a student to do something that they

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cannot do 10 times better. The two word definition of leadership is  
- FOLLOW ME!

Use it, or lose it (i.e. leadership).

**#1-Attitude is Everything:** Most kids think of their intelligence as something fixed as if carved into stone. They worry about if they have enough, are they smart enough or are they dumb. Teach your kids that the mind is a muscle, intelligence can grow. Yes, Arnold Schwarzenegger, you have to train to become Mr. Universe. For some people, growing muscle mass is more difficult than it is for others. Why would intelligence be any different? Unfortunately, in schools, the kids seem to be locked into a caste system where once your baseline intelligence is established, a student can feel locked into that curriculum not understanding that they are a Super Genius waiting to happen. When they do work hard and make a jump from regulars into accelerated classes they are not armed with the culture to succeed (see point #2 above). Even more importantly, they are

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not armed with the belief that they will succeed. A child's belief in their own ability to change and succeed is essential to their success in all areas of life. This is where confidence comes from. It must be trained in or it is all a head trip. A study was done involving 1200 seventh graders all doing poorly in math. 600 were given a workshop on how to study well. Their grades improved 0%. The other 600 were given a workshop on expanding the nature of intelligence and the brain. They learned that every time you learn something new your brain forms new connections. Over time, this makes you smarter. It was a basic mini-course in neuroscience. When they studied, they thought about neurons forming new connections. When they worked in school, they visualized their brain growing. By the end of the semester their grades had improved by 40%. Many parents compliment their children repeatedly, reinforcing their strengths. They are sincere but don't realize the message they may be sending to the other children by doing so. "My oldest is the super-genius and my other son he's the super-model." I've heard said.

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The reaction from the kids is very different than receiving the compliments intended. The oldest feels like an ugly duckling and the younger son feels he is stupid. We must be very conscious in our communications that we have with our children and how we shape frame and create their attitudes. Well, there it is. A few parting words....Be certain your children know that they are noble creatures that exist beyond where our world is today. They are the future. They are worth the time, energy, effort, and money that it takes to give them the skills necessary to make their world a better place. Doing our best to help them live their dreams creates an ongoing cycle for the betterment of humanity.

Good Luck!

We are United Kung Fu, making our world stronger, one Black Belt at a time.