

5 Simple Things You
Can Do **NOW** to
Bounce Back for
This School Year!



**READING ESCAPADES
& MATH EXPLORERS**

Learning is More Than Common Core

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It is August – you got your child all set for the school year. New supplies, new clothes, and, what you thought, was a new attitude. This year was going to be FANTASTIC! September comes along and it's going OK. What you didn't realize, or you put in the back of your mind, is that the first few weeks to months in the school year is a repeat of prior years. So your child didn't need to think or try hard at all to get the grades you would be happy about them earning. End of October and the grades are starting to fall – but you know, there is so much going on with Halloween, football, and just getting into the swing of things. The grades your child is now coming home with are not praiseworthy but, no worry, they will bounce back.



November and parent-teacher conferences are here. Oh no, your child's teacher is concerned about the work that your child is handing in to them. However, you are now aware of it and are in control. You will have the *TALK* with your child. All will be OK. December is here and there is **SO MUCH TO DO!** There's just no time to keep up with the plan to do better in school. OK – don't worry, the New Year is just around the corner then it is **TIME TO HIT THE BOOKS!** You make your child make the resolution to do better and you make the resolution to be more focused on their education. You both have the best of intentions but, just like almost all resolutions, there was no plan and, thus, everything went back to the way things were prior to January 1st.



It all seems lost. You are frustrated. Your child is embarrassed and feels bad about themselves. They want to do better, you want to be a better parent for them – but neither of you quite knows how to make the changes that need to be made to see a difference.

DON'T WORRY! Once you know what to do, and get in a routine, everything can turn around and your child can be proud of work they will do for the rest of the year – **AND** the rest of their life.



1. Create a Sacred Space to Work

Having a space just for work, and making sure they have everything they need is critical for productivity and good study habits. If you have a small living space and do not have enough space to dedicate for a study area, gather all the supplies they need into a basket or other container that your child likes so that they can grab it each day and bring it to their space. The space really should be the same place, like the kitchen table. I know how busy you are – but YOU must be the one to make sure the table is cleared off and clean. They will not be the ones to do it; remove the excuse that there is no place for them to work. Once the routine is in place, your child will take over but for now, you have to step up and be the one to make sure this happens.



1. Create a Sacred Space to Work

****HUGE EASY HINT**** One of the best routines that I have in place for my own children is to sharpen every pencil on Sunday morning. We have been doing this for years and it is so very simple, but when you don't have to search for the tools you need, **EVERYTHING** runs so much smoother.



2. Talk to your child about **THEIR** Goals

The very first thing I always establish with my clients – and these are the students, not the parents – is **THEIR** goals. What do they want to achieve. I am very adamant that they tell me what they want – not what they think I want to hear. It is rare when I actually get a student who has a goal because no one has ever asked them before. When I do get a student who does have a goal, almost every parent is shocked when they hear it because the parent had no idea what their child wants.



2. Talk to your child about **THEIR** Goals

It may take a few days or longer for your child to think about what they want. You should not pressure this, and be very open that goals change all the time so it is not set in stone. When you do get their goal, no matter how simple or unimportant you think it is – *make a sign and hang it up in multiple places so they can see it often*. Let them help with the sign if they want – depending on your child, use computer graphics, glitter, stickers or just handwrite it neatly. Do not discourage ANY goal – that will do more harm than good. My 3 year old wants to be a fireman from his favorite TV show that gets ‘emergencies’ via a fax, so we work on skills that a fireman needs to do, such as counting to the 8th building that is ‘on fire’ so we can put it out or reading the ‘faxes’ he get about the emergencies. You will almost always be able to show your child how the best way to live their dreams is to do their best with their education. Once you establish the routine of doing their best, it will follow them throughout their lives.



3. Make a Plan

Let me be totally honest here, and you may not like to hear this, but it is 100% true. **If YOU don't make a goal and a plan on how to achieve it, NOTHING will ever, ever change.** It is up to you – THE PARENT – to make sure that a space, a goal, a plan and a way to follow up gets established. No matter how old your child is, they don't know how to do these tasks, otherwise they would be doing it. While this part can be simple, it is critical to your child's future to teach them how to achieve what they want. It does require commitment on your part – but once it is established, it won't take that much time.

You already created a space and you have sat down and talked with your child on their goals. They already know that you are serious now as well as that you care what they want. The next step is for you to create a plan on how to achieve their goals. Your child's input into how they think can they achieve their goal is always important regardless of their age, but you need to be the final decision as you have the experience that they don't have yet.



3. Make a Plan

Once you have a plan outline – *write it down and put it where you and your child can see it.* For my teenage sons, I now write out their school plan for 4 weeks at a time, with what they need to do day. This is somewhat flexible but the plan is there to look at every single day before you start to determine the best course of action. When I have a student who goes to school, we either use a paper or electronic agenda that they track of all their work due the next day along with upcoming tests and projects. We decide each day the order of what to work on and how much time it should take. I also try to establish time frames to work on each assignment. I find it helpful to have a time-frame when we are going to stop. Some students do very well with a timer so they know exactly when they are going to get a break. By knowing there is an end, the students procrastinate a lot less.



4. Check EACH and EVERY day
until your child's routine is
established

This step seems to be the absolutely hardest to accomplish for parents. However, if you want your child's education to improve you **MUST** do it! Don't just ask because they will tell you everything is going fine. Check their work, ask questions. Is there something you don't understand, for example, Algebra? Have them teach **YOU** how to do it. This simple step shows them many things: that you don't know everything; that you are willing to learn; that they can teach you something. Any concepts that they teach you will solidify the knowledge they have. Make sure you follow up each and every day. If your child is older, after 4 weeks they should start coming to you. If they are younger, you are going to have to help keep these routines established.



5. Keep in Touch with Your Child's Teachers

Along with checking everyday with your child, make it a routine to send your child's teacher(s) an email or notes and hold them accountable to answer. You need to be aware of what is expected of your child and what is coming up. If your child is in high school and you are told your child should be responsible for their own work, explain that you are helping them to establish good routines. This communication from the teacher should be a backup to make sure your child is recording in their agenda correctly, not to replace your child's recording assignments due. For parents, I suggest doing this on Sunday morning while your child is sharpening the pencils (from step #1). Also on Sunday, I take a few minutes and look ahead to see what is coming up and make a plan for the week.

