

MAKING SURE YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILD STARTS ON A PATH TOWARDS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

The elementary school years are when children develop learning habits that will help them throughout their educational careers. During these important years, there is an emphasis on reading, writing, and math skills which are the foundation for success across all subjects. Socially and emotionally, children are learning to take more responsibility and develop peer relationships.

What can I do to help my elementary school child start and stay on a path towards graduation?



- **Encourage learning** by communicating high, yet reasonable expectations for your child's education. Seek academic help for your child if needed.
- **Be involved in your child's education** by assisting with homework, attending school activities, volunteering, and staying informed about what they're learning in class.
- **Attend parent-teacher conferences** and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team meetings; work with teachers to understand and support goals and expectations for your child.
- **Make sure your child attends school regularly** and is on time and in school every day.
- **Talk to your child about school. Find out what they are doing in school and what they are learning on a daily basis. Help your child set and achieve goals**, both academically and socially, such as improving a grade, trying out for a sport, joining an activity, or earning a special reward. Remind them that working towards the goal is just as important as achieving it!
- **Encourage independence and responsibility.** Provide opportunities for your child to contribute at home—whether it's doing chores, caring for pets, or helping prepare for special occasions.
- **Help your child develop and maintain healthy relationships** with siblings and same-aged peers. Encourage them to practice resolving conflicts respectfully and repairing relationships when misunderstandings occur.
- **Provide opportunities for your child to participate** in school and school and neighborhood activities—such as Scouts, clubs, or recreational programs—to help them build connections and a sense of community. **Praise positive behaviors** by highlighting specific things your child is doing well. Celebrate progress.
- **If your child has an IEP**, ensure they are included alongside their peers in all areas of school life and that their academic goals align with the general curriculum. Stay involved by monitoring their progress and asking whether they're keeping pace with grade-level expectations.
- **Ensure your child has access to and is using the accommodations and assistive technology written in their Section 504 plan or IEP to support their success in school.** Teach your child to communicate their strengths, interests, needs, and supports that are helpful to them.
- **Be aware of signs of** bullying, learning challenges, or health issues that could affect your child's performance or happiness at school. Partner with your child and their school to create a supportive plan that promotes positive behavior and adapts the learning environment to better meet your child's needs.
- **Encourage healthy choice and practices** such as understanding the purpose of and taking medications that are prescribed, getting plenty of exercise and sleep, and making healthy food and drink choices.



Examples of Practical Ways to Support Your Child in Developing Independence

What can you do?	How can you do it?
Offer choices with clear boundaries.	- Encourage children to practice making thoughtful choices in everyday situations like selecting healthy meals and snacks or deciding how to manage their time between schoolwork, play, and rest. - "When would you like to do your homework, right after school, before dinner, or after?"
Talk through the potential results of choices (positive and negative)	- When your child makes a choice, discuss the result of that choice and whether they should have done anything differently. Verbally explain the result of that choice: - "You chose to do your homework before dinner so now you can go to your friend's house to play."
Help your child understand what they need to keep their body safe.	- Help your child learn to express their boundaries by encouraging them to say what feels okay and what doesn't. For example: - "I don't like when you stand so close to me." - "I'd rather play by myself today."
Allow your child to attend and encourage participation in IEP meetings and parent-teacher conferences	- Help your child recognize members of the IEP and their role in the meeting. - Before and during IEP meetings or parent-teacher conferences, involve your child by asking thoughtful questions about their school experience. This helps them reflect and advocate for themselves. For example: - "What's going well at school?" - "What's not going well?" - "What do you like?" - "What don't you like?"

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia 770-451-5484 or 800-229-2038 or www.p2pga.org

Georgia Department of Education, Division for Exceptional Children: <https://gadoe.org/special-education/>

Special Education Help Desk: 404-656-3963 or SPEDHelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us

Graduation Requirements

<https://apps.gadoe.org/SBOE/SBOE%20Rules/160-4-2-.48.pdf#search=graduation>

Career, Technical and Agricultural Education <https://gadoe.org/ctae>

Additional resources: Contact the Special Education Director for your school system.

Credits:

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)

PACER Center

US Department of Education (Ed.gov)

