

Top Tips - How to help your child successfully at home

1. Don't be the teacher yourself

Trying to be the teacher puts too much pressure on you and invites push-back from your child. Instead, be their helper, organiser and chief supporter so mistakes feel like part of a shared learning journey, and sometimes even a bit of fun.

2. You set the standard - be properly prepared

If you've agreed that work starts at 5pm, aim to be sitting down a few minutes before, organised, positive and ready to go. Children take their cue from you: if you're late, disorganised, rush the marking or aren't really engaged, they are unlikely to give their best either. So don't just arrive on time - look through the work beforehand, know what's coming and have everything ready. This shows your enthusiasm and commitment, which helps your child see that this time matters and should be taken seriously.

3. Don't be overly ambitious

A short, focused session each day with varied work, properly marked and fed back quickly, produces the best results. Expecting over an hour of work after school is hard to maintain and often leads to tired, lower-quality effort. "Little and often" works well - including at weekends.

4. Mark and give feedback quickly

Learning is most effective when marking and feedback happen soon after the work is done. Talking through mistakes while they're fresh, makes it easier for your child to understand what went wrong and what to do differently next time.

5. Use lots of praise and stay relaxed

Children perform best when they feel calm and confident, not stressed or worried. Unintentional parental stress and anxiety can easily be passed on, so keep your tone encouraging and positive. A confident, happy, relaxed child is much more likely to do well than one who is anxious.

6. Build strong habits around everyday life

Small daily habits matter. Keep screen time within sensible limits and model this yourself; if they see you on your phone constantly, it suggests that a high screen time is acceptable. Make sure they eat well, drink enough water and get good sleep, tired children don't learn or perform well. All of this is much easier if routines and good habits are built early.

7. Get involved - don't stand back

Most children enjoy their parents' attention, encouragement and praise. Sit with them when you can, show interest in what they're doing and be actively involved in their preparation rather than just checking in at the end.

8. Make preparation fun and follow the success cycle (see diagram below)

Try to keep the tone as light and friendly as possible. With vocabulary for example, mix in simple games alongside written tasks; these bring more of their known words to the front of their mind and make learning feel less like a chore. The success cycle (see diagram below), encapsulates what you should be aiming for. Anything that keeps things light-hearted and fun will support this cycle. Having a simple rewards system based on effort and good habits (e.g. sitting down on time, being ready, staying focused) rather than just results, and mixing activities with games will help keep motivation high.

9. Show them that not getting in isn't the end of the world

Help your child understand that life will not fall apart if they don't get into a particular school. Stress and tension are major reasons why children underperform relative to their ability. Gentle conversations and reassurance can reduce worry and fear, making it more likely they will perform well on the day.

10. Manage your own stress levels

It's natural to worry as a parent, but your stress can show itself in many subtle ways and your child will pick up on it. Use whatever helps you: routines, talking things through, looking after your own wellbeing - to keep your anxiety from spilling over onto them.

11. Don't jump into full 11 Plus papers too early

This is probably the biggest mistake we see. Children need strong core skills first, otherwise children will struggle. The following are the most common pitfalls:

- In **English**, slower readers tend to underperform in comprehension as they run out of time.
- In **Verbal Reasoning**, limited vocabulary leads to lost marks despite knowing the question type.
- In **Maths**, children with weak core skills struggle with timing and make lots of small errors on harder questions.
- In **Non-Verbal Reasoning**, poor concentration and weak attention to detail cause avoidable mistakes.

Our clear advice is to build core skills up to the required standard and only then move into full papers. Starting with papers and trying to fill gaps afterwards only really works for late starters who already have strong foundations.

The Success Cycle

Watch your child's self-esteem grow before your eyes

- Work should be valued for the effort made, not just for attainment.
- If a child lives with encouragement, they learn to be confident.
- If a child lives with praise, they learn to be appreciative.
- If a child lives with approval, they learn to like themselves.

The Success Cycle

Is possibly the most essential factor in ensuring progress.

Learning Street Coursework

