

Supporting Your Child in School

As the summer draws to a close, parents and kids are usually abuzz with feelings of excitement and anticipation as they prepare for the new school year. This year, however, those feelings may be more akin to anxiety and concern around the unknown. And that's understandable because, even in the most normal of times, each school year potentially brings about challenges for students and parents. Testing requirements change, homework gets more difficult, and the pressure to do well increases with each passing semester. Whether your child must continue learning from a distance or they're able to return to school grounds, your evolving role in their education is vital. It's important that you educate yourself about how kids learn, the challenges they face, and the signs that may indicate that they're struggling. As such, we encourage you to rely on your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help support you in your roles as a concerned parent and as an acting at-home teacher.

A lesson on learning styles

Your child's education doesn't occur only in a classroom setting and it doesn't end when the last bell rings each day. Much of it takes place at home, where they study, do homework, and toil away at projects. At home, *you're* their teacher, answering questions, supporting them through assignments, and reminding them about that science project that they "forgot" is due tomorrow. So, whether your child typically struggles with schoolwork or not, it's important that you're able to help them when needed. One way to do this is by first understanding *how* they learn, or their individual learning style. That way, even if you don't always know the answers, you can fall back on your child's learning style to present information in a manner that resonates with them.

There are several recognized learning styles. Often referred to as a *preference*, each style describes how someone receives, interprets, sorts, and saves information. These are the most common:

1. **Auditory:** Learns best by hearing, listening, and being read to aloud
2. **Visual:** Prefers images and diagrams, drawing, and watching videos
3. **Verbal:** Learns by reading books, writing essays, and conducting research
4. **Physical:** Prefers physical activity and learns best by doing and using sense of touch
5. **Logical:** Prefers logic, math, and reasoning, and using calculations, patterns, and making connections
6. **Social:** Learns and studies best in groups and classes, and likes sharing information and ideas with others
7. **Solitary:** Prefers to learn alone through self-study and to work through problems and assignments alone

Each person is different and typically prefers more than one style. Determine your child's learning style (and yours if you're curious) with this online assessment: www.learning-styles-online.com/inventory/questions.php

Spotting a struggling student

Kids encounter a lot each day that can get in the way of their education. From worrying about passing tests and getting good grades to bullying, social pressures, and coping with a learning disability, any number of things may cause them to struggle. Although you may be aware of the daily challenges your child faces, you may not always know when it's time to step in. According to VeryWellFamily.com, your child may be struggling in school if:

- They suddenly refuse to discuss school
- There's a major, abrupt change in their attitude toward school
- They begin having trouble sleeping or eating
- The amount of time spent on homework is excessive
- Their teacher expresses concern
- They begin misbehaving at school
- They receive low grades

Take note of these signs but try not to get discouraged if they resonate with you. Advocate for and encourage your child as best you can, and don't be afraid to reach out for help from teachers, school counselors, and other parents for guidance.

In these especially trying and uncertain times, we understand that you might need some extra help as the new school year approaches. If you would like education resources or more information on supporting your child in school, please reach out the EAP. Our counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help you and your family. The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to federal employees at no cost.

24 HOURS A DAY

800-222-0364

TTY: 888-262-7848

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