

# Preparing Your Child for College and Career

**Help your child develop a “growth mindset”.** Three decades of research strongly demonstrates that students who are taught that their intelligence and abilities are not “fixed” traits, but rather grow stronger with effort and practice, show greater gains in attitude, effort, achievement, and even intelligence!

*Dr. Carol Dweck, Mindsetworks.com*

**Let them struggle a little now.** If they struggle through challenging courses now, it may save them from having to struggle to make a living for the rest of their lives. Don't let them give up. They may not make an “A” in everything, but they will be learning foundational skills they need in their future course work. Challenges create an increase in dendrites (neural connectors) and synapses (where information transfers in the brain), even when you get answers wrong.

*Dr. Eric Jensen, Jensenlearning.com*

**Make sure your child reads.** Statistics demonstrate that children who score in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardized tests read an average of 40 minutes per day. Those who score in the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile read 20 minutes a day. Reading well is critical to academic success and is vital in all careers.

*Shannon Dipple, M.Ed., Primary-education-oasis.com*

**Ensure your child's homework time is uninterrupted.** Don't allow cell phones, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, texting, or instant message features on the computer during study time. “Multi-tasking” is really a myth. Your brain can truly focus on only one task at a time, and tending to more than one task requires a shift in concentration. Research demonstrates that the less time spent on social media, the higher the grade point average may be.

*Dr. Aryn Karpinski, <http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/facebook2009.jpg>*

**Praise your child for effort, thinking, and for tackling challenges.** “I am impressed by how hard you have worked on this” is an effective praise. Avoid phrases such as “You are so smart!” or “You are so good at math!” Praising *ability* may cause a child to avoid difficult tasks for fear of failing. Praising the *process* promotes a growth mindset and encourages them to struggle through difficulties and take on new challenges.

*The Right Way to Praise Your Kids, WebMd.com and How to Praise Your Kids, Parents.com*

**Provide experiences that build strong STEM skills.** Enroll your child in challenging Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics courses or extracurricular programs and activities. In Louisiana, STEM skills are in high demand. Current research demonstrates that for every worker with a background in STEM knowledge and skills, there are three job openings across the state waiting to be filled. STEM skills help ensure your child will have more opportunities in the future.

*[changetheequation.org/stem-vital-signs](http://changetheequation.org/stem-vital-signs)*

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