

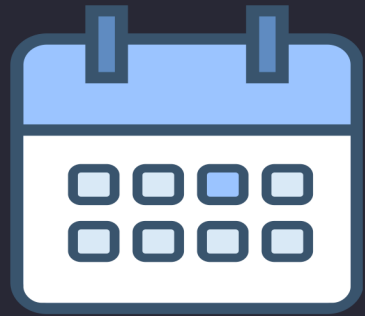
# TALKING WITH YOUR STUDENT ABOUT GRADES

Talking with your student about grades can be a loaded topic, that quickly turns into a fight. Use these tips to help foster a more productive & positive discussion.

## Begin Early

Talk with your student about grades before the report cards come out. This allows your student to know what your expectations are, and what they should be working towards. In these conversations you should communicate positive expectations and expect success out of them.

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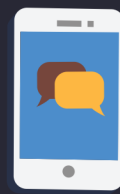
## Reward Effort, not Achievement

If a student is only rewarded when they earn a good grade then they can become overly focused on the grade itself and not learning. If you reward the habits that make a student a good learner, then good grades (and work habits) can follow. For example, reward your student when they study really hard for a test rather than the grade on the test itself. Another good example would be to reinforce turning in a homework assignment, rather than just the culminating grade of a class. These skills are a reflection of the students effort, and will serve the student much better in the long run.

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You should talk with the school regularly, but communication is especially important when your student has lower than expected grades. Before talking with the student touch base with the teacher to find out what is causing the low grades. Is your student not turning in their homework? Are they not understanding a particular topic? These are different issues and can be handled in different ways.

## Talk with the Teacher



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## Talk With Your Student



When discussing a report card, listen more than talk. Ask your student a lot of questions, "how do you feel about these grades?," "do you understand the material?," "what are you proud of?," "what is a goal you have for your next report card?." Check to see if they have a realistic understanding of their grades. Students may think they have only forgotten homework once, but if it is happening every week then their perception could be part of the problem.

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## Focus on Solutions

When discussing grades, create a plan for improving or continuing good work habits. When the focus is on solutions and the future, the conversation becomes more productive and less negative.

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Rather than just taking away privileges, think of consequences that relate to applicable work habits. If the student is not completing their work, maybe they have to spend an hour everyday without electronics doing their homework. Or maybe they have to spend part of a weekend with a tutor. Figure out what will work for your family and what ties into your student's particular challenges.

## Natural Consequences



Check to see if you have realistic expectations of your student. Not every student is going to have straight A's. High expectations are essential to student success, but when they are unrealistic they may cause stress or anxiety. While talking about grades, if you find yourself becoming angry or emotional, take a step back and a deep breathe.

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## Look Inward

Remember that grades are not everything and that your children are not their grades. Separate the grades from the student. For example you can tell a student "I love you, and I don't like this report card." The most important thing is that your student does learn, and if they progress that is a good thing, and if they are not doing as well offer to support them.

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## Moving Forward

