

# Parents Matter

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## Finishing the School Term Strong

The last six weeks of the winter term school can be academically demanding for many students. The newness of the year has worn off, the work load is increasing, the days are becoming shorter, and many of our children are tired. For most students, the ability to stay on top of class work and homework assignments for the next few weeks will determine their marks for the term. To help your child finish the term strong, consider some of the following tips:

**Check in with your child and review assignments.** One missing assignment or poor test score is not necessarily a problem, but if you see a problematic pattern developing make a point to talk to your child about it. It's best to intervene now before it's too late.

**Ensure that your child is getting enough rest.** Pediatricians are now emphasizing the need for teens to keep a fairly consistent bedtime. The idea that we can burn the candle at both ends all week and then catch up on rest by sleeping late on the weekends is no longer believed to be true. Help your child, regardless of his or her age, to develop good sleeping habits.

**Stay healthy.** Ask your children to wash their hands when they come home to reduce the number of germs brought into your house. Offer your children healthy meals, and make sure they drink plenty of water. Just last week my son missed a week of school and is now wading in make-up work. We thought he had the flu, and two days later he fainted. After a battery of tests, we learned that thankfully, he was simply dehydrated. It was a powerful reminder that young, growing bodies, especially those of student athletes, need rest and plenty of water to keep them going strong.

**Take advantage of light homework nights.** When your student has a night with little homework, encourage him to take advantage of it by reviewing past assignments, especially ones where he missed problems or failed to understand concepts. Taking time to review along the way will make studying for finals much easier.

**Encourage your child to self-assess.** Help your child see where her trouble spots are, and then coach her on how she can use resources available to help her. Is there a tutor available? Perhaps a study group will help. Maybe you have a neighbor with an older child who can spend some time going over some of the concepts.

**When necessary, communicate with the teacher.** If you see a problem in your child's performance, encourage him to talk to his teacher. Help him think through questions to ask the teacher to help get back on track. And when appropriate, e-mail or call the teacher yourself. It's always good to encourage our children to be self advocates. Yet there are times that as parents we need to intervene and communicate our perceptions. If we think of our children's teachers as our teammates instead of adversaries, we can work together to help our children be academically successful.

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### Another Parent Tip From...

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