

10 WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILD REVISE



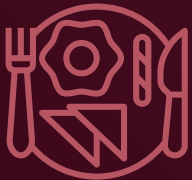
Exams can be a stressful time for both students and parents.

Emotions run high, and the uncertainty of exam performance looms large. Keen not to say the wrong thing and to offer any support they can, parents can play a huge role in their child's mental health and academic achievement ahead of exams season. Here are 10 things they can do to help:



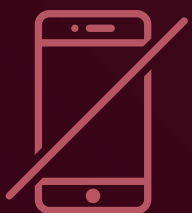
1. Encourage Good Sleep Habits

Parents should set a regular bedtime for their child to ensure that they get the recommended 8-10 hours sleep. Getting plenty of sleep during exam season is particularly important, as sleep deprivation is linked to a reduction in concentration and memory. Research has shown that sleep allows the brain to form new connections between brain cells, as well as prioritise the information we care about. This way, when it comes to the exam, the most important information can be recalled.



2. Ensure Their Child Eats Breakfast

We've all been told that "breakfast is the most important meal of the day". But despite everyone knowing this, research has shown that over 60% of teenage boys and 70% of teenage girls regularly skip breakfast. Parents need to encourage their child to eat breakfast as one particular study found that children who skipped breakfast or only had an energy drink performed worse in attention and memory tasks, when compared to those who had eaten breakfast. For more information on the psychological benefits of breakfast, click here.



3. Minimise Distractions

When their child is revising, parents can help by minimising the number of distractions available. Many young people seem to believe that they can efficiently multi-task, such that they can complete their revision, whilst also being on their mobile phone.

However, multi-tasking is actually impossible, and the mere presence of a phone is enough to cause a 20% decline in performance. Attempts to multi-task instead cause errors to be made and productivity to be decreased, as time is wasted switching from one task to another. For an explanation of why students should put their phone away whilst revising, check out this infographic.



4. Get Them to Revise Using Retrieval Practice

Retrieval practice, which requires students to generate an answer to a question, is one of the most effective revision strategies. It can include answering past papers, quizzes and multiple-choice tests. Click here for topic lists, past papers and mark schemes for your child. Getting children to recall previously learnt knowledge creates stronger memory traces, increasing the likelihood that information is stored in their long-term memory. Click here for tips on how to use retrieval practice.



5. Get Them to Teach You the Material

Parents should encourage their child to teach them their revision material, as this improves memory and recall. Teaching others, also known as the protégé effect, enhances children's understanding - preparing to explain the material to others helps them organise and clarify their thoughts and understanding.



6. Minimise Procrastination

75% of students consider themselves to be procrastinators, whilst 50% carry this out to a level that is seen as problematic. Encouraging your child to let you look after their mobile phone or getting them out of bed at a set time to revise is a good way to reduce procrastination. Research suggest that, if children concentrate on revision for just a few minutes, the brain's desire to see tasks through to completion takes over. This is known as the Zierganik Effect.



7. Provide Motivation

Providing motivation that encourages your child to revise can be difficult. However, research has shown that emphasising how useful the content that they are revising does increase motivation. Therefore, parents can motivate their child to revise by showing them how they've come to use the content they learnt at school later in life.



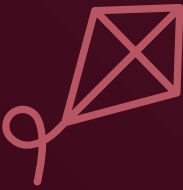
8. Have High Expectations

Recent research, which reviewed 37 studies, found high expectation to be one of the most important things a parent can do to help improve their child's grades. High parental expectations help children believe that they can achieve and encourages them to work harder. However, high parental expectations need to be coupled with support, which allows a child to develop resilience and better overcome setbacks.



9. Make Sure They Get Fresh Air Every Day

Parents should ensure that their child does some exercise outside every day during revision. Research has shown that going for a short walk, for just 12 minutes, improved students' mood, even if they knew they had a daunting task to complete when they returned. Exercise has also been proven to increase concentration levels, such that they were 21% higher on days of exercise.



10. Avoid All Work and No Play

Revision can be a stressful time for students. Therefore, parents need to ensure that their child is setting aside some time to relax and unwind. Not only do high levels of stress have a negative impact on a child's well-being, but also on the quality of their revision. A bit of TV, socialising and sport are actually important ingredients towards exams success.

FINAL THOUGHT

Whilst exam season will always be a stressful time for students and parents alike, hopefully some stress can be alleviated through the strategies explained above, and exam season will become a little more bearable for all involved.

Good luck to all parents and students!

