



## How to Stay Current Regarding Your Secondary School Age Child's Progress

Has this ever happened to you? You ask your child, "How was school today?", and your child responds, "Okay." You ask your child, "Do you have homework?", and the response is, "No, I finished it in class." Both questions are answered with quick, short answers and then the conversation is over. You want to know more about your child's progress in school, yet with the short responses given by your child, you know no more about the school day's events than you did before you posed the questions. Given the short responses offered by your child, how can you possibly gauge how your child is doing in school? Maybe a change is needed in the questions you pose. **Review your child's assignments and grades on the school website daily and use that information as conversation starters. Look on the website for events taking place at school and use those events as conversation starters.**

Here is a list of examples of conversation starters you can ask instead of the typical questions, "How was school today?", or "Do you have homework?" Having as much information as possible before you approach the subject can help extend the conversation with your child beyond one word answers.

1. Events--I see Homecoming festivities are coming up. How are you going to be involved? I see Friday is School Color Day. Do you need a shirt that color? Will you need anything else from us in order to participate?
2. Long Term Assignments--I see science projects are due in 3 weeks. What are you going to do for your project? Can you make a list of supplies you will need to finish it, and I can take you to buy supplies this weekend if you are available?
3. Grades--That Chemistry test must not have been what you studied. Will there be an opportunity for a retest? Did you have the information you were tested on in your notes or in a study guide? I see there is a teacher help session for this class. Why don't you stop by there tomorrow?
4. Grades--You did great on your Chemistry test, and that brought your average up. Way to go! What did you do differently when you studied for this test?
5. Events--What have you heard about the school play? I saw your friend, Jason has the lead? What night are you and your friends going to attend?
6. Events—I see your class is going on a field trip. What will you be seeing and doing there?
7. Behaviors—What happened that upset you so badly in Mrs. X's class today? I will be meeting with the principal in the morning and would like to know your version of what happened before the meeting. Tell me exactly what happened.
8. Homework—I see you have a test Friday in Algebra. How are you preparing for that test?
9. Interim Reports—Algebra seems to be the only subject giving you trouble. Did you expect an interim in Algebra? It says you have not been turning in homework. Is the homework too difficult? I would like to go over your Algebra homework with you before you go to bed. Just let me know when it is finished.
10. Technology— There is nothing worse than not having everything work when you need it. I want to make certain you have everything you need. I saw an APP for help with scheduling homework. Look at it, and then let's talk about whether you would like us to purchase it. What about chargers for your devices? Do you have enough chargers for all your devices, or do you need extra? What about the ink cartridges in your printer? What are the levels? Let's make a list to check monthly so that I know what you need, and you don't have to worry about not having the supplies you need.

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