

Keeping Track of Progress

To help your student do his or her best in school, find out all you can about how he or she is doing now. Final course grades give you a general sense of your student's progress. However, they come too late in the year for you to do anything in case your student needs help. You also need to actively monitor interim grades and scores. Important decisions will be made about your student's program based upon scores and grades. Should he be advanced, or held back? Would she benefit from a special program? Is he eligible for a scholarship? What courses should she take next year?

Find out how your student is doing on tests, papers and other assignments. By doing so, you not only put yourself in a position to help your student, but you also can be an informed part of the decision-making process. Ask your teen when he or she has papers due, tests, and other assignments in each course. Follow up to see if the student is preparing for the test or assignment, and has completed it. Then check the results. Encourage the student to log or chart the results. Ask to see the work. Not just the grade, but also the kinds of items missed or errors made. Read the teacher's comments carefully. They will provide important clues regarding improvement. Balance your comments. If your teen has done his or her best, offer praise and encouragement first. Provide feedback as to what you perceive as the strengths of his or her work. This lays the groundwork for any tough work ahead. When there are problems, provide appropriate feedback. Most students do want to do their best and parents do make a difference.

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