

Ready to Learn

Give your elementary schooler the tools needed for learning

A carpenter would never come to a job site without a box of tools. He knows that he can't do his best work without the proper tools for the task.

That's a good way to think about how your child can do her best in school. She needs to show up with the right tools to do the job. Here are a few:

- Enough sleep. Doctors say that children between the ages of seven and 12 need 10 to 12 hours of sleep per day. Without proper rest, she won't be able to concentrate on the multiplication tables or her history lesson. So do some math yourself. When does your child need to leave for school in the morning? When does she need to get up to be ready at that time? Ten to 12 hours before that is when she needs to go to bed.
- A healthy breakfast. Cars can't run without fuel, and kids' brains are no different. Many studies show that children who eat breakfast do better in class, earning better grades and test scores. They are better able to focus. And they have fewer behavior problems. And don't worry if your child doesn't like "breakfast food." Peanut butter on a tortilla or a slice of pizza will give her a great start.
- High expectations. When you believe your child can do her best, she'll believe it, too. So send her off with a big smile and she'll have the confidence she needs to tackle another day.

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