

# Tips to Promote Academic Skills at Home Elementary/Middle School Students

---

## **Plan academics during your child's day:**

- Engage in typical morning routines, chores, meal times, and nighttime routines.
- Use visual timers or schedules to help your child independently track their progress with academic activities for the day. Review the schedule each morning with your child so they know what to expect.
- Schedule time for each academic area (e.g. reading for 20 minutes, math for 20 minutes) in a communal area (e.g. dining room table). Follow with preferable activities such as play time or snack. All screens (e.g. TV, phone, iPad) should be put away during academic time.
- For some children, breaking work intervals into smaller chunks of time with planned breaks in between can be helpful
- It is important to also include “special” activities such as art, music, and recess (free play).
- Try to keep nap time (for young children) and mealtimes the same time as it is in their day-care or school-based setting.
- Maintain typical sleep schedules and screen time limitations.
- Promote positive behaviors and following the daily schedule by giving praise and end of day rewards such as a special game, extra screen time, or favorite meal. Give your child reminders that as soon as they complete “school” they get their “end of day” reward.

If your child needs increased monitoring during this time, consider using an approach called the **Window of Opportunity**:

- Tell your child they have 30-40 minutes to complete a specific academic activity. Ensure that the time you give them is **more** time than it actually takes to complete the desired activity.
- Ensure that the activity is completed in a communal area of the home (e.g. dining room table) and that the materials are set up for your child.

- If they complete the activity within the desired timeframe, they can receive a reward or special privilege and may have access to that reward for the remainder of time they have left.
- If they do not complete the activity in the desired timeframe, they do not get access to their special reward or privilege, but they can try again with the next activity.

## Where can parents find resources online?

### Reading help:

- Below are some programs to help children with reading (PreK- 12<sup>th</sup> grade):

Program	Grade	Format	Cost	Comments
Headsprout	K-4	Computer-based	\$190 for full program, free trial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child can do mostly on own</li> <li>• Game-like format</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.Headsprout.com">www.Headsprout.com</a></li> </ul>
Teach your child to read well - Maloney Method	K-6	Manual-based	\$100 for all materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 lessons per book</li> <li>• Very detailed</li> <li>• Levels 1A and 1B may require some training</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.Maloneymethod.com">www.Maloneymethod.com</a></li> </ul>
Funnix Reading	preK-3	Computer and manual	About \$50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 220 lessons</li> <li>• Starts off very basic</li> <li>• Good value</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.funnix.com">www.funnix.com</a></li> </ul>
HELPS program	1-12	Printed paper	Free - just need to print materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of material to print</li> <li>• Really good for a free program</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.helpsprogram.org/programs_parents.php">http://www.helpsprogram.org/programs_parents.php</a></li> </ul>
REWARDS	4-12	Manual-based	Varies by program (About \$100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper level students enjoy this</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.voyagersopris.com/literacy/rewards/overview">https://www.voyagersopris.com/literacy/rewards/overview</a></li> </ul>

### Free story times and activities:

- Check out your local library’s website for free online story times like these from the Ann Arbor District Library:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/AADLdotORG/videos?view=2&flow=grid>

**Free lesson planning and daily schedules:**

- Khan Academy Kids is offering student schedules by age with free, accessible content and materials for different academic areas

<https://tinyurl.com/quz12q3>

**Science experiments for hands-on learning:**

- Free science experiments you can try at home with minimal supervision

<https://sciencebob.com/category/experiments/>

**Free math worksheets by grade level:**

- Home School Math: <https://www.homeschoolmath.net/worksheets/>
- Khan Academy Google doc with links to math lesson by grade level:

<https://tinyurl.com/tg5hb5b>

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Teryn P. Bruni, PhD, BCBA  
Plain language editor: Karelyn Munro, BA

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 03/2020