

Nov 23, 2009

### **Talk To Your Child About Report Cards: Ten Tips**

Whether you are pleasantly surprised or very disappointed with the first report card, you'll want to have a discussion about the results, both with your child and with the teacher. The report card postmortem is part of a larger support strategy that makes you an active participant in your child's education.

Make the most out of your report card chat. Here are some guidelines to ensure that it goes as smoothly as possible, especially if you are in the very disappointed category.

1. Sit down together. Don't talk about the report card in the garage while you child is lacing up his rollerblades.
2. Remove distractions and focus on each other—TV off, no Game Boy or iPod!
3. Make a statement of intent. Tell your child up front that you need to have a talk about the report card.
4. Start by saying something positive. You can get off on the right foot by highlighting something positive about the report card, no matter how trivial.
5. Review learning strengths. Say something like, "You are still doing great in math, which is awesome."
6. Recognize the struggle (1). Listen to your child, and include his or her thoughts, comments, and worries in the discussion.
7. Recognize the struggle (2). Say something like, "I see that you're still having trouble with spelling."
8. Listen to the complaints. Children who have the most issues are usually the most vocal.
9. End with optimism. Make a comment like this: "There's still plenty of time for improvement, and we'll work together to make the necessary changes."
10. End with a plan. Identify the following before you leave the table: your role in helping with school, your child's role, and what the next steps are.