

# The A B C's of a Successful School Year

## By Rita Spain

As the end of August approaches, the excitement of a new school year begins to build! New friends, new teachers, new learning! Here are a few thoughts to help ensure that your elementary school child has a successful school year.

**Attitude** - Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. It is self-discipline and hard work. This can be accomplished by showing an interest in your child's progress at school, asking them to share what they did and learned at school that day, helping them with reading and homework and staying in touch with teachers and the school staff. Remind them, repeatedly, of how important their education is and that it is their responsibility to learn. Remember that children behave in a manner that is consistent with parental conception. Keep positive about your child's progress, encourage them and take an interest in their learning.

**Be Realistic** - It is important to express high but realistic expectations for your child's achievement. Set standards that are appropriate for your child's ability, age, maturity, strengths and talents. If your child is experiencing difficulties with a concept, subject or learning in general, discuss this with your child's teacher. Be available to help your child with their homework. If, however, you find that tempers get short and it is difficult to study with your child, look into hiring a tutor. Check local newspapers, high schools or with your child's teacher for names of tutors.

**Consistency** –At the beginning of the year develop a homework routine with your child and stick to it! Find a time that works best for you and your child to complete homework. This may be immediately after school, for others it is after supper and for some it is in the mornings. Also, find a quiet place for your child to study. It should be well lit, have a good surface to write on, and be equipped with pencils, pens, crayons, a dictionary, a thesaurus and a calculator. Communicate that homework has to be completed and there is no choice in this matter. Offer help when it is needed –remember that you are the helper, not the doer. Ask that your child show you their completed homework. Finally, set a consequence for incompleteness of homework. In a Harvard study, it was found that homework is a feature of school success because, in elementary students, it develops critical learning skills and, for students of all ages, it helps to develop persistence, diligence and the ability to delay gratification.

The new school year will soon be upon us. Have fun and enjoy a successful school year!

### CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism,  
he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,  
he learns to fight.

If a child lives with shame,  
he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,  
he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with ridicule,  
he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with encouragement,  
he learns confidence.

If a child lives with fairness,  
he learns justice.

If a child lives with security,  
he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,  
he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,  
he learns to find love in the world.