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Helping your child learn importance of academics

School is now in full swing across Georgia and many parents are wondering how to help their children do their best.

According to Georgia's Partnership for Reform in Science and Mathematics (PRISM), parents are the most influential people in the academic success of a child.

This is good news, but many wonder how they can make a positive impact when they aren't experts in the subjects their children are studying, especially in the areas of science and mathematics.

Suggestions to help your children reach set goals include:

Be resourceful. Often parents feel like they are not knowledgeable on subjects their child may be learning and are therefore unable to help their child with schoolwork. They should seek out resources that can help them provide assistance to their children. Help may be as close as the local library, the Internet, school or community organization. By being resourceful and seeking out expert information and assistance, parents both help their child and reinforce the importance of schoolwork along with emphasizing the importance of how to gain assistance for future challenges.

Open a dialogue. Don't wait for a conference to talk with the teacher about a child's progress. Students will be more successful if parents have an open dialogue with their children, teachers and

school administrators. Asking questions about what is being taught at school, a child's educational track, goals, struggles and more would give parents the knowledge they need to help their child. A good relationship with a child's teacher will ensure that you both are supporting the child's educational and developmental needs.

Communicate that Science and Mathematics are important. Georgia's student achievement scores fall seriously behind the rest of the country in science and mathematics. Parents should show children how science and mathematics are used in their lives each day to increase interest and relevancy. From the kitchen to the family car, balancing a checkbook and figuring out the discount on the latest CD purchase—science and mathematics surround us and enrich our lives in many ways.

Encourage challenging Science and Mathematics courses. All students need to be proficient in science and mathematics in order to be successful as adults. Even if a child doesn't foresee college in his or her future, it is important that he or she take challenging coursework in these areas in order to meet the demands in today's workplace as well as pass the high school exit exam. Parents should talk with their child and their teachers to help decide what courses are appropriate at their grade level.