



The Learning Habit: A Groundbreaking Approach to Homework and Parenting that Helps Our Children Succeed in School and Life

Stephanie Donaldson-Pressman , Rebecca Jackson , Robert Pressman

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A groundbreaking approach to building learning habits for life, based on a major new study revealing what works – and what doesn't

Life is different for kids today. Between standardized testing, the Common Core Curriculum, copious homework assignments, and seemingly endless amounts of “screen time,” it’s hard for kids – and parents – to know what’s most essential. How can parents help their kids succeed – not just do well “on the test” -- but develop the learning habits they’ll need to thrive throughout their lives?

This important and parent-friendly book presents new solutions based on the largest study of family routines ever conducted. *The Learning Habit* offers a blueprint for navigating the maze of homework, media use, and the everyday stress that families with school-age children face; turning those “stress times” into opportunities to develop the eight critical skills kids will need to succeed in college and in the highly competitive job market of tomorrow – skills including concentration and focus, time management, decision-making, goal-setting, and self-reliance. Along with hands-on advice and compelling real-life case studies, the book includes 21 fun family challenges for parents and kids, bringing together the latest research with simple everyday solutions to help kids thrive, academically and beyond.

The Learning Habit: A Groundbreaking Approach to Homework and Parenting that Helps Our Children Succeed in School and Life Details

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From Reader Review **The Learning Habit: A Groundbreaking Approach to Homework and Parenting that Helps Our Children Succeed in School and Life** for online ebook

Liz says

This is an interesting book about raising children to be independent learners who have the stick-to-it-iveness to tackle the tough stuff in life. I don't think it's "groundbreaking" (as advertised by the subtitle), but it is full of good, common-sense advice, along with a few new ideas that even seasoned parents will appreciate. I'd definitely recommend this to my children as they raise my grandchildren.

Ro Laberee says

This is the first of three books I have read this summer on how we (adults and kids) learn, and how the internet is profoundly changing our ability to learn....really learn, that is.

The content in these books quakes my soul and has been so disruptive that I've been unable to write about it. At last I am here, fingers poised over the keyboard, finally ready to distill the content, one book at a time.

This is a review of **The Learning Habit**. With plans to read two other books on this general topic, I eased in with this one first. I had read it three years ago. It scared me, so I tucked it away. *Hmmm*. But, as my concerns about digital communication and its impact on our ability to think deeply and to focus have continued to grow, I pulled this book back out and sat and read. Again.

Written in 2013, *The Learning Habit* is a book reporting on the results of the largest study on the digital lives and routines of American children and their families of its kind. *The Learning Habit* examines how children spend their time online and it looks for connections to performance in school and levels of social anxiety in children. It should scare any conscious parent.

This quote from a **very** successful game developer will cue you in on one of the central themes of this book: *The goal of developers is to make the most complex, most captivating, most addictive games they can. I don't let my children play video games for precisely that reason. I don't want my kids spending time gaming, when they could be playing a sport or reading a book.*"

Among many other disturbing facts, *The Learning Habit Study*, which is filled with multiple charts (I love charts!) and with great research, found that children who game more than 90 minutes a day are twice as likely to have social problems. The book demonstrates how social media is many things but that increasing true socialization among kids and teens is **NOT** one of them. It demonstrates how kids are increasingly able to waste up to **10 hours per day online** using iPhones and computers and internet-enabled tablets, doing very little productive work, but are **not able to sit still and read a book for 10 minutes**. There is a connection.

If your children are young, please read this book. It is probably a book more geared toward parents of young children/elementary school-aged children. It is filled with great advice for parents; it does not merely excoriate electronic entertainment. It contains step-by-step guidelines for how to set limits, how to make sure

the time your child spends online is productive, and how to partner with them in their lives online, before it is too late. It is filled with case studies, time management techniques, focus checklists, and helpful homework approaches.

Read it. This is a book that truly matters.

Albert Hong says

This was very readable and practical. The case studies were striking and concrete images of parenting well and parenting poorly. Pretty convicting in terms of calling out my "enabling" parenting.

We've already implemented some more "empowering" parenting with the kids and the initial results are very positive. Increased responsibility (along with some tears).

I'm always interested in hearing how other parents do this stuff, but I haven't really picked up a book since the kids were little. This was a helpful reminder that I can always get better as a parent and it provided good, research-backed suggestions for how to improve.

Jesse says

I loved the eight skills to success for children. Even though it's for parents to discipline their child, I'm using it to discipline myself haha.

I know I'll keep referring back because I want to try out the family challenges on the children I teach and babysit. There are 21 fun games you can play and they give the child perspective and responsibility. It's fun and children love to have fun!

Vanessa says

An excellent thought provoking and motivating examination of some impressive data. Lots of ideas that can be implemented by a wide variety of families, including my own homeschoolers. The section on media consumption is particularly shocking and provoked much discussion in our home.

Beth says

This book focuses on helping parents help their children to develop strong learning habits. Authors think that parents are not responsible for teaching children academic content - but in helping children develop the ability to work and think independently.

Authors think that some schools are going overboard on amount of homework assigned (and other research indicates that amount of homework in elementary school doesn't predict later success). Kids need to learn the

academics - but they also learn by exercise, helping out around the house, free play, and clubs/teams. It's got to be balanced - and with balance, kids learn to take responsibility for themselves.

I appreciated their suggestions for cultivating learning habits and was interested in their reports of what other parents are doing was interesting.

Megan says

Terrifying. I'm never having kids. But also, if I did, I'd be very glad that I'd read this book! Highly recommend for all parents, and as a teacher, I have taken a lot of advice from it as well. I hope the information from these studies will reach far and wide and parents will start getting back to routines, family time, limited technology, etc, because wow, today's kids need it.

Jim Robles says

I did not find anything that I disagree with, but telling me things that my wife already knew when we started child-rearing is not "groundbreaking!" On the other hand, it does work (or at least it did for our two children).

There is also a great deal (see communication) that was part of training at The Boeing Company in the 1980s. Good stuff? Yes! Groundbreaking? Not quite.

Lamentably there are many who would benefit from reading this. Something has been lost, and we need to recover it.

The fifty-fourth book I have finished this year.

Alex Whatton says

If you search the web for research and like the numbers alongside the advice, then this book is for you. I have already set-up new rules in my house and I currently have a 2.5yo and a 3m old! I will be looking at my dog-eared pages often in the next few years.

Kimberley Moran says

I got great ideas from this book. Sometimes the case studies felt dated but if you look beyond that there is so much to use.

Maria says

Loved this book! It was an easy to read, a practical approach, and supported their conclusions with research.

Their empowerment parenting dovetails nicely with the Love and Logic approach to parenting.

Karen says

Excellent description of how to be a successful individual. Although the book is about homework, the learning habits are spelled out and if followed - success will be yours! This book is so packed full of information you must read it and then read it again.

Jenny says

Just finished reading and I've already started trying techniques from this book. I checked it out from the library, but I plan to buy a copy so I can go back and reference it often.

Grace says

I picked up *The Learning Habit* in hopes of gaining some insight as to how to help parents help their kids how to study. It's part of my job as a tutor to make sure the kids do well, and the parents are part of that.

This is an interesting book with it's approach to the parents role in life. They talk about how parents can help their children acquire long term skills, and not the quick fix to an A. They approach this in a very no-nonsense way, yet full of sympathy and understanding for both parents and the kids.

They don't promise it will be easy. In fact, it forces both parents and children to take a hard look at their behaviours and habits -- and change. They give the family tips on how to lessen their addiction to media use, toughen their resolve and focus, showing parents how to help their children become independent, fully functional, and mature in their own rights.

I can honestly say I know of a lot of parents that would take issue with many of the things they say. They are called helicopter parents, and they tend to baby their children well past the infancy stage. These researchers note that this is enabling behaviour of the parents that suppresses their children's ability to grow and mature. To them this means:

- Defining rules and guidelines around bedtime and media and sticking to them.
- Rewarding for effort, not achievements, and only doing so honestly. (Doing so under every circumstance reduces the child's ability to recognise that hard work can get them through even the toughest things.)
- Make learning a daily habit, not another crappy task to rush through.
- Build skills of focus, grit, and confidence through hard work, not instant gratification.
- Communicate with the child like they are a miniature adult; don't be condescending.

I took issue with only two concepts that they brought up. The first is that they would leave teaching to the licensed and trained teachers. I disagree with this because I learnt far more from the adults around me, life, and myself than any teacher ever taught me. I fully believe that anyone can teach what they know (they may not be good at it), and parents should definitely try to help their children understand academic concepts -- you never know when the parent might be able to explain it in a way their child actually gets it.

As a corollary to this concept, and the second thing I take issue with, is that they also talk about setting up a homework timing rule. They define the time as 10 - 20 minutes for a first grader, and for every grade after that add 10 minutes a day for the total time. It works like this:

You would work for a certain set amount of time on your homework (as defined by your grade level) and that is it. If you aren't done, you aren't done. You turn it in unfinished.

That may seem all fine and well, but grades are based on the number of points you get on a paper. If a student consistently does this to build confidence and focus as they claim, but is consistently turning in unfinished assignments, then their grade will suffer somewhat. How is that supposed to make the kid feel? Or reflect on their report cards and college entrance marks?

I get that it is supposed to help a kid work on their focus and confidence to do the homework in a defined time -- and they are rewarded with being able to do other activities without a care -- but it makes me wonder how this works out in the long run. The authors focused on the increased ability of first and second graders to focus when this is applied, but they did not talk about someone in 8th grade that hasn't had this sort of structure before.

All in all, though, it was a very interesting book with lots of great insight. Part sociology, part psychology, and definitely recommended for parents, teachers, tutors, and students who want to get serious about their academic studies to read.

Jodi says

Probably 4.5. Some great ideas. My only issue is that they do not tell you how to accomplish some of these ideas when you have multiple children/ young infants who need attention at same time as older children.
