

Family Strategies for Supporting At-Risk Students

Purpose:

This handout provides families with **practical strategies** to support at-risk students academically, emotionally, and behaviorally. A strong home-school partnership plays a crucial role in student success and well-being.

1. Understanding At-Risk Students

At-risk students may struggle with **behavioral, academic, emotional, or social challenges** that affect their success in school.

✓ Common Risk Factors:

- Struggles with **academic performance** (failing grades, lack of motivation).
 - **Behavioral concerns** (aggression, defiance, rule-breaking).
 - **Emotional distress** (anxiety, depression, social withdrawal).
 - **Family or environmental challenges** (instability, trauma, substance abuse).
 - **Peer-related difficulties** (bullying, isolation, negative influences).
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2. Creating a Supportive Home Environment

✓ Encourage Open Communication

- Have **daily check-ins** to discuss your child's thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
- Validate emotions and **avoid criticism or judgment**.
- Encourage your child to express concerns **about school, friendships, or teachers**.

✓ Establish Consistent Routines

- Set **regular bedtimes, mealtimes, and study periods** to create stability.
- Provide a **quiet, organized space** for homework and school activities.
- Reinforce **healthy habits** (exercise, nutrition, sleep) to improve mental well-being.

✓ Promote Positive Behavior

- Recognize and reward **small achievements** and positive choices.
- Model **respectful communication and conflict resolution skills**.

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- Establish clear **expectations and consequences** for behavior at home and school.
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3. Strengthening School-Home Collaboration

✔ Engage with Teachers & Counselors

- Attend **parent-teacher conferences** and maintain ongoing communication.
- Work together on **individualized behavior and academic support plans**.
- Seek **school resources** (tutoring, counseling, mentorship programs).

✔ Advocate for Your Child's Needs

- If needed, request an **evaluation for additional services** (IEP, 504 Plan, special education support).
 - Discuss possible **accommodations** to help your child succeed.
 - Work with school staff on **problem-solving strategies** for ongoing concerns.
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4. Providing Emotional & Behavioral Support

✔ Encourage Emotional Regulation

- Teach deep breathing, mindfulness, or **journaling techniques** to manage stress.
- Help your child identify **triggers and coping strategies** for frustration and anxiety.
- Model healthy ways to **express and manage emotions**.

✔ Recognize When Professional Help is Needed

- If behaviors persist, seek **counseling, therapy, or mental health services**.
 - Contact **school-based or community mental health programs** for additional support.
 - If safety concerns arise, notify the **school counselor or administrator immediately**.
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5. Encouraging Academic Success

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✔ Monitor Progress & Provide Support

- Review **homework, grades, and assignments** regularly.
- Set **short-term academic goals** and break tasks into smaller steps.
- Offer praise and encouragement for **effort, not just results**.

✔ Encourage a Growth Mindset

- Teach that **failure is a learning opportunity**, not a reason to give up.
 - Use phrases like, *“You haven’t mastered it yet, but you’re improving.”*
 - Support **resilience and perseverance** in overcoming school challenges.
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6. Responding to Crisis Situations

✔ Know the Warning Signs of Crisis

- Sudden changes in mood, withdrawal from activities.
- Talk of **self-harm, hopelessness, or extreme anger**.
- Increased **aggression, risk-taking behavior, or substance use**.

✔ Take Immediate Action if Necessary

- If your child is in crisis, contact **school counselors, emergency services, or mental health professionals**.
- Remove access to **dangerous items (weapons, harmful substances)**.
- Stay calm, **offer reassurance**, and seek help immediately.

Final Takeaways

- ✔ **Parental involvement is key** to student success and safety.
- ✔ **Consistent routines, communication, and support** help at-risk students thrive.
- ✔ **Partnering with schools** ensures a strong safety net for struggling students.
- ✔ **Recognizing warning signs and seeking help early** can prevent crises.

 **For Further Assistance:** Contact your child’s **teacher, school counselor, or administrator** for support and resources.