

## Back-to-School Learning Tips

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Getting kids excited about learning is a matter of teaching them to be fully engaged in the moment. At SuperCamp we call this concept *This Is It!* It's one of our 8 Keys of Excellence that we teach campers. The new school year is upon us and *This Is It!* As summer winds down, parents everywhere want to help their kids prepare to start the new school year with the skills they need to succeed. Now is a good time to help your student refocus on what they learned at SuperCamp. Not sure where to start? Here are ten things that will be helpful for them to remember.

1. **SLANT:** Students can improve their learning in the moment by remembering this acronym, which stands for: **S**it up to tell your body you're interested and to alert your brain to be curious; **L**ean slightly forward in your chair, as if you're hanging on the teacher's every word; **A**sk questions to clarify anything you don't understand; **N**od your head to show you're listening and interested; and **T**alk to your teacher after class to build rapport and establish a relationship.
2. **Test-taking strategies:** Students can improve their test scores by following these simple rules. Allow enough time to get to class a few minutes early—hurrying causes tension and mental crunches. Use the few extra minutes to review notes one last time. Before and during the test, repeat positive mental messages such as "I know this information and I'm going to get an A." If you feel yourself getting tense, close your eyes for a moment and take a few deep breaths. Imagine a relaxing scene. If you're having trouble concentrating or are feeling overwhelmed, try drawing a mind map in the margin of your paper. It will help you remember what you studied.
3. **Create the ideal learning environment:** Help your child set up an effective study area at home that is conducive to learning. It should include good lighting, a desk or table to work at, a comfortable chair, inspirational posters, and plants. Play baroque music softly in the background. Encourage kids to study at the same time every day, to take a short break every 30 minutes, and tackle the most difficult subjects first. Getting the harder subjects out of the way makes the rest seem easy.
4. **Plan ahead for success:** Encourage teens to use a calendar to mark days for upcoming tests, organize tasks, create a game plan for what they need to do and allocate their time. Following a plan allows them to review content more than once, remember more at test time, and avoid stress.
5. **Discover the power of *This Is It!*:** *This Is It!* means making the most of every moment. It also means doing whatever it takes to make a subject interesting. Some ideas include studying with a friend or relating the topic to something a student already knows or likes. Knowing something well almost always makes it more interesting.
6. **Overcome the obstacle of a blank page with fastwriting:** When faced with writer's block, fastwriting provides visible and immediate progress. Choose a subject and set the timer for a specified amount of time. Write continuously until your time is up. Don't worry about structuring sentences, checking grammar, backtracking or crossing things out—just keep writing. Fastwriting clears your mind, focuses your ideas, and makes thoughts come to life on paper.
7. **Take breaks:** Every 30 minutes it helps to take a short five-minute break. Take mini-breaks more often by standing up and stretching whenever you notice your mind wandering. Studies show that you remember best what you learned just before and just after a break—so the more breaks, the more you learn!



8. **Cultivate a winning attitude:** Maintaining a positive attitude is a student's most important learning asset. Teach kids the importance of mentally preparing themselves before any learning experience. Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're usually right."
9. **Remember an "F" stands for feedback:** From infancy through adulthood, we learn through our mistakes, whether it's a failed test or a poor relationship. Help kids to understand that feedback from mistakes is simply the information they need to succeed.
10. **Help students realize how they benefit:** Some students do well in one class but decide another is boring. The quickest way to achieve an attitude adjustment is to help them realize what's in it for them. Ask "Why would you want to learn what the teacher is teaching?" The answer may be as simple as "So I can pass my exams." Help students understand how good grades can help them achieve other goals, like getting into a dream college or having a successful career. By understanding what's in it for them, students will find that their time spent studying and in class has far more purpose.