



Creating Independence In Your 6th Grade Student

A Guide for Learning Coaches

What can I do to encourage my student become more independent?

- **Make a list of agreed-upon responsibilities.** Make sure both you and your teen agree on who does what when. Having your teen work with you to create this list will create ownership of the responsibilities.
- **Come up with a schedule.** If your teen tends to forget if he or she has practice, a regular appointment, or chores to do, a weekly schedule can help. You may even already have a program like Microsoft Outlook on your computer that make scheduling easy and it even includes pop up reminders.
- **Teach your child how to write notes.** There is a reason millions of sticky notes are sold each year. Show your student how easy it is to make a note about something that needs to be remembered (Study Island due dates, class times, etc.) and posting it in a visible location. Your computer may even have digital sticky notes on it!
- **Do It Now!** A lot of irresponsibility is due to old-fashioned forgetfulness. The longer your student puts something off the greater the chance he or she will forget the task all together.
- **Get Organized.** If sticky notes and reminders do not work – planners are often a great tool for students. Students may find notebooks and file folder helpful to organize papers as well. Work together to determine what will be the best solution, and make sure your student can follow through without your support.

Creating Independence when working on the OLS:

1. Have your student track their own minutes on lessons.
2. Have your student print out their weekly schedule so they have a visual of exactly what is due each week.
3. Encourage your student to check their own Kmail each day.
4. Have your student set a timer or alarm to remind them when their live class sessions are.
5. Work together to come up with a schedule for lessons each day. Try to schedule more independent activities (Study Island, subjects your student is confident in, etc.) when you as a Learning Coach are less available – maybe at work or working with another student in the home.

Find the Strategies That Work For You and Your Student!

Some kids do well with traditional planners, and some kids would rather have their teeth drilled. It's important to **respect that what works for you may not be a great fit for your child**. If the traditional planner approach flops for your kid, try some of these options -

* **A master planner** for the whole family with blocks in it that are set aside for "Mom-available to help" and "Independent schoolwork" but not with any specific assignments listed. This helps some kids determine what they can do un-aided and what needs help....a step in the independence process.

* **A list of tasks** that must be completed by a set day, but not a specific schedule. This may require mom to take a lot of deep breaths if student waits until the last minute to do the work. Let the grades speak for themselves; let the consequences be REAL.

* **A pocket timer** is a great tool for some students. If the timer hasn't gone off, then the "independent schoolwork time" is not over yet.

* **Flexibility** with school time. If your child is a night-owl, perhaps doing schoolwork in the evening is actually a GOOD strategy. If it's not a good fit for **you**, have him do his independent work then, and save subjects where he needs your help for earlier in the day. There's not actually a right or wrong to the time at which academics are tackled.

Other Resources

This video talks about different aspects of responsibility including curfew and house rules.

<http://www.howdini.com/video/6650299/how-to-give-children-more-independence>

This article is geared for a traditional classroom but there are great ideas that you can put into your home classroom!

<http://www.originonline.org/newsletters/winter-2013-dd/teaching-team-rallies-lead-sixth-graders-independence>

The goal is to learn, and being flexible about when and how is empowering to a student as he or she gradually gains independence.