



The Betty East Tutoring Center at Victoria College

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Reading with Children Underfoot

Victoria College embraces non-traditional students. If you have a family on top of your class duties, it is easy to fall behind. It is possible to combine effective study and quality time with family. These tips are from students who are also parents. The specific tips you use depend on your schedule and ages of your children. Make a plan.

Attend to Your Children First:

For older kids, keep your books put up when you come home. Spend 10 minutes with your kids before studying. Give hugs, ask about their day, whatever you enjoy doing with them. Then explain that you have important work to do, the kind of work they will do someday when they go to college.

Use “Pockets” of Time:

Time may be found in unusual places. Be prepared and keep study materials close. Coming to class 15 minutes early and leaving 15 minutes late can create a lot of time. Review notes and don't waste time chatting when you need to study. Keep study materials in the car when taking kids to activities. Parents spend a lot of time waiting, and you could sneak in another chapter to read or review flashcards. Guard your time and be stingy with it.

Plan Special Activities:

You know your child and schedule. Use these tips to come up with activities that meet your family's needs.

- Find a friend for your kid and have them to play at your house first and the playmate's house next. Kids occupy themselves for extended periods, so you can just check on them occasionally. Coop babysitting can be used for younger kids. Find other parent-students and take turns watching each other's children.
- Take kids to the park and let them run and play with other kids while you study. Show them where you will be and keep them in sight, but stress that you have work to do. This builds independence and teaches them to respect your time. Physical activities can mean an earlier bedtime and more study time.
- Rent or record a kid movie to play on certain occasions. Find age appropriate shows on TV that can keep a kid's mind active. TV should not be used as a babysitter, but it can help occasionally.

Allow for Interruptions:

It's possible that you'll be interrupted even if you set up activities for your kids, so choose the kind of studying that will match the activities. Use books when you study outside, and use notes and flashcards indoors.

Plan Study Breaks with Children

Studying should be 50 minute sessions with 10 minute breaks to let your mind rest and recover. This is a good time to make snack for you and your kids. Older children can have chores and take breaks with you.

Make it a Game:

Involve family members in your studying and let them help you. Kids can make flashcards or lists to memorize. Reading in a funny voice can entertain younger children. Making it fun helps you and your children learn.

Just Read Something:

When you can't read everything, just read something. Skimming, pre-outlining, and marking passages in a textbook can be done with less concentration than reading an entire chapter. Do what you can and you will have less to do later. Doing some preliminary work will strengthen your memory while you keep an eye on the kids.