

## 10 Wishes for Parents

Sometimes articles catch my eye because they beautifully put into words the very things I have been thinking but could not express so eloquently. The following article, entitled *10 Wishes for Student Success*, by Maya Frost is one of those articles. When I think of the immense task of parenting, so many things come to mind in terms of what to do and what not to do based upon the latest research or past practice or what your friend said to do! It can be so overwhelming and often times there is no one right way to handle a situation. The following list of “wishes” from Ms. Frost helps to highlight some of the very basic, but very important aspects of parenting that truly do enable our children’s success.

President Obama [shared some advice](#) with America’s school children (or some of them, anyway). I’m happy that he encouraged students to work hard and stay in school. He had some sound long-term suggestions.

But as [any parent knows](#), kids don’t think about the long term. They think about lunchtime, recess or tomorrow’s quiz, but elementary school students do not ponder the possibility of quitting school. They assume that things will work out, and they’ll stay on track until the day they graduate.

It’s great to plant those powerful seeds of responsibility and commitment in the minds of our kids, but what they need most is the daily nurturing of habits that will contribute to their success. While schools can certainly do their part to promote good habits and kids can step up their efforts, parents are the ones who are teaching (or not) their kids to become outstanding citizens who value education.

So, I’d like to offer the following list of 10 wishes that would make a big difference today and in 10 years in the lives of our students. You’ll notice that every wish is aimed squarely at parents, those most experienced long-term thinkers. After all, they’ve been dreaming of the future they hope their children will have since before their sons and daughters were born.

- 1. I wish that parents of preschoolers would cancel one of those weekly must-do activities (swimming, gymnastics, soccer) and take their kids to the local library instead.**  
Instilling a love for reading and discovery is the key to creating lifelong learners.
- 2. I wish that parents would impose bed times for their school-age children.**  
A lack of sleep has a profound effect on young students learning ability and brain development.
- 3. I wish that parents would make dinner time an inviolable period during which the family sits down together for relaxed conversation.**  
Regular family dinners are one of the most powerful indicators of future student success.
- 4. I wish that parents would model healthy eating and exercise for their children and include active recreation into their family’s regular schedule.**

Obese students are far more likely than their normal-weight classmates to drop out of school.

5. **I wish that parents would spend less time driving their kids to sports practices and more time taking them to art classes, music lessons and cultural experiences.**

Students who study music do better academically, and those who are exposed to other cultures have a greater appreciation for those of different backgrounds.

6. **I wish that parents of middle school students would encourage their kids to find and develop their strengths rather than sign up for the activities their friends are doing.**

Middle school students who know what they're good at develop greater confidence at an age when this quality can dramatically alter their life choices.

7. **I wish that parents of middle school students would encourage their kids to develop and share their own opinions.**

Kids spend a lot of time with their peers at this age, and the influence of adults is greatly needed in order for them to see issues from a more mature perspective. Those family dinners are crucial at this age!

8. **I wish that parents of high school students would encourage their kids to deepen and celebrate the qualities that make them different.**

High school students who see themselves as individualistic or independent are more likely to excel in the areas they find interesting and this leads to a clearer sense of direction.

9. **I wish that parents of high school students would send their son or daughter abroad for at least a few months prior to graduation.**

I've written a book on the benefits of the high school exchange or other experiences abroad and made recommendations for the most affordable options less than \$4,000 for an entire year with plenty of full scholarships offered. Spending time abroad at this age is the most brain-boosting and transformational opportunity available for young people and far more advantageous than another same-old semester or year of high school.

10. **I wish that parents of high school students would become savvy mentors rather than crazed coaches or fearful protectors.**

If parents commit themselves to wishes one through nine, this will already be the case and their kids will be confident, competent and compassionate young adults who are truly ready for college or anything else they choose to do.

Teachers, schools and presidential advice matter, but without consistent parental support and encouragement, kids will not have the skills and habits they need to maximize their potential. If we want our sons and daughters to prepare for their most thrilling and fulfilling opportunities in the 21st century, we need to make these wishes come true.

---

*To read more blog entries by Maya Frost, visit her site [MayaFrost.com](http://MayaFrost.com).*

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.convergemag.com/blog/globals/59027732.html>