

Boost learning with proven parenting strategies

For students in junior and middle grades

Ways to boost learning

Here are a few key things to remember as you encourage your child to learn:

- How you say it is as important as what you say.
- Children need to be taught why certain values are important.
- Avoid *why* questions, use *how* or *what* questions instead.
- Always speak to your child with the same respect you wish him to demonstrate to you.
- Children learn from your actions and your words all the time.

Help your child build self-acceptance and self-confidence

Because we live in a constantly changing world, it is important to help children boost their own self-esteem rather than counting on others to define personal self-worth.

To build self-acceptance and self-confidence:

- give hugs, pats on the back and a caring shoulder to cry on when necessary
- have time during the week for all family members to be together to share experiences and just talk
- regularly tell your child she is loved and respected
- model emotional closeness in your marriage (or other relationships) for your child to observe

say 'no' to requests for new 'fad' items he wants just because everyone else has them.

Help your child work toward goals

Success is usually attained by overcoming hardships, obstacles and setbacks. To help your child overcome these and work toward goals:

- limit his activities to doing fewer things well instead of many things superficially
- support persistency and commitment in what she does with positive feedback and encouragement
- help your child accept failure and use setbacks as learning experiences
- avoid taking over when he is experiencing a problem and help him assume personal control of the situation

Help your child develop a strong work ethic

There is a connection between work skills and attitudes and your child's success as an adult.

To help your child develop a strong work ethic:

- have her do regular chores
- encourage him to earn extra money through odd jobs and activities
- avoid giving out cash when she asks for it
- engage in co-operative work projects to model good work habits

avoid paying in advance for work unfinished or for projects poorly done.

Teach your child good manners and social sensitivity

An understanding of people and social skills is key to being successful at work and in relationships. To help teach good manners:

- ask him to be polite and show good manners in public and at home
- model good manners even when you are frustrated – especially when speaking to your child
- get people together to talk out problems and find solutions
- avoid excusing her rude or disrespectful behaviour just because she is young, funny, cute, frustrated or angry
- discuss how to control negative emotions

Help your child get organized

Everything we do requires time management and organizational skills.

To help your child get organized:

- have places for him to put away his homework, notices from school, etc.
- have established routines for completing homework, chores, bedtime, television time, etc.
- engage her in sorting activities, such as doing laundry, cleaning up rooms, changing clothing from one season to another
- check and sign your child's agenda and write back to the teacher if you or your child are unsure about something
- have him help you make shopping lists, plan trips, etc.

Model and practice learning how to learn

It is important to show your child that your family values learning. Here's how you can do that:

- Play board and card games together
- Try to learn new things together, such as building a book case, cooking a recipe, etc.
- Discuss issues in the news, ideas and interesting facts together
- Read and research together regularly
- Keep diaries of trips and important events