

How to Encourage Your Child to Love Learning

Ultimately, we want our kids to love to learn. A passion for learning is quite different from just studying to earn a grade or to please parents or teachers. Those who develop a love of learning at an early age continue the process throughout their lives and are generally more successful, interesting, and happier than those who don't.

Steps

1. Talk with your child about the things you read and hear, especially the things you find interesting.
2. Ask your kids how they feel about various issues (current events, relationships, values). Allow them to have opinions without passing judgment. Ask your children to help you understand why they feel the way they do.
3. Pursue your own hobbies and interests. Share these with your child, but do not require that he or she follow your pursuits.
4. Encourage your kids to have interests of their own. If they show curiosity about a hobby, area of study, sport, or instrument, encourage and support them in any way your finances allow.
5. Read books. Read on your own, which sets a good example. Read to your kids, to get them hooked on books.
6. Expose your child to a wide variety of experiences including music, plays, sports, museums, travel, reading, dance, games, food, puzzles, ethnic activities, etc. One never knows how what exposure may influence future life choices.
7. Play "thinking games" with your kids. These are games where there is not just one answer. Scrabble and chess are examples. Emphasize the value of thoughtful moves rather than the importance of winning.

Tips

- If you demonstrate excitement about learning and are open to your children pursuing their own interest areas, it will be hard for them to resist the opportunities.
- Explain to your child why he or she is learning, and how it will be worthwhile (e.g. learning multiplication tables)

How to Overcome Your Child's Learning Difficulties

Parents, take these 7 steps to transform your child's actual ability to learn. Almost every child begins school excited to learn, but discouragement and frustration from repeated failures erode that enthusiasm. You can rekindle your child's love for learning.

Steps

1. Acknowledge your child has learning difficulties and become absolutely committed to the fact these can be overcome. This courageous step that only you can take is one of the most important things you can do for your child.
2. Literally make notes as you observe your child's learning behavior. Do they resist reading? Take forever to complete homework? Struggle to maintain attention? Fail to follow through? Each of these symptoms is key to understanding how to unlock his or her learning potential.
3. Schedule a comprehensive cognitive skills test for your child. An accurate, quality testing is available at LearningRx (<http://www.learningrx.com>).
4. Sit down with a professional to review your notes and match the test results with your child's behavior. This individually-tailored consultation will help you understand the exact cause(s) of your child's struggles. Armed with this information, you can choose the best course of action.
5. Explore specific skill training options that are customizable for your child. Don't waste any time on tutoring or Special Ed alternatives that can't change the root cause of the problem.
6. Help your child work hard with a cognitive skills trainer for 12 to 24 weeks, a few hours each week. It won't take long to begin to see results, but it will require effort and your encouragement.
7. Watch as your son's or daughter's love of learning is reignited faster than you ever thought possible.

How to Be Patient When Doing Homework with Your Young Child

When working with small children, it's often easy to lose patience. This is especially true when looking at schoolwork. Here's how to keep your cool and give your child the greatest possible benefit.

Steps

1. Decide what you want, and what you need to do. Do you want your child to get good grades? Do you want him to understand the material well? Write out your goals on an index card.
2. Determine your child's learning style. Many children don't process visual information well, but are quick to learn if the material is spoken out loud. Some are the opposite. Your child's teacher can help you determine what teaching methods work best for him, or you can do online research. (Or both!)
3. Decide before you start how much time you're going to devote to helping with homework. Set an egg timer so that you don't have to worry about running over. Whenever you find yourself getting frustrated with the amount of time it's taking, remind yourself that you promised you'd help for an hour (or whatever) and it's not taking any more time than you expected.
4. When you sit down to help your child with an assignment, look over it first. Make sure you understand clearly what's being asked, and if there are any special instructions on how to do it. Few things in life are more embarrassing than telling your child how to do something, only to find out that he was supposed to do something else entirely!
5. Let your child do as much as he can. This is the **hardest** step. The assignment looks so easy to you, you want to jump in and tell him how to do it. But he won't learn that way. Wait until he's stuck before you reach out to help. (This is where your index card comes in. Keep it in your pocket, and read it every time you want to say something. If your help wouldn't correspond with the goal on the index card, hold your tongue.)
6. Resist the temptation to tell him the answer when he's stuck. Instead, ask leading questions. For example, if he can't decide whether to add or subtract, ask him to describe what addition does, and what subtraction does. Then ask which of those two is closer to what this problem is doing. Try everything you can think of to get him to figure it out for himself.
7. At the end of the assignment (or your allotted time, whichever comes first) find something you can praise your child about. Maybe he finished it in less time than you expected, or got most of the answers on the first try. Complimenting not only will make him feel good, it will make you feel like your time was well spent.

Tips

- Talk to your child's teacher. Most of them chose this career because they want to help children learn. This person is an enormous resource for specific teaching styles for

your child, other activities that can help your child learn, areas your child is having trouble with, and hundreds of other options. I have never met a teacher who wasn't thrilled to have a parent ask, "How can I help my child learn better?"

- Keep an eye out for applications of the subject. If your child is having trouble with addition, let him add up the grocery bill when you go shopping. If he's struggling with history, take him to the state capital and tell him how your state came to be. If he doesn't spell well, make a game of spelling words -- take him to a baseball game if he can spell a list of baseball-related words, or buy him a piece of butterscotch candy if he can spell it correctly. Again, your child's teacher is a great resource for ways to get your child interested in learning.
- Make sure you know the subject he's learning. In first grade this probably isn't an issue, but by third grade you may need some review. When was the last time you found a lowest common denominator?

Warnings

- don't upset your child, call them names, and criticize them