

Nutley Public Schools

The 7 Secrets

Proven Ways to Motivate Children
to Do Better in School

Date: October 19, 2016



“It’s not that I’m so smart,”
“It’s just that I stay with problems longer.”
- Albert Einstein



A Child Who is Not Motivated is likely to:

- Choose work that is inappropriately easy
- Need lots of prompting to get started
- Put in minimal effort
- Show a negative or apathetic attitude about learning and schoolwork
- Give up quickly when the going gets rough
- Leaves many tasks unfinished.



A Motivated Child is Likely to:

- Choose tasks that are challenging
- Begin tasks without be prompted
- Show serious concentration and effort
- Have a positive attitude toward learning and schoolwork
- Use coping strategies to get though rough times
- Stick with tasks until successful completion



Set Proper Expectations

- Communicating with your child.
 - Ask child what they perceive as their own strengths and weaknesses
 - Share your opinion but never dismiss your child's self-assessment.
 - The areas that both you and your child see as areas of strength should be the focus of your highest expectations of achievement



- On the other hand, those areas where you both agree she struggles should be the focus of different expectations
- Make it clear that you expect to see her top effort. If the effort expectation is met, then she has succeeded.
- It's natural to be concerned with results. If you only look at the final product, you may miss the enormous amount of work that went into every step.



Re-evaluating as Necessary

- Plan to review expectations with your child about every three months (more frequently if needed)
- Plan to have these meetings over ice-cream, slice of pizza, or another enticing outing.
- Make adjustments if you and your child agree that any of your expectations were too low- or too ambitious for the moment.



Help You Child Set Goal

- Write the goals down
- Make the goals specific
- Make the goals measurable



Show Your Child You Think School is Important

- Maintaining a relationship with your child's teacher.
- Supporting the programs at your child's school.
- Creating a suitable environment for homework and studying



Show Your Child You Think School is Important

- Keeping up with your child's assignments.
- Staying positive about school and schoolwork.

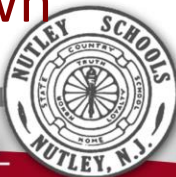


Support Your Child's Learning Style

- Your child is more likely to want to learn if he uses the learning style that feels most natural and makes the most sense- to him.

Does your child learn best by:

- **Hearing**, such as listening to a talk or an audiobook? If so, he may be an auditory learner.
 - Music, hearing stories
 - Can follow oral directions well
 - Comfortable talking
 - Would rather spell words aloud than write them down



Support Your Child's Learning Style

- Seeing, such as reading a book or a graph? If so, he may be a visual learner.
 - Artwork, movies, live theater.
 - Likes things written on paper to back up oral lessons
 - Maps, charts



Support Your Child's Learning Style

- Doing, such as building a model or preparing a chart? If so, he may be a kinesthetic learner.
 - Loves to move- exercises, recess
 - Would rather participate than sit and watch.
 - Likes hands on activities



Speak the Language of Encouragement

- Most parents enjoy praising their children with words like “good job!” and “that looks great.” However, research shows that encouragement that has a bigger effect than praise on a child’s motivation



Praise

- Discusses results. “Great work on the science quiz! You got an A!”
- Uses opinion words such as “good,” “great,” “terrific,” and “wonderful.”
- Is typically given when the child has performed as you had hoped she would.



Encouragement

- Notices effort and progress. “Look at that paper! I can tell you’ve spent a lot of time on it! It must feel good to know you worked so hard.”



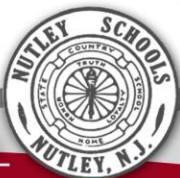
Encouragement

- Uses descriptive words. “You cleaned the bathroom without being asked. Look at that shiny sink! I can see myself in it!”



Encouragement

- Can be given regardless of the child's performance. "That didn't work out that way you planned, did it? I can tell you're disappointed, but I know you'll try again next week. What do you think you might do differently next time?"



Reinforce Learning at Home and in the Community

- Motivated students know that learning takes place everywhere. Activities that can increase their knowledge and understanding are also lots of fun.



Reinforce Learning at Home and in the Community

- **When your child reads a classic**, see if a video version is available. Watch the movies as a family and ask your child to tell you about the differences he notices between the two.



Reinforce Learning at Home and in the Community

- **Dive into the cultures your child studies.** A wonderful way to do this is through food. Eat at a restaurant that serves the food of the culture. Or get on the Internet and search for some recipes then try preparing the food yourself.



Reinforce Learning at Home and in the Community

- **Expand your child's point of view** by taking him to something that doesn't fit with his typical tastes. If he loves basketball, take him to the ballet. Point out that athleticism might be found where he least expects it.



Reinforce Learning at Home and in the Community

- Getting your child into the habit of reading news articles. Have your child search for articles online or in magazines that interest them.



Reinforce Learning at Home and in the Community

- **Museum visits are always fun**, but they are especially appropriate when your child is studying science and social studies. Taking your child to an exhibit on rockets, dinosaurs, or life in ancient Mali will give his schoolwork a new dimension. Instead of looking at a picture in a book, he can experience life-size replicas of what he has read about.



Encourage Your Child to Be Resilient

- Resilient children are ready for whatever life throws at them. They get that way, according to Goldstein, by developing qualities like these:
- **Strong belief** that an adult in their lives will always be there with love and support



Encourage Your Child to Be Resilient

- Ability to solve many of their own problems
- Ability to focus on their own strengths
- Regard mistakes as something that happens to everyone, and something to learn from.



Encourage Your Child to be Resilient by:

- Empathizing with your child
- Providing your child with reasonable choices



Encourage Your Child to be Resilient by:

- Supporting your child's interest and talents.
- Changing your approach when it clearly doesn't work.



What about rewards?

- Do rewards motivate or teach children to only work for what they can get out of it?
- Treat your child to a reward once in awhile but other times reward them with only a smile or a big thumbs up. Or say: “You can really be proud of yourself. Look what you did!”



Conclusion

- Between ability and hard work, the most important key to success in school and life is **hard work.**
- Striking the spark that motivates a child produces an internally fueled quest for success that no amount of external rewards, threats or pleas can equal.

