

Most good students aren't born good learners. Yes, individual personality plays a big part in a child's willingness to learn and their overall disposition when it comes to schooling and education, but most children who are good learners at some point had to become good learners. More importantly, any student, who possesses the basic aptitude and receives the right motivation, can become a good learner.

One of the biggest mistakes teachers and parents can make when to comes to developing students and children who are good learners is to limit learning to the classroom. While the classroom will likely be the primary source of instruction, intellectual, social and academic growth should extend outside the walls of the classroom – if you want to really enhance a child's desire and ability to learn.

The following are proven tips and strategies that will motivate your child to learn. Apply them correctly, and you'll see your child or student discover the joy of learning.

1. Develop an atmosphere of reading

Some people would argue that reading it the key to success in life. We would most certainly argue that at minimum reading is a key to success in learning. Children who develop a love of reading, develop a love for learning. Children who struggle with reading, struggle with learning.

Reading not only helps children develop a much richer vocabulary, it helps their brain learn how to process concepts and formal communication. And the skills gained from reading extend far beyond increased performance in language art classes. Students who read well experience an enhanced ability to learn in all subjects – including technical subjects such as math and science.

Help your child develop reading skills and a love for reading by filling his world with reading. Read to your child frequently. Have your child real aloud. Create a family reading time where everyone focuses on reading for 20 minutes a day. Through your own example of reading and by filling your classroom and/or home with reading materials (novels, posters, newspapers, magazines, etc.) you'll create an atmosphere of reading that will demonstrate to your child (or students) just how important reading is.

A key to developing good readers, it to make reading fun – not frustrating. If a child decides that reading is boring or frustrating, they won't want to read and their ability to learn will be diminished. Let children pick their own books to read, help them read, and create activities for them that make reading fun

2. Put your child in the driver's seat as much as possible

When it comes to education, all some kids experience is control, control, control. When a child feels controlled, or out of control when it comes to their education, they often withdraw from learning. It's important to guide children through the learning process, but it's just as important to allow children to have control of their own learning experience. Whether at home, or in the classroom, provide children the ability to have direct input into their learning choices. A good way to do this is to provide children options. For example, when assigning a writing project, allow children to choose their topic to write about.

We also recommend allowing children to choose their own extracurricular activities. The more control and input you're able to provide a child, with respect to their learning environment, activities, and style, the more engaged and motivated a child will become to learn.

3. Encourage open and sincere communication

Encourage your child or student to express his opinion about what's going on with his education. Create an open atmosphere where he feels comfortable expressing his likes, dislikes or concerns. When he shares his opinion, make sure to validate his feelings – even if you disagree. When children feel like their opinion doesn't matter, or they're stuck, they're likely to disengage from the learning process. Good learners know their opinion matters and feel reassured that they can be open about their educational experience without being judged, put down, discouraged or ignored.

4. Focus on your child's interests

When learning engages children in areas and subjects of interest, learning becomes fun and children engage in learning. If you really want to help your child to become a good learner, encourage him to explore topics and subjects that fascinate him. If he likes dinosaurs, help him find engaging and interesting books and stories about dinosaurs. Then challenge him to identify his five favorite dinosaurs and explain why he chose each one.

5. Introduce and encourage different types of learning styles

Every child has learning preferences and styles that are best suited to their way of learning. Some children have a dominant learning style, while others prefer to learn using a mix of learning styles. There isn't necessarily one right or wrong learning style, or mix of learning styles. However, by helping your child discover his preferred learning styles, you can use techniques that will improve his rate and quality learning.

**There are seven fundamental learning styles: Visual, Auditory, Verbal, Physical, Logical (mathematical), Social and Solitary.** For example, children who are visual learners learn best by seeing how things work. Conversely, children who are auditory learners learn best by listening to things being explained. For young children, it's beneficial to explore and employ different types of learnings styles.

6. Share your enthusiasm for learning

Enthusiasm rubs off, especially when it comes to learning new things. If your child or student sees that you're sincerely enthusiastic about learning, they're likely to become enthusiastic about learning. Whether its history, science, reading, writing or even math, help him see that learning is a journey of exciting new discoveries. Take every opportunity – without being overwhelming or overbearing – to discover new information with him. As your child sees the joy and excitement learning brings to your life, he'll begin to share your enthusiasm for learning new things as well.

7. Make learning fun through game-based learning

Game-based learning is not a new concept. It's been around for a long time. Game-based learning can be very advantageous for many reasons. Using games as an education tool not only provides opportunities for deeper learning and development of non-cognitive skills, it helps motivate children to want to learn. When a child is actively engaged with a game, their mind experiences the pleasure of learning a new system. This is true regardless of whether the game is considered "entertainment" (e.g., video game) or "serious" (e.g., military simulator). Games that are entertaining provide the added benefit of motivating children to want to engage in the learning process and want to learn more.

Game-based learning is also an effective motivation for team-based learning – which can be particularly beneficial for children in a classroom setting. Students typically try harder at games than they do in courses. Games are more engaging. There is also the competitive aspect to playing games. Students are trying to compete or win, on behalf of themselves or their team. They may strive to perform at a higher level in an effort to earn more points for their team or because they want the opportunity to play.

Game-based learning is a great way for parents and teachers to introduce new ideas, grammar, concepts, and knowledge in a way that motivates children to learn.

8. Focus on what he's learning, not his performance

Instead of asking your child how he did on his math test as soon as he gets home from school, have him teach you what he learned in math today. Focus on what your child is learning, as opposed to how he is performing. While performance is important, focusing on his learning experience will (1) communicate to your child that actual learning is more important than test grades, (2) results are not the most important thing, (3) you're more concerned about him than you are about his performance and (4) by focusing on his learning experience that day you'll provide him the opportunity to put into his own words his lesson and solidify what he's learned.

9. Help your child stay organized

Helping your child organize his papers, books and assignments will go a long way to helping him feel motivated to learn. Disorganization is typical among young school age children, but it can also lead to a feeling of being overwhelmed. Overwhelmed children spend more time and effort being frustrated and worried than they do learning. Be patient, but consistent, in helping your child organize his school supplies and assignments. This will help him feel in control, less overwhelmed and more motivated to learn.

10. Recognize and celebrate achievements

No matter how small they may be, it's important to recognize and celebrate your child's achievements. This is especially important for elementary age school children who require constant positive reinforcement to keep them motivated to learn and challenge themselves to do better. We're not suggesting that you praise mediocrity, but that you offer recognition and celebrate your child's achievements. Finishing a difficult project deserves a special treat; doing well on a math test could call for a trip to get ice cream

Always use positive reinforcement as your tool to motivate learning with your child.

11. Focus on strengths

Focusing on strengths can be difficult when there is so much your child struggles academically. Notwithstanding, focusing on your child's strengths is vital to healthy emotional and academic development and progress. Focusing on your child's strengths is another form of positive reinforcement that will motivate him to keep learning. Conversely, focusing on your child's weaknesses does nothing but cause discouragement, distress and a lack of desire to learn. Did Johny fail his math test? Well then, in addition to getting him a little extra help with his math, make sure to congratulate him for how well he's doing in science class.

12. Make every day a learning day

Turning every day into a learning day may sound like a bit much, but it really isn't, if you go about it the right way. Whenever possible, encourage your child to explore the world around him, ask questions and make connections. Help him categorize, classify and thinking critically of what he sees and experiences. Turning every day into a learning day will help your child develop the internal motivation to learn in the classroom, at home or wherever he may be.