

- **How to make report cards a positive experience:**
Preparation. Ask, "What do you think your report card will tell us?" Getting ready is helpful. **Perspective.** Understand that a report card is just one small measure of your child. A child with poor grades still has plenty of strengths. **Positive action.** Find something to praise. Focus on how to improve.
- **Be aware that your attitudes about school affect your child.** If you hated math, be careful not to prejudice your child.

Motivating Your Child

- **Children need the 4 "A"s as well as the 3 "R"s:** Attention, Appreciation, Affection, and Acceptance.
- **Some researchers believe every child is gifted—if we will just look for the ways.** Helping a child see his giftedness is very motivating.
- **Encourage children to read biographies about successful people.** As children learn about the traits that made others successful, they are often motivated to adopt those same success patterns in their own lives.
- **Motivate your children in math** by challenging them to figure out how much change you should get back from a purchase. If they get the amount right, they get to keep the change.
- **Praise children constantly.**

Building Responsibility

- **Try a simple cardboard box** to help make your child responsible for school belongings. Have your child choose a place for the box—near the door or in his room. Every afternoon, his *first* task should be to place all belongings in the box. When homework is finished, it goes in the box, too. In the morning, the box is the last stop before heading out the door.
- **Help children understand,** and take responsibility for, the consequences of their choices. "I chose to do my homework. The result was that I got an 'A' on my math test." "I chose to get up 15 minutes late. The result was that I missed breakfast . . . and nearly missed the bus."
- **Try giving your child the responsibility** of growing a small garden—even in just a flowerpot. The positive and negative results of carrying out your responsibilities are very clear.
- **One reader found a way to keep children moving in the morning:** After her daughter wakes up, Mom begins to play her favorite record album. Her daughter has until the side plays through to get herself dressed for school.

Reinforcing Learning

- **Encourage kids to collect things.** Whether they collect rocks, shells, leaves, or bugs is not important. But by collecting, children are learning new ways to make sense out of their world.
- **Estimating is an important math skill.** We estimate how much our groceries will cost. We estimate how much time we'll need to complete a project at work. You can help your child learn to estimate at home. Here's one idea: As you're driving, estimate the distance to your destination. Then estimate how much time it will take to get there. Use the odometer or a map to check your work.
- **Talk about geography in terms children can understand:** Go through your house and talk about where things came from. A calculator may have come from Taiwan. A box of cereal may have a Battle Creek, Michigan address, or White

Plains, New York. Talk about where the wheat for your bread came from. Where was the cotton for your blue jeans grown? Tell your children where your ancestors came from. Find the places on a map.

- **Show your child that writing is useful.** Have them help you write a letter ordering something, asking a question, etc. Then show them the results of your letter.

Homework

- **Try playing "Beat the Clock"** with your child during homework time. Look over the assignment and figure out about how long it should take to complete it. Allow a little extra time and set a timer for that many minutes. No prizes are needed. There is great satisfaction in getting the work done on time.
- **Teach your child to use the formula "SQ3R"** when doing any homework assignment. The letters stand for a proven five-step process that makes study time more efficient and effective: Survey, Question, Read, Restate, Review.
- **Here are five tips to make homework time easier—for you and your child:** 1. **Have a regular place** for your child to do homework. Use a desk or table in a quiet room. Be sure there's plenty of light. 2. **Find a regular time** for homework. You may want to make a rule, "No television until homework is finished." 3. **During homework time,** turn off the TV and radio. 4. **Help your child plan** how she'll use her time. 5. **Set a good example.** While your child is doing homework, spend some time reading or working yourself. Then when homework is done, you can both talk about how much you've accomplished.
- **Nitty gritty homework tips:** Do the most difficult homework first. Save "easy" subjects for when you're tired. Do the most important assignments first. If time runs short the priorities will be finished. Do what's required first. Finish the optional assignments later—even if they're more fun.
- **Look over your child's homework everyday.** Start at an early age and keep it up as long as you can. Praise good work. Your interest will encourage good work.
- **Try having your child teach you the homework.** The teacher always learns more than the student.

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