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Digital Life Newsletter For Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Following is a list of Helpful tips and techniques compiled by Common Sense Media to encourage and motivate your children during virtual lessons in what promises to be a very unusual school year.

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SIX TIPS FOR KEEPING STUDENTS MOTIVATED FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Getting started

Check in

Students may be motivated by different things than they were last year. Your type A child may no longer work for gold stars, and your slowpoke may speed through work just to get it over with. Don't make assumptions on what's going to work. Instead, ask questions: See how they're holding up, ask how they feel, determine what they want to accomplish, and figure out what you can do to support them.

Lead by example

Your energy will wax and wane, but keep your attitude positive and your approach consistent. If you sense your child is flagging, find role models -- from movies, books, or real life -- whose grit may inspire them.

Build their work ethic

Yes, we all want this to be over with, but remember that learning is a lifelong goal. When discussing schoolwork, focus on the skills children are building, the value of seeing things through, and the feeling of accomplishment. Most children can push themselves when it's something they love, like creating a successful game or mastering dance choreography. Ask them to call on the same skills that drive them in other areas.

Praise effort

Maybe they got a problem wrong but asked the right questions. Maybe they breezed through the day's reading assignment when yesterday's was tough. Now, more than ever, taking notice of and commenting positively on how your child is growing and progressing can really give them forward momentum.

Motivation 101: Proven motivational strategies for just about every kind of kid

Establish structure and routine. Sticking to a schedule provides the stability children need to keep plugging away. Plus, it minimizes their instincts to go rogue. When expectations are set, it's more likely they'll be met. You can try digital tools like to-do lists, site blockers, and screen-limit settings when children need help staying on task.

Maintain accountability. Maybe *you* can't motivate your kid -- but their best friend can. Have them schedule daily check-ins with a friend either by text or on social media. Accountability helps students realize they're not alone and gives them a tangible reason to work hard.

Incentivize. Children may be motivated by rewards, but you want to make it feel as though they've earned their treat (or you'll end up in a vicious cycle). If they finish one packet, they can choose a board game to play; two packets, they get to make that brownie mix you've been saving.

Make it special

Mark the occasion. This school year children won't get to have Friday pizza parties and dances. But you can still give them something to look forward to. Plan a celebration (online) with family and friends, like a virtual class party, a Zoom dance, trivia night, or a watch-together movie.

Let them see progress. Some children respond well to visual cues. Use a calendar or another visual aid to mark time so they can see how much they've accomplished and how much more there is to go.

Do a related activity. A positive aspect of remote learning is the flexibility to go deep on topics children really love. Build upon and extend what they're learning with a natural connection. If they're learning about the solar system, let them stay up late on a weekend night and use an astronomy app to map the night sky.

Mix it up

Be willing to experiment. If a child is struggling with reading a book, turn it into a read-aloud or get an audiobook. If math is "too boring," do the problems on a whiteboard or outside using sidewalk chalk. A change of scenery can do wonders for a child's motivation.

Break up the day. If you have some control over when they do the work, break things up a little. Let them have a slower-paced morning and do their work after lunch. Make an agreement in advance: "If you take the morning off, you still have to get your schoolwork done before you can play online with your friends later today."

Change the timing. There's nothing magical about the hours of 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. -- that's just when we're all used to school happening. Of course, if your children are in online classes, you have to accommodate those schedules. But for things like working through a packet of assignments from a teacher, there's no harm in experimenting with different times of day. Sometimes the change is all it takes.

Trouble-shooting

Appeal to a favorite teacher

A word of encouragement, such as a recorded video message, a text, or an email, from a beloved teacher can be just the thing. Your child wouldn't want to let the teacher down.

Rule out other issues

Sometimes what looks like a lack of motivation is actually a child covering up for a problem. Probe for underlying issues and address them. If they just need a mental health break, [these apps may help](#).

Adjust expectations

If we've learned anything during this crisis it's to expect the unexpected. Your child may not take to the new learning environment. Insist on the bare minimum (completion of all assignments), and set up natural consequences for noncompliance (maybe they miss out on an online playdate). Empathize with your child's feelings and move on. Allow yourself a moment to gather your strength and recharge. Celebrate the little victories, and start tomorrow with fresh eyes.

All the information in this article was taken from the following:

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/keeping-kids-motivated-for-online-learning>