

Shakespeare Primary School

10 Ways to Motivate Your Child to Learn

1. Fill your child's world with reading.

Take turns reading with your older child, or establish a family reading time when everyone reads their own book. Show how important reading is to you by filling your home with books, newspapers, even posters and placemats with words on them. 'Children can learn to read by living in an environment that's rich in words.' Turn on subtitles on your tv when they are watching their favourite programme/movie. This is said to improve their reading by double. Watch Stephen Fry talk about 'Turn on subtitles' on YouTube or visit www.turnonthesubtitles.org

2. Encourage your child to express their opinion, talk about their feelings and make choices.

They could pick out a side dish to go with dinner and select their own activity out of school. Ask for their thoughts on family decisions and show that you value it. 'One of the things valued in school is class participation and having practice at home expressing their feelings, is good for self-esteem and self-confidence.

3. Show enthusiasm for your child's interests and encourage them to explore subjects that fascinate them.

If they are a horse nut, offer stories about riding, or if they are into James Bond, stories about child secret agents and challenge them to find five facts about their subject in the encyclopedia or online.

4. Provide them with play opportunities that support different kinds of learning styles – from listening and visual learning to sorting and sequencing.

Encourage playing with blocks – your child will develop their creative expression and problem-solving skills as they build. They will need lots of unstructured playtime to explore them – although sports activities and language clubs are valuable experiences. Be careful not to add 'too much stress' to your child's life and distract them from exploring the pleasure of learning at their own pace.

5. Point out the new things you learn with enthusiasm.

Talk about the different ways you find new information, whether you're looking for an address/phone number or buying an item or food shopping online! Let them see you in action, talk about what you are planning to do and share your thoughts and the reason for what you are doing.

6. Ask about what they are learning in school, not about their test scores.

‘Even if they aren’t doing as well grade-wise compared to the other pupils, they might still be learning and improving and you don’t want to discourage that.’ Have them teach you about what they learned in school today – putting the lesson into their own words will help them retain what they learned.

7. Help your child organise their schoolbooks and homework so they feel in control of their work.

If the task seems too much for them, they’ll spend more time worrying than learning, as they get older and have more responsibilities, things can get ‘really painful.’ So check up with them on a regular basis to make sure they are not feeling overloaded.

8. Celebrate achievements, no matter how small.

Completing a book calls for a treat, finishing a book allows your child to some ‘family games time’. You’ll offer positive reinforcement that will inspire them to keep learning and challenging themselves. **‘If a child feels as if they are successful regardless of what it is, it builds them up and makes the next challenge easier.’**

9. Focus on strengths, encouraging developing talents.

Even if they didn’t do great in their maths test, they may have written a good story/poem. In addition to a workbook for math practice, give them a writing book so that they can jot notes down or write their own story. When they know that they are talented in one area, they become confident to try to achieve in others. ‘You don’t want to not offer challenges, but there’s always a positive when you have your child feeling good about who they are.’

10. Turn everyday events into learning opportunities.

Encourage them to explore the world around them, asking questions and making connections. ‘A prickly fruit in the supermarket could look like one of those fish that blows up, to your child.’ Get their imagination working and enjoy their unique quality of just being them.

**Thank you
Clare –
Family Learning Mentor**