

The more a child develops their love of learning, the more they will flourish and the happier they will be.



Resources to help your children develop a passion for learning

Positive Schools

Positive Schools mental health and wellbeing conferences provide an opportunity for teachers to learn up-to-date knowledge, ideas and strategies about positive education and wellbeing.

www.positiveschools.com.au

The Positive Times

A new online newspaper offering an array of articles, strategies and information about wellbeing and positive education in Australian schools and colleges.

Positive Times is free for all educators to access.

www.positivetimes.com.au

KidsMatter and MindMatters

KidsMatter (for primary schools) and *MindMatters* (for secondary schools) offer free support and services to develop an up-to-date whole-school approach to wellbeing in your school. They will help you build on the programs and initiatives you have and offer additional strategies and initiatives to support a flourishing school community.

www.kidsmatter.edu.au and www.mindmatters.edu.au



For information on mental health and wellbeing programs available to schools, visit www.waamh.org.au.

Raising a child with a passion for learning

A guide to help parents help their children develop a love of learning at home, at school and beyond.



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Representing the community-managed mental health sector in Western Australia

Above all else, parents want their children to be happy.

One of the most important ways parents can help their children achieve long-term happiness is to help them embrace a love of learning and a passion for learning. Children who love to learn are more likely to feel happy in themselves, their relationships, and their ongoing studies and careers. Moreover, a love of learning social, emotional and academic skills helps children grow into self-directed adults who love life.

Children with a love of learning are children who have learnt to be self-directed and intrinsically motivated. They are also more likely to pursue academic, social and emotional goals with a sense of purpose, and have a healthy curiosity about the world around them. As such, children who love to learn are children who have learnt to enjoy the intrinsic benefits of learning. They are children with the necessary skills to successfully pursue personal and professional goals with a positive attitude and positive values.

Children of all ages and all abilities have the potential to love learning if given the right opportunities, the right environment and the right support. It is certainly true that not every child will excel in every way, but they can all develop self-determination and motivation to live life well. They can all learn to value themselves and those around them, and strive to become valued members of their community.

No matter what successes or failures your child meets at school, life success comes from the acquisition of positive life skills more than it comes from grades.

Supporting a love of learning in your child involves creating and maintaining an environment where children understand the intrinsic benefits of learning, where they have a voice of their own, and where they feel safe to make mistakes and take 'safe' risks.

Here are some of the ways in which a love of learning can be enhanced and supported in your home: five things to maximise and five things to minimise.

Supporting a love of learning — Encourage and maximise

1. Maximise the benefits of learning with a focus on intrinsic rewards. Keep childrens' attention firmly on the intrinsic (personal) benefits of learning by encouraging them to list three things they enjoyed about every task or activity, every day. What was great about a social event? What was good about school today? What was good about home?
2. Provide a nurturing environment — create an environment where your children feel able to express themselves freely and to make mistakes (without fear of reprimand or punishment). You may not always like or understand what your child does, but you can always empathise with, and listen to their feelings. ('I appreciate you are angry and upset'). Remember to ask your child how they are before you ask them what they are doing.
3. Maximise opportunities for collaboration as a family — children like to be a part of a team, and learn most effectively in groups. Make sure you make regular time for family time each week; whether this be shared meals, getting out to explore nature or simply going to the movies.
4. Encourage autonomy (choice). Children need to have a voice of their own if they are to develop a sense of ownership over their life. Let them have a say in developing family rules. Where possible, let them make decisions about when to do chores, how to celebrate family events, how to decorate their rooms ...
5. Maximise task engagement (interesting and relevant content). Content needs to be engaging to be enjoyable. This means providing ongoing feedback, structure, defined goals and relevancy to everyday life for everything your child is learning. Ask your child to find reasons for doing things that relate to their own wellbeing. For example, learning to share happens best when a young child realises this is the best way to get others to share with them. Older children are more likely to avoid alcohol when they believe that being sober can actually be fun.

Discourage and minimise

1. Minimise or eliminate the use of extrinsic rewards and punishments. These may lead to short-term compliance but they lead to long-term disengagement with learning and with parental leadership. Encourage children to find the personal benefits of making good choices and to see problems as an opportunity to learn.
2. Minimise controlling behaviour that leads to resentment and resistance. Rather than telling your children what to do — try to offer choices and options. Let them become directors of their own lives.
3. Minimise highly-structured activity and screen time. One of the best ways children develop creatively is by being given unstructured time to create their own entertainment. Too many highly-structured activities or too much TV and computer time reduces opportunities to develop self-direction, creativity and a natural curiosity about life.
4. Minimise hard work! Ideas of hard work conjure up ideas of doing lots of things we do not want to do. Learning comes from engagement and a sense that we are doing something meaningful and fun. Focus on creating a positive environment rather than one that emphasises difficulties and drudgery. Make sure there is time for humour, rest, relaxation and fun.
5. Minimise a focus on outcomes and maximise a focus on process. A focus on the process and engagement of learning leads to a more sustained love of learning, and to better outcomes.