



Beyond Homework Motivation-Techniques and Tips That Will Make Your Child Want to Succeed

By Kelly Nault, M.A.

What to Do When "The Dog Ate Your Kid's Homework" Again

Poor dog! According to your kid, the family pooch ate their homework yet again. It's amazing you don't have to go to the vet more often!

In all seriousness, homework is one of those "hot topics" for parents. Many moms feel it is their life purpose to ensure their child completes homework correctly and on time. When a child falls behind, Mom sometimes gets very anxious-and resorts to using all the homework motivation techniques she can find!

Guilt Trips, Lies, and Short-Term Homework Motivation-All Techniques That Don't Work

The following three homework motivation techniques only lead to more aggravation and only achieve short-term results (at best).

1. **Fear Tactics** - Telling your children they will get nowhere in life without school is an ineffective lie. Your kids will call you on it as soon as they find out people like Bill Gates were school dropouts!
2. **Guilt Trips** - When parents place too much pressure on their children to succeed in school, kids often rebel by skipping class, taking drugs, drinking alcohol, or even dropping out of school. In chapter 12 of my book *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You*, I mention Amanda, a past counseling client who was driven to get straight A's in school while her parents groomed her for a career in medicine. Meanwhile, all Amanda wanted to do was act. When I met her during her second year in college, Amanda was on antidepressants, battling suicidal thoughts, and falling behind in school. Although guilt trips may work in the short-term, they often backfire in the long run.
3. **Bribes** - "We'll give you \$20 if you get an 'A' on this test." This type of pressure can very quickly put a strain on your household budget, especially when your child demands a raise for that "A"!

Your children will rarely feel proud of their accomplishments if they're only getting good grades to appease or please you. Positive long-term results require a better approach.

How to Best Support Your Child

Not every kid on this earth can be a doctor or a lawyer-nor should they be! We need a variety of skilled adults for a healthy, functioning economy, and the true "success stories" are the ones who are doing what they love.

One of the best things you can do for your child is to see what they are truly passionate about

and then support them in it. Encourage your children by helping them to succeed at the things they love best!

Consequences: The Best Teacher

So how *do* you get your children to do their homework? You don't! Instead, you leave homework up to your children, and let them deal with the consequences directly.

Here are four effective ways to inspire your children to do their homework:

1. **Let your children experience poor grades.** This is difficult, I know but critical. When report cards come out, sit down with your children and ask how they feel about their grades. Discuss which areas they want to improve in and which areas they are proud of. Sometimes going to summer school and missing out on summer fun is a big motivator to do better next time.
2. **Pay attention to the subjects they are interested in.** Ask them about their interests, hobbies, and projects. Support them in their activities any way that you can.
3. **Attend as many of your child's school events as possible.** Go to the parent-teacher interviews, the concerts, and the games, and demonstrate your interest, care, and support.
4. **Stop reminding them about homework.** Leave the responsibility for their homework to them. In order for your children to do well in school over the long-term-and ultimately in life!-they need to care about their homework and responsibilities more than you do.

Gimmicks, lies, guilt trips, and similar homework motivation techniques don't help. Instead, choose to make a small investment in your kids' future success: Give them the support and encouragement they need now. They'll ultimately feel more confident about making their own choices and taking responsibility for their achievements-and then you won't have to motivate them to do their homework any more. After all, chances are you have already passed your schooling and don't need to do it again.

Kelly Nault, MA corporate spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! Sign up for her free online parenting course at www.UltimateParenting.com.

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