

How to Teach a Child About...

**Motivation**

- Motivation is that inner drive that inspires us to action- to make plans and follow through with them, based on specific elements of our self-concept.
- Getting positively motivated and staying that way engenders the **energy behind positive action.**

- We take for granted that motivation is an inborn trait and that some folks are motivated and others aren't! But naming a thing, teaching it explicitly, can help make the concept known to a child.



- Seeing motivation as the powerful tool it can be may help your child recognize it as one of their own inner drives.



- In truth, all action is motivated by some inner need or thought. Helping your child to understand this will allow them to examine what motivates them and use it for constructive purposes.



# Preschool

- Very young children watch us and listen to us. Eventually they know that there are reasons for what we do. If it is cold, we may put on a sweater. If we are hungry, we eat. Many of our actions are motivated by our need to survive or be comfortable.



- Other needs are clearly motivated by other factors. For example a hug is motivated by love or by fondness.
- Going out is motivated by the desire to have some fun! The observations kids make and the connections that happen as a result, cause kids learn about motivation.

# Preschool

Very young children often ask "Why?" Your explanations will help them understand the motivation behind actions and decisions. Thinking out loud when doing something or weighing the factors while making a decision is an everyday way to help them learn about motivation.



- As they grow, you can help your child get in touch with what motivates them by listening closely and reflecting back what they say.
- Their wants and needs along with their reactions to events around them will be the indicators of what motivates them.



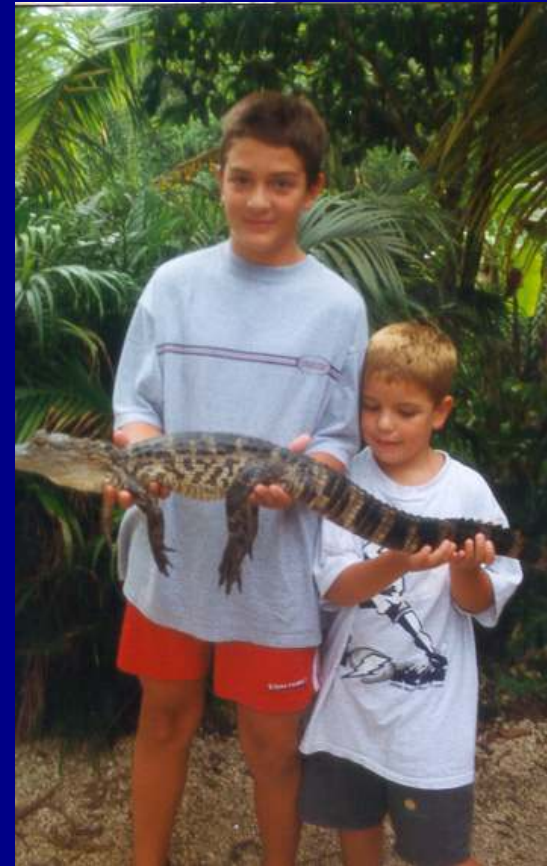
# Main points to address:

- **Very young children learn about motivation by watching and listening to us.**
- **Thinking out loud can help kids know the “whys” behind things.**
- **Listening to your child and reflecting back to them what they’ve said will help them become aware of what motivates them.**

# Grades K-3rd

- Early school experiences will spark the motivation of your youngster. The excitement of a new environment, new people and new things to do will cause your child to be highly motivated. Curiosity is one of the major motivators at this age as they take in information about the world. Kids this age are also motivated by the need to connect and interact with others.

- The need to please and be noticed- heard and seen- is strong at this age.
- Viewing behavior, both positive and negative from this perspective will help you and your child understand why they do what they do.



- Motivation from fear can manifest in many ways: a reluctance to go to bed, refusal to get on the school bus, hesitancy to join activities in school.
- Understanding your child's motivations will help them resolve their fears.



- You can also help your child understand the puzzling behavior of others by exploring the possible reasons why people do what they do and say what they say.
- Keep such conversations light and without blame.



The aim is to make  
your child aware of  
the motivations of  
others without  
criticizing or judging.



# What motivates a child...

- By this time, you will have a good idea of what motivates and inspires your child.
- Perhaps it is enthusiasm. Maybe it is ordering things around them.
- Or it could be their desire to be center stage.
- Children are always motivated when they are pursuing their interests or expressing their preferences.

# Main points to address:

- **The need to be seen and heard is strong at this age.**
- **Motivation stemming from fear can explain some negative behaviors.**
- **Recognizing and encouraging your child's natural bent and gifts can motivate them to succeed.**

## Grades 4-6th

- Children this age are actively discovering their natural gifts. Parents recognizing and supporting the development of these gifts, without pushing, are helping their child develop intrinsic motivation.

# Experiencing success

- Experiencing success is highly motivating.
- A child who learns in a natural environment, employing their creativity is learning to take risks and try new things.
- Dealing with failure and persisting until successful motivates further exploration.



# Listening to child's hopes and dreams

- Listening to your child's hopes and dreams without criticizing and without a great deal of input helps them experience and verbalize their own inner motivation.
- Kids at this age love to explore different possibilities and often fancy themselves as someone remarkable. This hope is a priceless element of motivation.
- All of us have the potential to impact the world in meaningful and positive ways.

- Activities that touch the heart, mind and spirit of a child are motivating.
- Volunteering at an animal rescue, participating in a community cleanup, or reading to a lonely senior can spark compassion and creativity- both great motivators.



- In group situations, a sense of community is essential to maintaining motivation. Having a shared purpose that dovetails with individual purpose or vision inspires positive action and shared responsibility.
- Teach your child the power of thought over their lives. What you think determines what you become.



- Older children have the capacity to see the relationship between positive thought and words to positive and productive action.
- Bringing this truth to conscious awareness will help them monitor their own thoughts and words.

- Believe in your child's ability to function as an independent and constructive person.
- Talk to them about why, or why not, you do or choose not to do something.
- Help them become competent in areas that turn them on, even if it is not what you would have picked.

- The confidence and satisfaction they will gain from being involved and successful in something meaningful to them will cause them to experience first hand what true motivation is.

## Main points to address:

- **Success at something of personal interest and meaning is motivating.**
- **Listen to your child's hopes and dreams without criticizing.**
- **Activities that touch the mind, heart and spirit motivate repeat experiences.**
- **Teach your child the power of their thoughts and words.**