

Home Learning Advice – General No.4

15th May 2020



Dear Parents

Over the past few weeks we have talked about how to engage your child in learning. This time we will give more pointers on how to help your child to work hard and do their best.

What motivates children to work?

Everybody needs to feel that there is a purpose to what they do, children are just the same. So, children need to understand that you care that they work hard. There are several ways you can do this.

Set expectations

To care about their work, children, need to know what is expected of them for each task, so it is important that you tell them before they start a task. If you would like them to read a certain number of pages or to write a certain amount, then tell them before they begin. Remember this needs to be at the right level for their age and their reading and writing skills.

'Complete tasks'

Children will know this behaviour from school where they understand that completing tasks is an important part of learning. Tell them what you want them to do and what you expect a 'completed task' to look like. Be as clear as possible and discuss any difficulties they may have with them before they start.

Provide some support as they work

If your child seems to have lost interest in their task, it may well be because they need some help. Children can sometimes find themselves 'stuck' as they work at a task. They might have read a word they don't understand or, if they are writing, they might need help to work out what to write next.

The key here is to ask questions. Ask why they have stopped work, is there a problem, can you help? Then try to help them to take the next step and keep going. Children get this help from their teacher when they are in school and it is important for them to learn.

How to help children to work at home:

1. Have a routine and allow children to be comfortable.
2. Think about sessions and what went well.
3. Tasks shouldn't be too long or too difficult.
4. Talk to your child about how they learn and model behaviour that will help them to learn well.
5. Don't criticise, praise hard work and make it fun!

Feedback is very important

When children work at home, they need to feel that what they have done matters, so it is important that an adult looks at their work and makes them feel valued:

- Check if your child has met your expectations for what you agreed should be a 'completed task'. Praise what they have done to work towards completing the task. If it is not finished, then agree with them what they could do to complete it and ask them to do so.
- If the school has a system for collecting children's work and providing feedback, then please make sure the work is sent to the teacher. Read any feedback from the teacher with your child, discuss everything they did well, and gain some ideas for what they can work to improve next time.
- Children may not be able to send their work to their teacher, so it is very important that **you** give them feedback. It is best to be very positive about what they have done well. Many schools use '**two stars and a wish**'. This is a simple model which means that you would tell your child two things they have done well, and one way they could improve their work next time. For example, *"Your writing has some excellent ideas (first star) and your handwriting is very good (second star), next time please could you try to improve your spelling (a wish)"*.

Remember to make this 'wish' part of your expectations when they start their next task and discuss with them how they will achieve the 'wish'.

Nursery and Reception Children

Talk to your children:

Talk to your child about how his/her five senses strengthen everyday experiences that we have. As you talk with your child talk about what they are doing, for example **smelling** the flowers on a beautiful spring day, **hearing** the birds singing, a yummy **tasting** cookie, **seeing** different things in a book or outside and **feeling** with their hands or feet different shapes in the home.

Extend children's vocabulary:

Children need to hear a word several times before they start to use it. This means that you might use a word with your child many times before he/she actually says the word. Children understand far more words than they can actually say so keep repeating words to give them more opportunities to read them.

Read to and with your child:

Find a time that works for you. Bedtimes are great, but anytime during the day works too! Talk about the pictures. Be as expressive as possible when reading aloud to your child. Use emotion, use voices, and make sounds, as it all adds to your child's enthusiasm for the story and they will start to do the same.

Phonics/Blending:

As you continue to practise all of the alphabet sounds, focus on 1-3 new sounds at a time. Keep blending the sounds and say the whole word in one go. Remember, blending is the skill that helps us read. Here are some more words you can blend, this time ending in 'an', **ban, can, fan, man, pan** and **tan**. Encourage your child to write

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the letters on card or paper and ask them to build these words, in doing so, children can clearly see how letters spell sounds and how these sounds can be blended into words. Check our Letter Cues document for the formation of each letter:



SFA Letter Cues.docx

Maths:

Talk about words that refer to the position of one thing to another with your child such as **over, under, around** and **through**. Encourage your child to use actions alongside these words and get them to say them. Tidy up time is a great opportunity to practise this, for example, "Put the toys **into** the basket; "Sit teddy **on** the shelf next to the books".

Physical Development:

Try throwing carefully; watch where you're throwing to at all times. You could throw using two hands into a box. Stand away from the box then using two hands throw a soft object like a teddy or rolled up socks into the box. Next try it using one hand (the one you write with). You can make it harder or easier by either moving the target further away or closer or change the size of the box or objects.

We'd love our [@successforall](#) schools to share their home learning! Why not ask your parents to include us in your Tweets?

