

Fun Ways to Motivate Your Kids

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PARTICIPATION POINTS

Giving Participation Points is a great way to get your kid involved in the lesson!

1. On a whiteboard, poster paper, etc. write your child's name.
2. Put a tally mark next to his/her name each time your child:
 - Asks a question about the topic you're discussing
 - Follows directions the first time they are given
 - Shares an idea relevant to the topic you're studying
 - Stays on task
 - Completes the task in a timely manner

At the beginning of the day or week, set a goal of how many points your child is capable of receiving. At the end of the day or week, reward your child with a small treat or prize if he/she reaches the goal!

TERRIFIC TICKETS!

- Buy a roll of "raffle" tickets at a local office supply store or make your own tickets!
- Give tickets for:
 - Participation
 - Behavior
 - Good Handwriting
 - Completed Assignments
- Have your child collect the tickets, storing them in a Ziploc baggie or small container.
- Set a goal and reward your child once the goal has been met. (You may even want to set short term and long term goals.) For example:
 - 10 tickets = small candy, stickers, pen, small toy from Prize Box, etc.
 - 100 tickets = trip to McDonalds, rent a video, etc.

TIME CARDS

- Take a 3x5 index card and write a subject that needs to be completed each day for a week. (You may choose to have a Time Card for each subject or for a subject in which your child needs extra motivation to complete!)
- Write the number of times that week or minutes each day your child needs to work on that subject. (For example: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.)
- Put a string through a hole-punch in the card and tie it up in a convenient place.
- When the student completes the lesson in that particular subject for that day, then he/she may punch a hole in the card.
- At the end of the week, have your child turn in the card to receive his/her payment (whatever you've determined ahead of time).

BOOKS & BLANKET DAY

Turn reading into a PARTY! Once long term reading goals have been met, reward your kids with a fun reading day! (You may choose to do this activity for a few hours or for the entire day!)

During this time, allow your kids to read in a comfy location in the house (or outside if the weather's nice). Have lots of nutritional snacks available for your kids to eat while they're turning the pages. Some children like to get cozy with their sleeping bag and stuffed animals while reading.

Here are some ideas of things to have on hand for your Reading Party!

- Good selection of magazines and books that interest your kids. (You may want to visit the library the day before!)
- Blankets, pillows, sleeping bags, sheets to make reading "tents", stuffed animals, etc.
- Nutritional snacks and drinks

*Join your kids for this celebration and catch up on the reading you've wanted to do! 😊

POPCORN JAR

Place an empty jar in a place where your kids can view it while they are working. Scoop a spoonful of popcorn kernels into the jar whenever your kids have completed their work in a timely manner, followed directions, etc. Once the jar is full, celebrate with a POPCORN PARTY! (*You may want to make this party even more fun by including soda, friends, and/or a video!)

MARBLE JAR

Place an empty jar in a place where your kids can view it while they are working. Place a marble in the jar whenever your kids have completed their work in a timely manner, followed directions, etc. Once the jar is full, reward your child with a prize! (*You may even want to have a separate jar and goals for each child.)

STAMP CHART

Create a chart for each child that includes 20 boxes. Place this chart near your child's work place. If your child completes all assignments for the day in a timely manner, follows directions, has a good attitude, etc. reward him/her by using a rubber stamp to stamp one of the boxes on the chart. (*You may even have a "double stamp day" when a child can earn two stamps for extra good behavior!) At the end of the month, if every box is stamped, reward your child with ice cream!

AWARD TIME

Your child is **OUTSTANDING!** Let your kids know how special they are by giving them a special award for outstanding writing, reading, math, handwriting, or for any other subject or behavior! Teacher supply stores have all sorts of awards for each subject; you could even create your own on the computer! Have an informal Award Ceremony after dinner and present the certificate to your kid along with dessert! Your kids will gleam with joy and will take great pride in their work with this acknowledgement!

PUNCH CARD

These cards are similar to the punch cards adults get from places such as coffee shops where you can purchase 12 cups of coffee and then get one free! It is punched once with every purchase. Kids love having their own punch card, earning a prize when each number has been punched!

Give your child a small card (credit card to 3x5 card size) with a predetermined number of small numbers, circles or symbols that are small enough to be punched out with a hole punch. Punch out a circle on the card if your child:

- completes the day without complaining
- finishes work in a timely manner
- meets a reading goal, etc.

STICKER CHARTS

Buy a chart from a teacher supply store, office supply store, or make your own! Use the charts to record progress in subjects like math or reading!

Reading:

Earn a sticker on the chart for each book read. (Set monthly goals!)

Math:

Earn a sticker on the chart for each set of facts learned.

MONEY EARNED, MONEY SPENT

- Reward your child with play money (purchased inexpensively from \$1.00 stores) or make your own.
- Give your child a dollar for every chore, task, good attitude, etc. (Of course there are things in life which are expected of us without a reward; make sure you review this with your child!)
- Have a box of items with various price tags that your child can purchase.
- At the upper grade levels, you may want to create yet another educational opportunity by collecting taxes, gaining interest on money saved, etc.
- Depending on the personality of your child, he/she may choose small items like candy for a small price or save money up for a new basketball, book, CD or other long-term goal prize.

FREE TIME FUN

Purchase a small bag of colored chips and assign your own value system to them. Here are some examples:

- Blue Chip = 100% on a test, unit completed, etc.
- Yellow Chips = room cleaned, following directions, etc.
- Green Chips = neatness, shown improvement, etc.

Reward examples:

- Blue Chip = 20 of fun time
- Yellow Chip = 10 minutes of fun time
- Green Chip = 5 minutes of fun time

*Fun time could include video games, watching TV, playing with a friend, etc.

FOOD FUN

- Offer your child one ingredient to a favorite cookie recipe every time he/she completes a predetermined goal/task.
- When your child earns all of the ingredients, enjoy baking and eating the cookies together!
- Try this activity with other multi-ingredient fun foods such as pizza!

HOLIDAY REWARDS

EASTER

- Fill plastic eggs with small candy, coins, coupons, or small toy.
- Place these eggs in a basket near your children's workspace.
- Allow your kids to choose an egg to open if they complete all of their work (neatly completed and without complaints) for that day!

VALENTINE'S DAY

- Have lots of red hots, conversation heart candies, or small chocolates handy!
- Use the candy as markers in a BINGO game that reinforces their spelling or vocabulary words.
- Give your child one small candy for each math fact or spelling word memorized, each page read, etc.!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

- Allow your kids to complete their work using green colored pencils, crayons, and markers for the day!
- Have green foods for breakfast or lunch!
- Reward with green jello and other fun green treats!
- Create a "Pot of Gold", full of gold wrapped chocolates to be earned for superior work or behavior!

***Have fun coming up with your own holiday traditions and rewards!!!

BOOK BUCKS

Using play money, give your child a dollar for every book he/she reads. Once your child earns a predetermined amount of money, allow your child to "purchase" a prize from your Prize Box. *Another idea: You may want to have a selection of books available for your child to "purchase". Look for inexpensive books at Outlet stores, Dollar Stores, and yard sales.

PENNY COLLECTION

Preschoolers and younger children will enjoy collecting this coin, especially if they are placed in a transparent jar.

- Dole out pennies for every toy picked up, every letter written correctly, every time they say, "Thank you".
- Once the money adds up, let them pick out a cheap toy with the money.

M & M FUN!!!

There are several M & M Math books available that provide fun math activities; these are great, especially since the manipulatives are edible! Here are a few more ideas for turning a dull assignment into a fun activity!

- Give one M & M for each math fact that is memorized and can be recited quickly.
- Give a package of M & Ms for each group of math facts learned. (Ex. memorizing the twos in multiplication)
- Use M&Ms as markers in a spelling/vocabulary word BINGO game; eat them after the game is over!
- Keep a jar of M&Ms handy near your work area; pass out a few when your child does an extraordinary job with his/her handwriting, site words, reading, etc.

***Any small candy (Skittles, etc.) is sure to get your kids excited!

PAPER CLIP CHAIN LINK

Give your child a paper clip for every activity he/she completes independently. This could be used with a learning center. Kids can link the paper clips together as they earn them. By the end of the day/week, if they have enough paper clips to measure the width of their Math book, they could earn a special reward- extra free time or stickers!

PAPER CHAIN

Give your child a strip of paper for every book read. Your child may write the name of the book and the author on the slip of paper. As he/she collects the strips, link them together with glue, creating a chain. This will be a fun decoration and your child will take pride in the growing chain! Reward your child with a new book once the chain reaches around the room or down the hallway!

MYSTERY PRIZE!

- On a whiteboard or poster board, write a blank line for each letter of a mystery prize that your child can earn. For example, __, __, __, __, __, __, __ (think hangman).
- At the end of each day, if your child has followed directions, stayed on task, etc., reward him/her with a letter that will be written on the line.
- If your mystery prize is going to be POPCORN, then write a "P" on the first line. *It's fun to see your child start guessing what the mystery prize is going to be once the letters start appearing!
- Once your child has earned all of the letters, in this case POPCORN, celebrate with a popcorn party!

CHECKBOOK REWARD SYSTEM: (for older students)

- Create a play checkbook for your child.
- You begin each week with a specific amount of money deposited into the checkbook, such as \$200.00.
- If your child does not follow directions or does not get work finished in a specified time, he/she might have to write a check for \$50.00 to you.

- If a student breaks one of your rules, perhaps he/she will owe you \$25.00.
- If your child does an extraordinary job, reward him/her by depositing money into the "account"!
- You can use any behaviors that you would like to encourage.
- At the end of the week, your kids will be able to purchase privileges based on the money they have left in their checkbooks. For instance, they may pay you \$75.00 to watch a video with popcorn, \$50.00 to have free time, etc.

HAVE A PARTY JAR

- Find a jar and a bag of wrapped-up candy.
- Put pieces of candy in the jar when they accomplish certain things (finishing an assignment in a timely manner, memorizing a new set of math facts, etc.).
- Let your kids know ahead of time what the activity is worth.
- When the jar is full, they get a party, and the candy. (A variation to this would be to keep the jar on a balance beam scale, with a weight on the other side. When the jar and candy tip the balance, they get the party. Turn it into an estimation exercise, too!)

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SPECIAL

On Friday afternoons (the last hour of the day might work well), reward your children with free time, game time, etc if they have finished their work for the week. Students who have unfinished work from the week will need to use this time to complete an assignment. You may want to set goals each week for your children. If you see that they're having trouble getting work done, you may suggest that your students complete an assignment in the evening so that all of their work is done by Friday afternoon. You may even choose to have a Friday Afternoon Special Snack to go along with their special activity!

OLYMPIC SPIRIT

If the Olympics are taking place, take advantage of the Olympic spirit and find ways to get your kids motivated to learn! Here are a few things you might consider:

- Create goals with your kids in which they can earn points towards earning medals!
 - Neat handwriting on an assignment=10 points
 - Completing an assignment before the timer goes off=20 points
 - Completing all of the lessons assigned for the day=30 points
 - ...come up with your own task and point system! 😊

- Decide how much each medal is worth: Examples—(Bronze=50 points, Silver=75 points, Gold=100 points)
- Have a Medal Award Ceremony after dinner each night!
 - Create Bronze, Silver, and Gold medals to have on hand.
 - Consider having a small privilege that corresponds with each medal.
 - You may even want to use bronze, silver, and gold wrapped CHOCOLATE coins to create your medals!
- Use the Olympics as an opportunity to talk about the dedication and endurance of athletes and how WE can strive to reach our goals as students!
- Most important...use this as an opportunity to create a FUN learning environment for your kids! 😊