

# Motivation Methods That Work

“Have you finished your book report?” “When are you going to take out the trash?” Does it seem like you’re constantly nagging at your youngster to get things done?

Instead of nagging, try the suggestions and “can-do” tips in this special report. You’ll boost your child’s enthusiasm for doing what he needs to do—in school and at home!



## Offer praise

Never underestimate the power of a “Good job!” Children crave approval from their parents. A positive response, such as a hug or a smile, can be a great incentive. Whether it’s for washing a sink full of dishes or passing a math quiz, a word of encouragement will show your youngster that you notice his hard work. His self-confidence will soar, and he will want to keep trying.

**Can-do tips:** Let your child overhear you bragging to a friend when he cleans his room without being asked. Hang tests on the fridge, or send copies of a good report card to relatives.

## Create excitement

When your youngster needs help getting motivated for a task, find a way to make it enjoyable. For example, if you make reviewing for a test entertaining, you’re not only helping her study, you’re teaching her that learning doesn’t have to be boring.

**Can-do tip:** The next time your child is preparing for a test, turn studying into a game. *Example:* Draw a baseball diamond on a piece of paper. Ask her questions related to what she’s studying. Tell your youngster that she gets a base hit for every correct answer and a strikeout for every incorrect one. For every three base hits, she scores a home run.



## Show interest

Let your child know that what he’s involved in is important to you. When you express

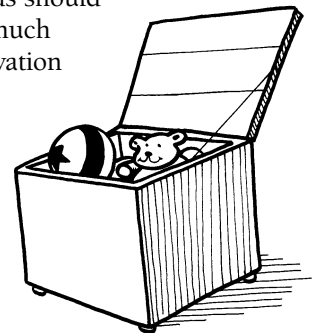
curiosity about the new computer game he’s playing with his friends or you regularly attend parent-teacher conferences, your youngster will see that you’re interested.

**Can-do tips:** Ask your child questions about his day. *Examples:* “How was the field trip?” “What was the score of the game?” Attend extracurricular and school functions, such as music recitals and parent nights, whenever possible.

## Give rewards

Simple rewards, like extra privileges, can be powerful motivators. But rewards should be used sparingly. Bargaining too much can limit your child’s natural motivation by putting the focus on getting something.

**Can-do tips:** Offer your youngster a special snack or extra TV time when she finishes her homework quickly. Or surprise her with a thank-you card in her lunch bag for helping you clean the garage.



## Use consequences

Experts agree that punishing kids for not doing what they’re supposed to do doesn’t always produce improved results. However, linking consequences to performance can provide a reason for your child to get the job done while giving him a greater sense of control over his life.

**Can-do tip:** Try to connect what your youngster needs to do with an outcome. *Example:* “After you rake the leaves in

