

**Prepared for:**

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## **Proven Ways to Motivate Students To Do Better in School**

**One of a series of Parent Guides from**



**Secondary Version**

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## Support Your Student's Learning Style

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Your student is more likely to want to learn if he uses the learning style that feels most natural and makes the most sense—to him. Help him figure out, and use, his best learning style.

Does your student learn best by:

- **Hearing**, such as listening to a talk or an audio book? If so, he may be an auditory learner. He enjoys music and hearing stories. He can probably follow oral directions very well. He is comfortable talking. He would probably prefer telling the teacher about what he has read than taking a written quiz.
- **Seeing**, such as reading a book or a graph? If so, he may be a visual learner. He appreciates artwork, movies and the live theater. He can probably follow a map like a pro. He likes to have something written on paper to back up oral lessons. He would probably prefer studying the periodic table to saying chemical elements aloud with the class.
- **Doing**, such as building a model or preparing a chart? If so, he may be a kinesthetic learner. He loves to move, making physical education a critical part of his school day. He would much rather participate than sit and watch. He likes using his hands to create things. He is probably much happier during his hands-on science lab than he is during the theory lesson that preceded it.

### Auditory Learners

Auditory learners feel motivated and engaged when they can incorporate more *listening* into schoolwork. Here are good ways to motivate an auditory learner:

- **Have your student record himself reading** a chapter. Then review by listening to it.
- **Use mnemonic devices** (letters or words that make you think of other words) to remember facts. Example: **M**y **V**ery **E**xcellent **M**other **J**ust **S**erved **U**s **N**oodles to remember **M**ercury, **V**enus, **E**arth, **M**ars, **J**upiter, **S**aturn, **U**ranus, and **N**eptune.
- **Have him ask friends and family members to give him an oral quiz** or listen to him recite facts.
- **Suggest that he see if an audio book is available** when he is assigned to read fiction. He can follow along in the book as he listens.
- **Suggest that he "talk himself" through a problem.** "Let's see, multiply and divide before you add and subtract. So the first thing I need to do is multiply two times six ... ."

## Reinforce Learning at Home and in the Community

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Learning becomes drudgery if your student sees it only as something that happens while he is sitting at a desk. Motivated students know that learning takes place everywhere. They realize that many of the activities that can increase their knowledge and understanding are also lots of fun.

Use your imagination and creativity to make learning come alive! Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **See if a video version is available** when your student reads a classic. After he reads the book, rent the video and watch it as a family. Ask your student to tell you about the differences he notices between the two. Don't forget the popcorn!
- **Dive into the cultures your student studies.** A wonderful way to do this is through food. Eat at a restaurant that serves the food of the culture. Or get on the Internet and search for some recipes—then try preparing the food together.
- **Expand your student's point of view** by taking him to something that doesn't fit with his typical tastes. If he loves basketball, take him to the ballet. Point out that athleticism might be found where he least expects it.
- **Get your student into the habit of reading the newspaper.** It's like giving him a gift that will last his whole life. Clip relevant articles or read bits of articles out loud. Broadcast news may be up to the second, but it can rarely provide the depth of information and perspective that the newspaper can.
  - **Visit museums.** They are especially appropriate when your student is studying science and social studies. Taking in an exhibit on rockets or life in ancient Mali will give your student's schoolwork a new dimension. Instead of looking at a picture in a book, he can experience life-size replicas of what he has read about.

