

A photograph of a desk with an open book, a lamp, and a mug. The text is overlaid on the image.

Keep Kids *Engaged* in *Learning*

Ultimately, we want our kids to love to learn. A passion for learning is quite different from just studying to earn a grade, or to please parents or teachers. Here are a few things you can do to engage your child in learning. BY LIM WEE MING, FOUNDER OF MY LITTLE GENIUS



When we were students, we fared better for subjects that we loved, whereas we usually fared worse for subjects that we disliked or had no interest in. It is also exactly due to this reason that students' results can range from distinction to a normal passing grade. We have seen so many cases on how academic results are proportional to a child's interest level.

With so many distractions around the student, it is no wonder that their focus and concentration are much shorter, and this urgent issue has become an alarming problem for parents to address.

No doubt, children love to learn. They learn best when they are excited and motivated to listen and learn. The key is how to make the subjects and activities interesting for the children to be engaged and to want to learn more. Interest can be cultivated when the child is young. You can also use innovative methods to draw the child's attention and concentration.

One way to ensure that your child is engaged in education is to let them apply the knowledge that they have learnt in school. For instance, when a school teaches values such as resilience, you can give real-life, day-to-day examples of people who are close to him, so that they can relate to them and understand the importance of resilience. Case studies are also useful for a child to relate to the stories and learn from mistakes.

Expose your child to many different activities, but within the same time frame. Build up your child's stamina. It is ideal to start from young, where the potential for brain development is higher.

Children enjoy it when their parents take an active role in their learning journey. Constantly speak and listen to them to keep abreast of the things that they do in school and at home.

Last but not least, always praise your child. Praising is something that a lot of parents do not do. A simple praise will greatly increase your child's self-confidence and motivation to try their best in whatever they do, developing holistically as a result. ☆

Have a topic that you would like to see covered about your child's development?
Email sc-ed@key-editions.com



Tips for Fostering Good Study Habits

With Singapore's Ministry of Education emphasising on holistic education, children not only spend their time on their studies, they also spend a fair amount of time on their co-curricular activities (CCAs). Depending on the type of CCA, time spent can be voluminous. Here are some ways that you can foster good study habits in your kids.

School Diaries

Schools usually provide their pupils with school diaries. For a start, your child can use the diary to plan what they want to do at the different time slots. For example, if your child reaches home at 4pm, they can plan to complete their homework by 6pm, rest, have dinner, and then resume their daily revision/reinforcement of different subjects in one-hour blocks. Such schedules are meant to be as a guideline. Although it should be adhered to as closely as possible, your child can still exercise some degree of flexibility in scheduling.

Set Aside a Specific Area at Home for Studies

Creating an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning is critical to success. We all know that there can be many distractions at home. Technology (e.g. computers, televisions, tablets, game consoles) is one major disruption. The presence (and lure) of siblings is another inevitable distraction. It is imperative to filter out all the distractions so that your child can produce good quality work or revise their work effectively. Demarcate a study area for your child with minimal distractions. It can be as simple as the kitchen table or a small desk, where children can read, study and focus without distractions.

Time Management

Time is of the essence. It is imperative that time must be managed effectively for efficient allocation of time between studies and CCAs. Educate your child to plan their routine for the day. They can come up with a timetable and pin it up on a conspicuous area for easy reference. This can also be a form of early training to prepare their younger siblings in managing their own time. Alternatively, you can encourage the kids to learn about time management by helping them create their own calendar. By getting involved in such activity, this helps to promote fun and learning.

Set Realistic Goals and Expectations

Many children are faced with the stress of juggling between their studies and CCAs. Setting too high an expectation will not help in managing their sanity in an already stressful environment. There are pros and cons in every country's education system; the key is to adapt to the system. Discuss with your child and agree on realistic goals and expectations for them. Education is only a means for a child to be a good contributor to society, so set realistic targets while still giving them time and space to develop in other aspects, such as character building, resilience, etc. Most importantly, honour your promise to your child after they have met your expectations and achieved the set goals.

Need some ideas on making your own calendar? Just turn back to p.6!

Discipline

Discipline is important. The last thing we want is a child who is just sitting at their table, staring into the book, but with their mind wandering elsewhere. Speak with your child and get them to focus so they can do their work right once, and after the work is completed, check that they understand their work. Explain to them that it is always better to do a job well once and for all, rather than slogging through it for a lengthy period of time. Share with your child the reward(s) that they can get once they have completed their work well, for example, a 15-minute break where they can do their favourite activity or read their favourite book.

Parents' Involvement

This is one of the most important things that your child can ask for. While most of us are busy working to bring home the bacon for the family, your child will feel more motivated when they know that you are taking an active interest in what and how they are doing in school. Set aside some time at night (even a mere 15 minutes will do) to speak about how they are doing in school, in their studies and CCAs, and constantly engage them. It is always good for a child to know that no matter how tough things may get, their family will always be there to support them.