

GOOD STUDY HABITS – part 1

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Some parents screw up kids' attitudes about school when they make comments like, "I only went to school to eat my lunch", or, "I hated school and I still got by." By saying such things, it is sending a clear message to kids that there is no value in education. Adults who express these opinions were perhaps those who struggled with study themselves.

Some kids are naturally good at particular subjects. People who like science, math, and technical studies are said to be 'left brained', where those whose interests and abilities are in creative arts, music, and subjects that involve self-expression, like writing fiction stories, are said to be right brained.

It has been found that the left and right hemispheres of the brain contain sensors that favor these attributes. Most of us are a mixture of both sides of our brains with a bent more towards one side than the other. Unfortunately, we can't choose the subjects we like and then ditch the rest. In high school I was in a shorthand class, which was a subject I struggled with. The friend I sat next to was really good at it and every time I tried to talk to her in class she was practicing her 'short forms'. After a while I gave up trying to get her attention and decided to practice like she did. She came top in the class and I came 6th. I was absolutely blown away by my ability to become proficient so quickly. What made the difference was that the change in my grade scores changed my attitude to the subject.

There are other factors that can change kids' attitudes to study. A good teacher can make the subject so interesting and be so encouraging to students that they are drawn into trying harder. They feel good about themselves and the subject when they see they are mastering it. A positive role model can make a difference in a child's attitude to study. I was always going to be a nurse because my favorite Aunt was one. My husband and I were adult university students when our kids were between 4 and 14 years of age. Their attitude to study was influenced by the satisfaction we expressed when we achieved our goals.

Here are some tips to ensure your kids develop good study habits: Parents, express a positive attitude towards education and have high expectations for your kids. It is counterproductive to insist your child should be top of the class. It is reasonable to expect them to do their best. Take an interest in their school experience and class projects (Just don't do their class projects for them! It will hurt you to get a failing grade!) Reward them for high achievement and get help for the study they are finding difficult.

Take your kids to the library and encourage them to read books e.g. adventure stories, history, and fiction. If you are having a problem getting your

kids to do their homework, ensure that you have a daily routine and, within it, homework time is set. Do not allow your child to do the fun stuff until they have done their homework. Encourage homework to be done during the week so kids can have a rest from school stuff in the weekends.

Don't nag your kids about homework. You can set up a little contract with your kids to include a two-way positive outcome. Homework completed for the week results in a reward during the weekend. The reward can be a fun outing. As a nation, we have lost a lot of the value our forebears saw in obtaining a good education and we have decreased in our educational attainment compared to other developed countries. Teaching our kids to value educational achievement will help to change their attitude to life.

There will always be things we like to do and things we don't. Certain parts of any job are boring. Choosing only the fun stuff is not realistic. Kids need to have a good all-round knowledge and skill base to be able to function successfully in jobs and in their everyday lives. Learning to master a wide variety of subjects at school is a great training ground for motivation and self-discipline thereafter.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.