

Back to School

by

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Q. Do you have any suggestions for helping a child to be successful in school?

A. Yes. As you send your child off to school each day say, "Have a meaningful day!" That one message can foster self-worth and be an important force behind school achievement.

While the old "Have a good day!" may sound good, here is a revision to ponder. "Have a meaningful day." Although "a good day" is positive in many ways, it has the capacity to set up a child for failure. Because of any number of reasons beyond your child's control, he or she may or may not have a good day. However, because of every reason within your child's control, he or she can always be counted on to say something nice, smile at a friend, or deliver a gesture of kindness that will be appreciated. Self-care, which includes eating well, exercising, and getting a solid night's sleep, can be part of a child's daily responsibilities. Any one person always has many roles to play that are valuable, needed, and important. Throughout the course of a day, a child can take excellent care of himself or herself, be the best he or she can be, contribute to the well-being of others, and enjoy the power of having a positive self-image.

With this new focus, your child will always be successful. There is no end to the ways he or she can be productive and helpful. There will always be tasks and assignments to do and other students and a teacher to help. There will also be the need for health care and self-care. By concentrating on accomplishment and contribution, your child can live each day in his or her own meaningful way. As you acknowledge all of your child's worthwhile and purposeful activities, he or she will grow in self-worth.

Albert Einstein said, "Instead of trying to become a success, a man should strive to become someone of value." His wisdom tells us that school success can and should come from the inside out. The A's and other outer rewards will be the likely bi-products of genuine inner effort. Learning, creating, and helping are the building blocks of success.

Often adults try to make children feel happy from the outside by giving them treats and taking them to special places. However, with the simplicity of this new message, your child will now have a concrete way to enjoy the pleasure of inner satisfaction. It is free, and he or she can have it every day. I hope you and your child will reap the rewards daily of this new type of communication. In the meantime, "Have a meaningful day!"

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