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How you can help your child at school

Five things every parent
should know to help
their student achieve
their potential.

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How you can help your child at school

Five things every parent should know to help their student achieve their potential.

Introduction

Will this help my child – am I doing the right thing?

This is the question most often asked by parents who contact us.

The demands on students today are greater than they have ever been. Not only do they need to learn more than we ever did – they have the additional demand of a lifestyle busier than we had, with many students doing as long a ‘working day’ as we do as adults.

This book has been put together specifically for adults who are looking for ways to help their child. This book contains five ideas that you can use that we know will help your student achieve their best. They do not require extensive training or masses of additional time. They may require a change in attitude and priorities.

These are concepts I endeavour to use at home with my children. I don’t always remember, and writing this book has been great as it has served to remind me how important these concepts are.

There is nothing in this book that is an ‘adults only’ secret. Share the ideas with your child and work on one or all of the concepts together. Make it a ‘team effort’, so they understand you are not ‘on their case’ – you are ‘on their side’.

All the best.

Rose Siva
ICS Australia

1. Get the attitude

Have you heard this saying?

“Whether you think you can or you can’t, you are probably right.”

We have all come across information on the power of positive thinking - our brain is the one in control – but if we tell ourselves that we aren’t up to facing the challenge it can become a self fulfilling prophecy.

But it is not just our own thoughts. Every day we take in masses of information from external sources – radio, TV, newspapers, friends, family members, and teachers. Every word we hear becomes a ‘message’ in our brain, and if that message is relevant to us we will file that away in our subconscious for future reference.

Then, when we come across a relevant situation, we review our subconscious memories.

Let me give you an example.

I was never very good at sport in school. I suffered from asthma, and was smaller than my classmates. I would never make the rep teams in any sport. However I did enjoy playing team sport – right up to the day a visiting PE teacher came to school. He set up an obstacle course and one of the challenges was run and jump onto a spring board and then spring onto a bench. Because I was smaller than the others I could not make it up far enough, and the teacher labelled me a ‘granny’ and separated me out from the group.

From that day on I didn’t join any of the sports teams. I felt not only was I not as good as the others – I felt that I would let the side down because I could not achieve what the others could.

Many, many years later I was looking for a social sport where I could achieve (regain) a level of fitness. I hate gyms (that is a personal thing) and I like working with people. I remembered that as a child I really liked basketball but, no, I am not good

enough to do that... But hang on, maybe things have changed – maybe I can find a social team where all the players are as bad as I am? So I found one and joined, and you know what – I may not be able to jump high, but my eye/hand co-ordination is pretty damn good and I sure could contribute to the team.

That visiting teacher had put a thought in my mind that I was inferior – a failure at sport. I took on-board that comment and, because I had no other reference point (I was not *good* at sport, but up until then I believed I was OK) that became my unconscious image of myself. I am sure that was not his intention, and he would be mortified if he knew the effect he had on me.

I call him a ‘negative wizard’ – he planted a negative thought in my mind and it stayed there, and I referred to it when I had to make a decision about sport. I did not have enough ‘positive images’ in my subconscious to counter his negative comment.

Negative and positive wizards

We all encounter lots of influences every day. Some are positive and some are negative. If we foster a positive attitude in ourselves we can help overpower negative thoughts. For example, if we make a mistake we can choose to think ‘that was real stupid – I’m an idiot’ (negative thought) or ‘that was real stupid – now I know not to do that again’ (positive thought).

But what about the external wizards in our lives? We can’t always hang around with positive people (although that is a really good idea). There are some really negative people out there, and the best way to handle them is to take in what they say, and then put in a positive thought to counter that attitude. I guess if I knew what I know now I would have handled that comment by the PE teacher differently. “OK, I can’t jump as high as the others, but I can dodge and corner faster than the others.” Maybe then I would have stuck with the basketball team after all.

What about the influence we are having on others? Are we being a positive or a negative wizard to our children?

Conclusion

We all want the best for our children.

We raise them from babies and then, as they get older, entrust them to others who have other specialised skills to assist them on their journey. Teachers have a special role in our children's lives, and often our children will spend more of their waking hours with them than they do with us.

But we should not use this to abandon our role in helping our children. Teachers, no matter how good they are, and how hard they try, cannot provide all the answers our children need. The amount of knowledge in our world increases daily, and teachers are faced by the daunting situation of having to provide more and more information in a limited amount of time.

As parents we need to partner the school and also take responsibility for our children's education. We need to be aware of the challenges and the options available, and not expect our education system to provide all the answers to all of the problems.

At ICS we attempt to assist schools, teachers, and parents by offering programs that can help students by reminding them of the core skills they need to achieve in their higher-level work at school. Students who are confident in their study processes and essay writing skills are better able to cope with school work, and understand that they have to pay an active part in their own education. Productivity skills such as advanced reading skills, note-making and time management serve to reduce stress and increase enjoyment of education for the students and the teachers who interact with them on a daily basis.

ICS has been delivering programs for over 25 years, and works with thousands of students in hundreds of schools across Australia every year. Information in the courses is available at www.skillcentre.com.au. Check out options available in your area.

ICS also offers *free* study tips for students, and *free* business tips in writing and reading skills at our web site. Subscribe today at www.skillcentre.com.au