

10 DO'S TO MOTIVATING YOUR HOME SCHOOLED CHILD

1. Arrange your house so it is "education friendly." Be sure to have plenty of the following within easy reach: interesting books, magazines, and catalogs; arts and crafts supplies; writing and office supplies; science equipment (scales, thermometers, magnets); math manipulatives and calculators; cookbooks and measuring tools; musical instruments and music books (we purchased ours from yard sales); a microscope or telescope; a globe, and maps prominently displayed.
2. Turn off the TV or limit its use. Few kids (or adults for that matter!) can resist the hypnotic grip of a blaring television.
3. Shut off the Game Boy and restrict mindless computer games.
4. Visit your library regularly and check out a variety of books on interesting new topics.
5. Gear your studies to your child's interests. Find a topic that inspires her, and follow her lead. Study science using insects, fractions by baking, horticulture by gardening, and geometry by building a birdhouse.
6. Provide a space for mess-making and have a table set aside for ongoing projects.
7. Establish specific guidelines of what is expected each day (we write everything out on a large, dry-erase board). Cooperative academic time earns unrestricted free time. Or as Jo Ann, a homeschooling mom from N.J. puts it, "To play hard you have to work hard. Both are great, but need to be balanced."
8. Allow for down time when kids aren't producing much at all. This "dormant" period is often followed by an intellectual growth spurt. Encourage and support this slow period.
9. Set a good example. Want your kids to read more? Let them see you reading. How often do you write letters, look up something you don't know, or play an educational game? Are you willing to try an unfamiliar activity or learn a new task? Kids mirror what they see at home. If your free time is spent vegging out in front of the TV, how can you expect your kids to do anything different?
10. Become your child's learning partner. Homeschooling is really a great opportunity to learn all those cool things you missed when you went to school. See your role as more of a facilitator... guiding, providing learning opportunities, and creating an atmosphere where learning is a part of living rather than something that takes place during "school time."