

6 DON'TS TO MOTIVATING YOUR HOME SCHOOLED CHILD

1. Don't purchase a full curriculum package and expect your child to complete everything included. Better yet, don't purchase a curriculum at all -- create your own. Read *Choosing a Homeschool Curriculum* for more information.
2. Don't encourage competition. In school, kids vie to receive the highest grade or be the best student. A real education is not about obtaining the highest grade or finishing first -- it's about learning to love learning. Focus on the process, rather than the results.
3. Don't compare your children to other kids. It doesn't matter if your daughter's seven-year-old friend knows all of her times tables, or the eight-year-old down the street is already writing script. Homeschooled kids have the luxury of learning when they're ready to learn. Enjoy this freedom.
4. Don't confuse rote memorization with real learning. Schooled kids reportedly forget 80 percent of the prior year's "learning" (i.e., memorization) over summer vacation. Kids (and adults!) remember things they love. If your kids are allowed to pursue their passions and interests, they'll be light years ahead in their learning without even trying!
5. Don't make it a practice of promising rewards for academic accomplishments. Your child may be temporarily motivated, but for the wrong reasons. Obtaining the reward becomes the goal, rather than becoming a truly self-motivated learner. Studies have shown that rewards can actually lead to apathy for or dislike of the rewarded subject, completely negating your original purpose.
6. Don't blame your child if things aren't going well with your homeschooling. Step back, take a break, look at what you're doing, and find a better way to do it. Talk with other parents, read a good homeschooling book (try *The Homeschooling Book of Answers* by Linda Dobson), or stop by our How to Homeschool information center. Flexibility is essential. Be willing to let go and try something new.