

How long are you working on this unit? How will you break up what you need to do over that time?”

**Make sure the goal is reasonable** and can be done in a short time. If you choose a long-term goal, set milestones along the way. Setting a reasonable target helps ensure students experience success, which will motivate them to make further progress.

**Determine how you will know if the student is making progress toward the goal and how you will know they have reached it.** Having a measurable goal is key to knowing if you’ve reached it, and therefore getting those positive feelings that come with success.

**Talk about how the goal relates to things your child values.** Is it a skill they are interested in learning related to a hobby? Is the goal related to a future job they want? Is it related to something else they want to learn? Making the activity relevant to the child increases its value.

**Document what your child can do if they get stuck.** Students aren’t going to be 100% successful when they are learning. Make a plan for how they will get help when they get stuck so they are less likely to quit and see a path to success even when they struggle.

### **Making the most of rewards**

1. Remember that there are all kinds of rewards
2. Use rewards to encourage students to do something they are otherwise not likely to do.
3. Make sure students know what specific behavior is being rewarded.
4. Focus rewards on effort, not results.
5. Occasionally give surprise rewards. Make the timing and type of the reward unexpected.

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## **THE PARENT’S GUIDE**



**INCREASING YOUR  
CHILD’S MOTIVATION  
DURING ONLINE  
LEARNING**

## INTRODUCTION

As parents, you might be wondering how to motivate your child to learn at home during extended school closures. Gaining new skills is rewarding and fun, but the process of learning can be challenging. What's more, distance learning provides opportunity for distraction.

In addition, at home there are many other non-digital distractions, often few or no cues to help students refocus, and no built-in breaks like recess at school. The good news is there are things we can do to help children focus.

One of the major theories of motivation is called Expectancy-Value Theory. It holds that **people are more likely to do something when they expect that they will be successful at it and when they value the activity.**

You are more likely to do something when you think you will be successful and less likely if you think you will likely fail. You are also probably more likely to do something when there is value to you.

## MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

A good approach to thinking about motivating kids of all ages to do school work is to consider two questions:

- 1) **How can I help them believe they will be successful?**
- 2) **How can I increase the value of the activity?**

### HOW TO?

#### 1. Goal setting and progress monitoring

Goal setting and progress monitoring are powerful motivators because they impact both the expectancy of success and the value of the task. Some tips for good goal setting:

**Check in with your child's teacher about goals for the class and your child and how they are tracking them.** If the teacher has already set clear goals and tracking methods, post them clearly and have conversations with your child about their progress.

**Have a goal-setting conversation with your child.** When students are part of the conversation, they develop ownership of the goal, which makes it more valuable. Here are some quick examples for different ages:

**Age 6:** At this age give the child short-term

goals and very specific choices. Example: "Let's pick one thing we really want to make sure we get done this morning. We could write the sentences to go with these three pictures, or we could finish these 10 addition problems."

**Age 11:** Work with children this age to create longer-term goals that are broken into smaller pieces. The parent should continue to provide guidance like, "Hmmm... how will your Friday-self feel if you wait to do all your work on Friday?" Example: "Let's set your math goals for each day this week. Let's look at your material. What do you want to have done by the end of the week? (Or what does your teacher say you need to get done by the end of the week?) How do you want to break that up over the five days this week?"

**Age 16:** Focus students of this age on what they want to learn, and then shift to what they need to do in order to learn it. Example: "So what do you need to learn in this unit? What do you need to do to learn that?"