



Motivate your underachieving middle schooler with support

Your middle schooler is smart, so why does he keep bringing home so-so grades? The issue may be motivation--or, rather, a lack thereof.

If that's the case, he's not alone. According to a U.S. Department of Education study, students' lack of motivation is a main cause of low achievement in school.

Of course, students become underachievers for different reasons. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problem. There are, however, many strategies you can use.

To motivate your child:

- Talk to him. Find out what makes your child tick and what he enjoys most/least about school. Is he bored because the work is too easy? Is he overwhelmed because the work is too hard? Figure out your child's feelings and you'll be that much closer to solving the issue.
- Work with his school. Talk with your preteen's teachers regularly. Get their thoughts on how he's doing in class. Ask for suggestions about encouraging him to try harder.
- Believe in him. Your preteen may feel like the whole world is against him. So show him that you're always on his side. Knowing you believe in him may go a long way toward motivating him to do better in school.

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