

Build in rewarding opportunities for social interaction.

- Your student may find an otherwise tedious or frustrating task to be more motivating if it provides an opportunity for social interaction. An adult tutor, for instance, can provide support and encouragement that can kindle motivation for a student.
 - One caution, though: social interactions can be so entertaining that they interfere with learning! Instructors can minimize social distractions in academic situations by making their expectations for student work very clear from the outset and by monitoring social groupings to ensure that academics always remain the focus.

Provide audiences for student work.

- One social context that can be extremely motivating is to have an audience that will eventually evaluate one's creative work. Parents can encourage students to present it to live audiences (e.g., a poetry reading).

Reduce the 'effort' needed to complete an academic assignment.

- Research indicates that the amount of effort needed to undertake an activity (effort threshold) will play an important role in how motivated a person is to attempt the activity in the first place. If a task is made more difficult, it is likely that people will be more likely to put off trying the task. If a task is made easier, people will more willingly attempt it.

Make learning fun!

- Teachers have always used game-like formats to liven up academic material and engage student interest. While at home, you can try playing a game to review for an upcoming test that follows the format of the TV gameshow, Jeopardy! -- Try presenting test review items and requires competing teams to try to phrase questions for which review items are logical answers. Humor and fast-paced instruction are also methods for making learning more lively and interesting.

Create Low-Distraction Work Areas.

- While at home, try to seat your student in a location where the student is most likely to stay focused on instructional content. All homes have an 'action zone' so try to create a space for your student that is in a low-distraction area but is also close enough for the student to communicate their need for support. The ideal seating location for any particular student will vary, depending on the unique qualities of that student.

Restrict Student Access to Electronic Devices and Other Potential Distracting Objects.

- Create a list of possessions that can pose the potential to distract your student from instruction (e.g., cell phones, personal game devices, etc.). During instructional times, either completely ban the use of these items or restricts their use to clearly specified times or conditions.

Provide Opportunities for Choice.

- Allow your student a degree of choice in structuring their learning activities. This typically results in having fewer behavior problems during instructional times. One efficient way to promote choice during learning is to create a master menu of options that your student can select from in various learning situations. For example, during independent assignment, students might be allowed to (1) choose from at least 2 assignment options, (2) sit where they want in the home while they work, and (3) select a preferred snack/treat to eat while they have their work checked. Student choice then becomes integrated seamlessly into the virtual learning routine.

The setting in which we work can encourage us to give our best effort or discourage us from even trying to perform. Ideas to motivate by influencing factors in the student's environment:

- Reduce distractions in the home learning environment.
- Create a consistent room arrangement, with predictable materials and routines.
- Enlist your student's help to come up with rules and guidelines for effective learning.
- Create a memory-friendly environment. Post assignments and due dates, written steps for multi-step tasks, etc.
- Use a mix of verbal and environmental cues to keep your student focused and on-task.
- Ask your student's advice on how to make the classroom a more inviting and useful learning environment.