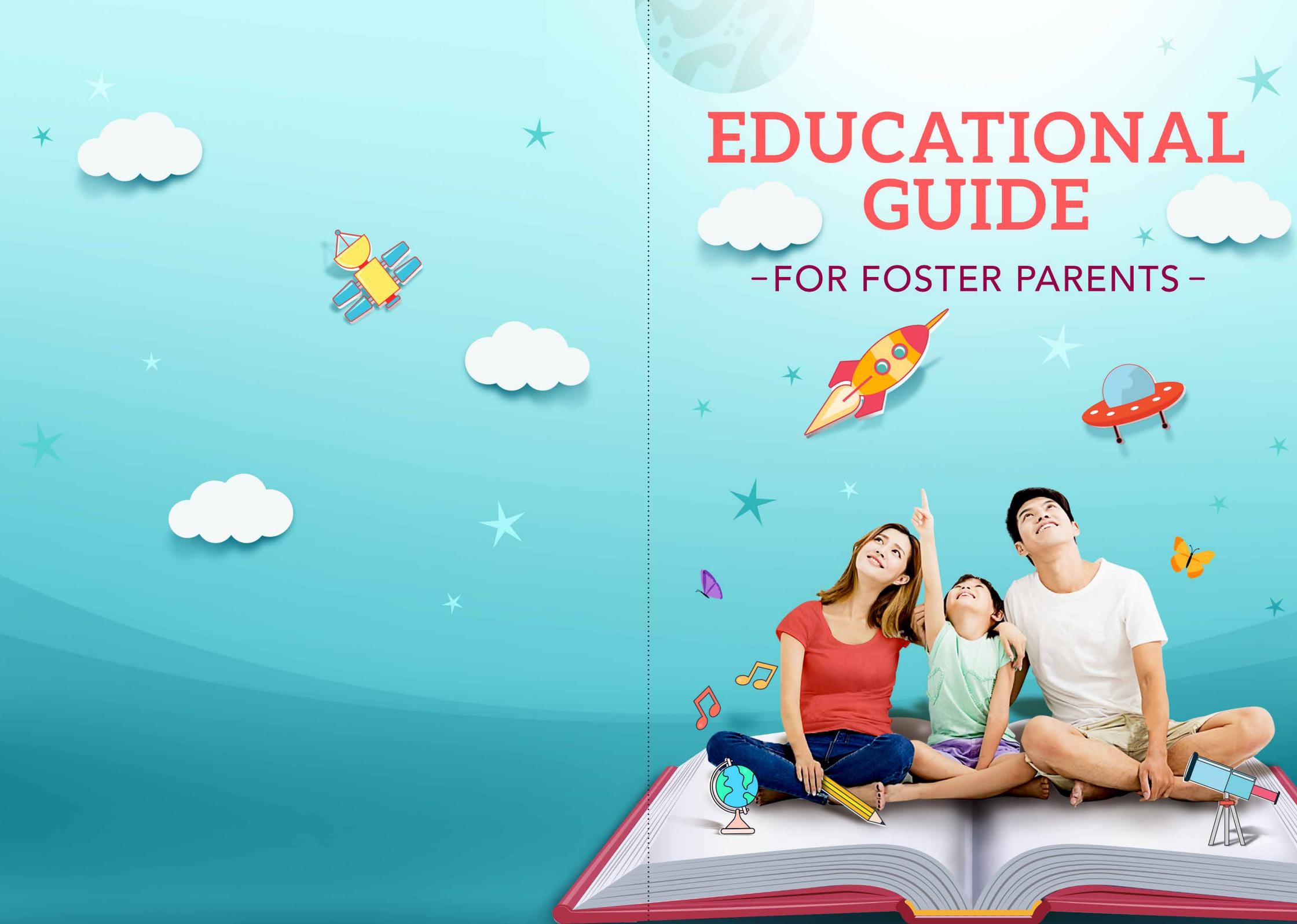


EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

- FOR FOSTER PARENTS -



FOREWORD

Our foster children have aspirations like all other children. They want to realise their potential, use their talents, and lead a purposeful life. An education is important not just to equip them with knowledge and skills, but to stimulate in them a desire to learn and excel. With a good education, they can make their own future.

However, our foster children often face steep challenges in learning. They need an extra boost to their development, to make up for the lack of attentive and nurturing care prior to being placed in foster care. Support from their teachers, community partners and especially you, their foster parent, is crucial.

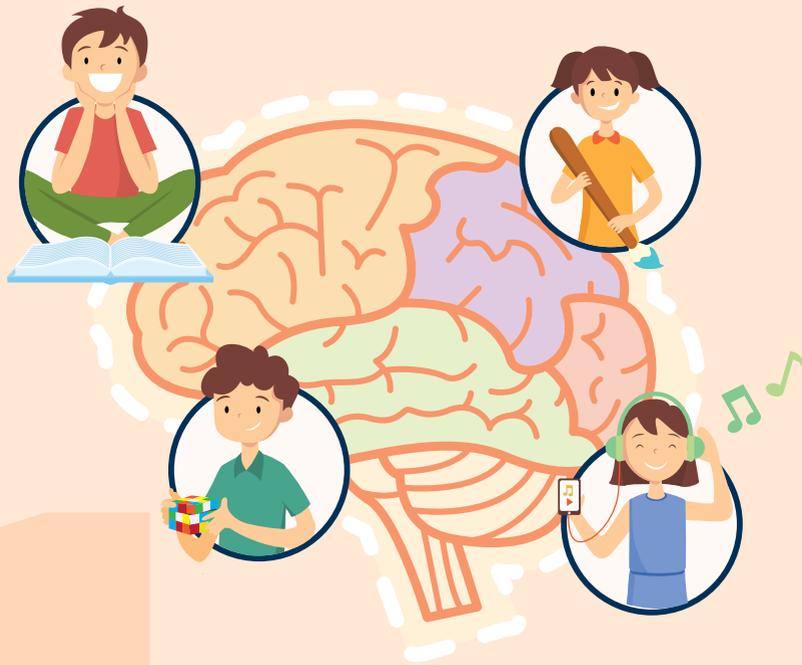
To support you better to work with your foster children who are in mainstream schools to improve their educational outcomes, the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and Social Service Institute (SSI) have worked together to develop this Educational Guide for you. This Guide provides practical tips and tools to help you walk with your foster children on their educational journey. It helps you understand different learning styles and to tailor the learning to their needs.

You will also learn how to encourage them to tap on their strengths, and to celebrate small successes with them. With your guidance, your foster children will gain confidence in their abilities, a love for learning and be the best that they can be. Read on, and find out more!

Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim
Senior Parliamentary Secretary
Ministry of Social and Family Development and Ministry of Education

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Understanding Different Learning Styles

Everyone is unique in his/her own way. There is no one learning style that suits all. Identify the Learning Style(s) that best suits your child to enhance his/her learning outcomes.

Types of Learning Styles

VISUAL LEARNING

A visual learner learns through observations (seeing and visualising). He/She:



- exhibits behavioural traits such as being impatient, a fast talker and having a tendency to interrupt.
- has difficulty with verbal instructions.
- prefers learning in the form of images, pictures, videos, mind maps, animations, graphic organisers, and slideshows.
- often appears to be daydreaming.

WHAT HELPS

Maintain alertness by movements and the use of lighting in the room.

AUDITORY LEARNING

An auditory learner learns through listening and verbalising. He/She:



- exhibits behavioural traits such as speaking slowly, being a natural listener, and thinking in a linear manner.
- has difficulties in paying attention and understanding body language.
- is reactive to noise, touch, and visual input.
- prefers reading out loud, discussions with friends and family members, dialogues and group work.
- likes to listen to music.

WHAT HELPS

Maintain alertness by playing an assortment of music, providing silence via the use of headphones, and diversifying auditory input to gain his/her attention.

KINESTHETIC LEARNING



A kinesthetic learner learns through doing and solving real life examples, hands-on approaches to things, and trial and error. He/She:

- exhibits behavioural traits such as being a slow talker, and speaks with hand gestures.
- has difficulty sitting still, feels bored easily, and likes to move about.
- enjoys role-plays, hands-on demonstrations, games, and use of computers.

WHAT HELPS

Maintain alertness through stretching, chair-rocking, pressing air-filled fidget toys, and playing with strings, balls, bean bags etc.

READ-WRITE LEARNING



A read-write learner learns through information displayed in writing with emphasis on text-based input and output. He/She:

- enjoys reading and writing in all forms, prefers to read by himself/herself than be read to.
- prefers writing out key words in a list, silent reading, taking notes in class, arranging diagrams and translating visual depictions into sentences and notes.

WHAT HELPS

Provide quiet places with minimal distractions for him/her to work in.

Notes

1. Discuss with your child his/her preferred learning styles.

Empty rounded rectangular box for notes.

2. Think of two activities that you can explore with your child to increase his/her interest in learning.

Empty rounded rectangular box for notes.



Establishing Effective Study Skills

The key for your child to be effective in his/her studies is for him/her to not only study hard but to study smart as well. You can help him/her establish good study habits such as improving his/her memory and reinforcing the strength of his/her imagination and association.

Improving Memory...

MNEMONIC

Use a word, a diagram, or an image to help your child recall a phrase, a list of facts or a sequence of events.

EXAMPLE

ROYGBIV is a way to remember the sequence of colours of a rainbow: **R**ed, **O**range, **Y**ellow, **G**reen, **B**lue, **I**ndigo and **V**iolet. **FACE** is used to remember the piano notes on the spaces of a treble clef.

RHYME

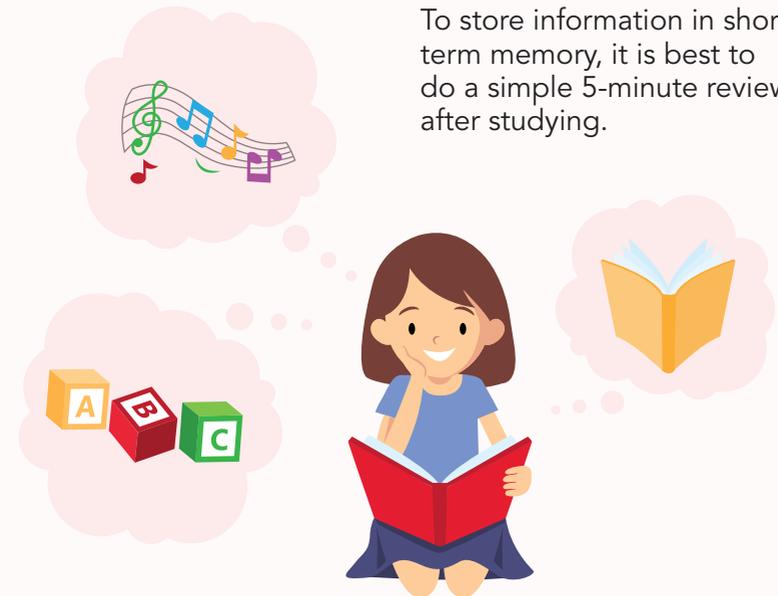
Use rhyme, which is the repetition of similar sounds in a sing-song pattern which connects with your child's senses and which his/her brain can encode easily.

EXAMPLE

Use of rhyme to recite sequence of alphabets. Placing the facts to be memorised into a rhyme or poetry form.

RECALL AFTER LEARNING

To store information in short-term memory, it is best to do a simple 5-minute review after studying.



REVIEW AND REPEAT

- Rehearse and practise at least five times to transfer information into long-term memory.
- When to review and repeat what your child has learnt?
 - ☑ Shortly after learning
 - ☑ 1 day after your child has learnt it
 - ☑ 1 week after your child first learnt it
 - ☑ 1 month after your child first learnt it
 - ☑ 3-6 months after your child first learnt it
- How to review what your child has learnt?
 - ☑ Do a summary after each topic
 - ☑ Do a Quick Check/Exercise after each topic
 - ☑ Do a test after a week of learning the topic
 - ☑ Do a test on the topic just before Common Test and revise the topic for Semestral Assessment

TAKE A BREAK

- Remind your child to take a short break after every 20–60 minutes of studying.
- Going for a drink/taking a toilet break/doing simple stretching after an hour of study are good ways to help your child focus and for him/her to remain mentally sharp and active.

ASSOCIATION

- You can help your child associate information by linking or pegging information through the use of numbers, symbols, orders, patterns, or images. The more organised the information is, the more successful the brain will be in locating the information.
- Simply link new knowledge with existing ones. Connections formed from the different information can be crazy, funny, or personalised for easy recollection and retention. Funny or peculiar things are easier to remember than normal ones.

IMAGINATION AND STIMULATION

- The more your child uses his/her imagination, the more he/she will enhance his/her ability to learn. Imagination stimulates brain functions, develops strategies, and makes conclusions. It expands the mind by allowing connections to be formed within the brain.
- You can stimulate your child's imagination from a young age through art work and handicrafts, exploring nature, reading, pretend play, imaginative fantasies, playing dress-up to create a make-believe world, etc.



Reinforcing the Impact of Imagination and Association...

EXAGGERATION

- Encourage your child to think big and be wild in his/her imagination by allowing him/her to have freedom to heighten his/her creative power.
- It is easier to remember exaggerations. You can help your child make a mental picture of something that is usually small into something comically huge or vice versa. Alternatively, exaggerate the size of important parts of the image.

ACRONYMS

- Help your child create acronyms for easy memorisation. This can be done by taking the list of words or facts he/she wants to remember and put them in an order so that the first letters of each word spell a real word or a made-up word. These words can then be put together to form a sentence.

EXAMPLE

To help remember the order of the planets, take the first letter of each planet's name (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune). The acronym would be: MVEMJSUN. This may be hard to remember until you give each letter a word and then form a sentence using all the words. This would now be 'My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Noodles'.

NUMBERS

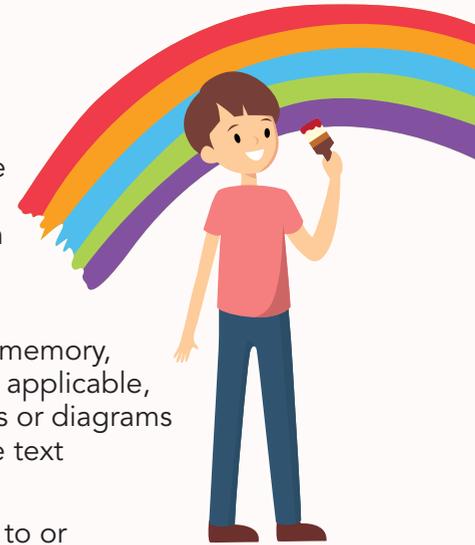
- Numbers bring order to your child's thoughts, and help make memories more specific.
- The use of numbers, letters, and indentation when studying helps organise information and provides clarity in learning.

EXAMPLE

List information as Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, and so on instead of remembering the whole paragraph on how to do an experiment.

COLOURS

- Colours bring memories to life, heighten visual senses, and stimulate the brain to enjoy the experience of seeing. They play a significant role in enhancing memory and in capturing better attention levels.
- Brightly coloured diagrams improve memory, especially for young children. Where applicable, do include relevant coloured pictures or diagrams as a visual representation to enhance text learning and comprehension.
- Encourage your child to add colours to or highlight the notes he/she has taken. This makes the notes more memorable and allows for easy retrieval from the text or notebook.



ORDER AND PATTERNS

- Patterns help children learn sequencing and make predictions, which in turn enhance their mathematical skills and logic. Patterns also help children in establishing order. Additionally, the recognition of patterns is imperative to learning.
- Encourage your child to arrange his/her words, thoughts, information, and actions in a certain order. This will help him/her organise and get things done. For a start, your child can learn to sort or group items by colour, weight, size, age, location, etc.
- Raise your child's awareness of the patterns he/she encounters in everyday situations. By identifying patterns and associating the patterns with objects or concepts, your child will be able to make mathematical connections and solve problems better.

LAUGHTER

- Making lessons or a child's learning environment fun and lively can improve his/her performance by reducing anxiety, boosting participation, and increasing his/her motivation to focus and study.
- The use of humour when engaging your child in his/her studies helps relieve physical and emotional stress. You may want to use humour to transform your child's anxious moments, such as before or during examination periods, to relaxed and comfortable experiences.
- Creating a pleasant and light-hearted environment reduces your child's examination anxieties. This in turn helps in information retention, which leads to better performance. The more your child laughs, the more he/she will enjoy thinking about what he/she wants to remember.

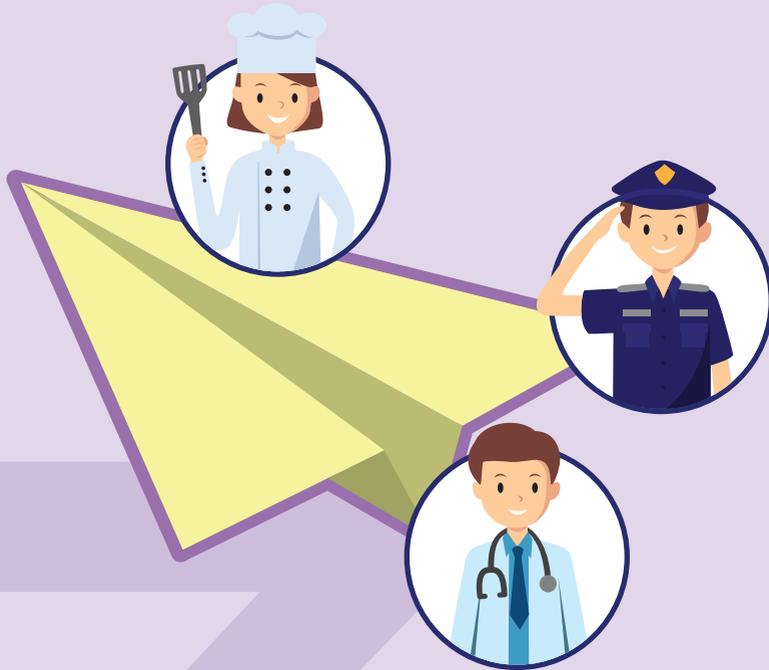
POSITIVE THINKING

- As foster parents, you play a huge and essential role in teaching your child to think positively. By modelling a positive and encouraging attitude in all that you say, do, and believe, you instil in your child a positive mindset, which in turn elicits powerful positive emotions. The good feeling enhances a child's ability to build useful and valuable skills that will help him/her cope better in his/her everyday life.
- In your interaction with your child, do also encourage him/her to recount positive experiences and images rather than negative ones.

Notes

1. Together with your child, identify some study skills which he/she would like to use to improve his/her outcomes.

2. How can you help your child use these study skills in his/her studies?



My Aspirations & Goal Setting

My Aspirations

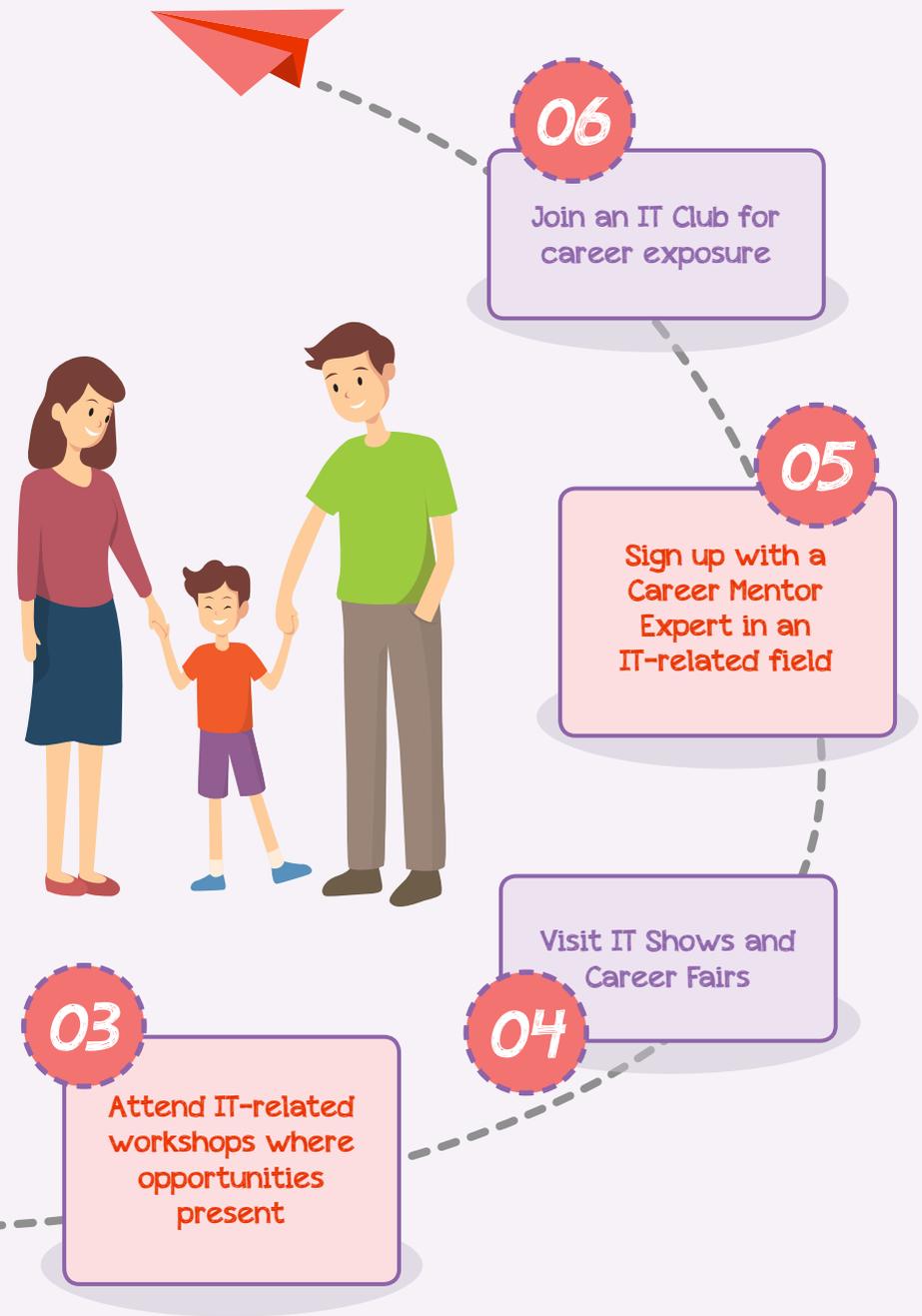
Everyone has aspirations and dreams. So does your child.

Aspirations and dreams are what children and young people hope to achieve for themselves in the future. As they grow and develop, they will begin to show interest in many different things. As foster parents, how do you help and support your child to work towards his/her aspirations and dreams?

You can talk to your child about what he/she wants to be when he/she grows up and help him/her to take actions to achieve them.



Below is an action plan you can do with your child to get him/her closer to his/her dream and aspiration.



My Goal Setting

You are encouraged to set goals/targets with your child for every school assessment and work with him/her to achieve them. Below is a template for goal/target setting.

Subject	Target	Actual Score	What can I do if I have not achieved my target?	Who is able to help me?

Notes

1. What are your child's aspirations and how can you help him/her to achieve his/her aspirations?

2. What do you plan to do to help your child achieve his/her goals?



The Importance of a Conducive Learning Environment

The environment in which your child is in plays an essential role in facilitating his/her ability to remember what he/she is learning, as well as his/her rate of productivity. By creating the best suitable environment for your child, you can help facilitate his/her learning process. Here are some ways you can do that.

CREATE A HAPPY STUDY AREA

- Positive emotions are vital to effective learning. Adding decorations that bring out positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, interest, hope, pride, inspiration, and love can help your child to keep pressing forward.
- Add colours to his/her study area.
- Blue, purple, and green are colours that symbolise peace and calm.
- Keep your child's study area clean and organised.



MINIMISE DISTRACTIONS



- Before sitting down to do work, ensure that your child removes anything around him/her that may distract him/her (e.g. putting aside his/her handphone).
- For some, listening to music may be a distraction, but for others, music may actually help them to concentrate better and study more productively.
- Know what works best for your child and choose the way that would help him/her best absorb the information.

SET A SCHEDULE

- Identify a daily homework/revision time with your child and ensure he/she sticks to it.
- A daily revision time will provide a structured learning environment and help your child dedicate regular effort to his/her work.



FIND THE BEST STUDY TIME



- Encourage your child to fix his/her study time to when he/she is most energised. Sticking to a study schedule can keep your child on track and avoid homework meltdowns.
- Just like how each child has a unique learning style, different children may learn better at different times of the day. Find the time of day that works best for your child. It is during the hours when your child focuses the best that he/she can absorb and retain information.

- Contrary to popular belief that taking breaks is a waste of time, periodic study breaks will actually help your child to relax and recharge.
- Taking breaks enables your child to be more productive and focused. It helps develop a positive outlook as he/she continues studying.

INCLUDE STUDY BREAKS



KEEP BODY AND MIND IN SHAPE



- What is good for the body is also good for the mind.
- Ensure that your child gets plenty of rest and nourishment.
- Ensure also that he/she drinks enough water and has healthy snacks (e.g. fruits, raisins, cereal, energy bars, almonds, multi-grain crackers, etc.) if he/she is hungry before a meal.

A conducive learning environment is more than just ensuring a comfortable physical space for your child.

Together with your child, talk about three ways to help him/her learn better.

Notes



Building Intrinsic Motivation

It is no easy task to encourage and motivate your child to work and strive hard in his/her studies for himself/herself especially when placement in care is time-limited. In addition, your child may also be confronted with different sets of challenges in foster care such as traumatic experiences prior to his/her removal from home, adjustment issues due to change of school, friends and environment, etc.

Hence, it is undeniably a challenging task for you to get your child to just focus and put in his/her best efforts in his/her studies.

Below are some ways that you can explore to build on your relationship with your child, and gradually instil intrinsic motivation in him/her.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation refers to behaviour that is driven by internal rewards such as a sense of joy, fulfilment or satisfaction. Your child wants to engage in this behaviour because it is naturally satisfying or he/she simply enjoys the process.

This is in contrast to Extrinsic Motivation where the child is motivated to perform a task to obtain a reward/incentive or avoid punishment.

In Intrinsic Motivation:

- Your child feels good and motivated to try despite the outcome of a given task.
- He/She shows genuine interest in any task that does not come with external rewards or requires any positive adult feedback to sustain his/her level of motivation.
- Some examples of Intrinsic Motivation include:

01

Spending time to read a book because it is pleasurable and enjoyable.

02

Baking with the foster family because it is fun and enjoyable for the child.

03

Desire to perform well in any assigned task as it gives the child a sense of accomplishment.

Ways to Encourage Intrinsic Motivation in Your Child

PRAISE YOUR CHILD FOR HIS/HER EFFORTS

- Place emphasis on your child's efforts, and not his/her intelligence.
- Praise your child for his/her efforts and persistence, rather than on his/her actual accomplishments.

EMPOWER YOUR CHILD TO MAKE CHOICES

- It is important to create opportunities for your child to evaluate his/her own accomplishments. Instead of stating what you think about his/her ability and performance, ask him/her what he/she thinks of his/her own work.
- Instill in your child a sense of responsibility by encouraging him/her to make decisions for himself/herself. Keep the choices to within reasonable guidelines and slowly increase autonomy when you assess your child to be capable of a wider range of decisions.
- For example, give the younger child a choice between two types of fruits instead of forcing him/her to accept what is already prepared for him/her. For an older child, you can give him/her a choice between doing homework before meals or after meals.
- Giving your child some say in how he/she does a task is likely to increase his/her level of motivation to do it. For example, let the older child plan how he/she wants to schedule his/her timetable during the school holidays.
- Allow your child two to three options of how he/she wants to perform a task. Too many options can be too overwhelming.

CELEBRATE SMALL SUCCESSES

- As a foster parent, you can support and assist your child to experience incremental success through baby steps.
- Your child will be delighted and more empowered at having experienced success especially when you have noticed it.
- Validate the efforts and not the natural intelligence of your child by saying "I am so proud that you have persevered and put in so much effort" instead of "I am so proud of you because you are so clever".
- It is also important for you to ask your child reflective questions such as "What do you think you have done to achieve this progress?". This helps your child to reflect and make a connection with the steps that he/she has taken to achieve the incremental success. This reinforces the sense of internal locus of control which strengthens his/her sense of confidence and autonomy to pursue his/her goals.
- Give your child a sense of accomplishment by providing him/her opportunities to fine-tune his/her skills such as allowing him/her to tie his/her own shoelaces or wrap presents.



HAVE REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

Do not unduly pressurise your child by pushing unrealistic expectations of his/her performance and conduct.

Do not expect your child to:

- show adult-level productivity and efficiency
- always be in a good mood
- always be at their best behaviour in school at all times
- always achieve good results
- be grateful and appreciative for what you have given him/her
- never mess up
- take initiative to complete all his/her assignments and projects on time

It takes practice and maturity to learn and muster Intrinsic Motivation for tasks that are less fun. If your child is intrinsically motivated and has high expectations for success, he/she will persevere in spite of temporary setbacks because his/her self-esteem is not tied to immediate success.



BUILD A POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD

- Rapport building is the key element to create a better relationship and communication between you and your child.
- Other than rapport building, seeking emotional connection with your child such as showing genuine interest to understand his/her feelings, thoughts, and concerns is vital in building emotional safety and trust within your child.
- This helps your child to feel that he/she is being understood and accepted by you, which in turn builds his/her sense of self-confidence.
- Spending quality time by engaging in simple activities conveys an important message to your child that "You are important to me".
- Your child will be more ready to open up and talk about himself/herself when he/she feels safe and assured enough that you will not judge or assess him/her negatively.
- Always seek to understand and not to judge when your child is misbehaving as there is always a cause to his/her presenting behaviour.
- Help him/her to discover his/her talents and inclinations.

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO GAIN A SENSE OF AUTONOMY

- Give your child some level of autonomy to complete a task rather than to complete it simply to make you stop asking.
- Avoid being over-protective towards your child by giving him/her age-appropriate tasks to accomplish on a daily basis. For example, getting a 6-year-old child to brush his/her own teeth independently in the morning and before going to bed at night.
- Do not forget to praise him/her once he/she has completed the task independently.

FOCUS ON THE GOOD THINGS THAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING RATHER THAN HIS/HER SHORTCOMINGS

- It is natural to focus on and correct a child's weakness or problematic behaviour which results in giving the child more negative attention.
- However, this can affect the child's self-esteem and create self-doubts of his/her competency. If your child persistently feels that he/she is a disappointment, it perpetuates the sense of failure and your child is likely to give up on trying.
- It is essential to affirm and validate the child's efforts so that he/she is aware of his/her own strengths and this helps to build resilience.
- It can be as simple as praising him/her for taking the initiative to fold the clothes, pack his/her own school bag or wash the dishes.

RESPOND TO YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

- Be consistent and genuine in responding to your child's needs.
- It is important to be sensitive to your child's emotional state. For example, take your child for a walk if he/she appears to be very moody and easily irritable while doing his/her homework at home. Make use of the opportunity to talk to your child once you notice that he/she is feeling better.
- Provide your child with opportunities to learn to be age-appropriately independent where possible.
- Caregivers are also the best role models for a child to learn emotional regulation skills from. When you are feeling upset with your child, it is alright to tell your child that you are feeling angry with his/her behaviour and you need time for yourself to calm down first before speaking to him/her again.

ENCOURAGE PROBLEM SOLVING

- You can assist and guide your child through the problem solving process by encouraging him/her to propose suggestions, generate creative ideas, and brainstorm the solutions together.
- Attaining his/her own solutions to his/her problems helps your child to increase his/her Intrinsic Motivation to want to independently solve other problems in the future.

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO EVALUATE HIS/HER OWN PROGRESS BY REFLECTING ON HIS/HER WORK

- Show keen interest in your child's progress by asking questions to get him/her to reflect on his/her work. For example, you can ask your child "What did you like most about this activity?", "How do you think we can improve on the activity to make it more interesting?", or "What else can we include to make it easier to learn?".
- This creates the space for him/her to reflect on his/her work and be more aware of his/her own efforts and what he/she enjoys doing.

Sharing by Our Foster Children

"I am very thankful that my foster family has always been so supportive of me all these years. My foster mother always reminds me to do my best for my examinations. She also asks me to take care of myself when I stay up late to complete my homework or revise for my examinations. I will tell myself to put in my best efforts so that I will not regret later on or disappoint my foster parents. Most importantly, I want to do well in my studies because I want to get a good job and achieve a better life when I am discharged from foster care."

Foster Youth Aged 20

"My foster family is always there for me whenever I need help. They help me in setting academic goals and provide me with information on how to achieve them. They ask about my aspiration in life and what I want to do when I am older. They are very encouraging and I do not feel demoralised when I fail to achieve a particular goal. Besides my foster family, my friends are also very encouraging and caring towards me. I like to listen to music while doing my homework as it helps me to stay focused."

Foster Child Aged 13

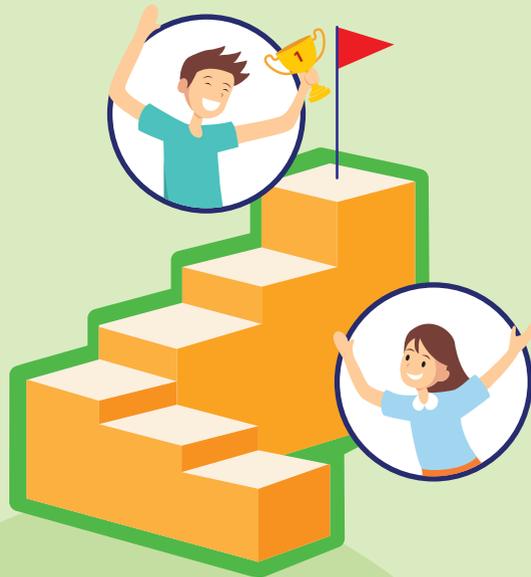
"My foster parents have been coaching and encouraging me in my studies. They work with me to set targets for every test and examination. I believe hard work and determination are the keys to success."

Foster Youth Aged 16

Notes

It is important for your child to know that you believe in him/her.

What are some things you may say to encourage him/her to persevere and press on?



Celebrating Incremental Successes

Celebrate successes (even small ones) with your child. This will make your child happy and recharge him/her psychologically. This gives him/her the motivation to tackle the next mile and meet challenges positively. Celebrating together shows your child that you value and support him/her and this encourages him/her to focus on his/her accomplishments.

Here are some ways your child is able to celebrate daily successes.

SHARE LITTLE SUCCESSES WITH HIS/HER FRIENDS

Encourage your child to celebrate and take pride in every achievement and share his/her achievements with his/her good friends. Encourage your child to acknowledge and thank friends or family who helped him/her along the way. This friendship bond will help him/her gain more confidence.

TAKE TIME TO REWARD HIMSELF/HERSELF

Rewarding himself/herself with something simple like his/her favourite snack, a short activity that he/she enjoys doing, or a chat with a good friend can contribute to his/her positive state of mind.



PAUSE AND BREATHE

Each and every achievement, no matter how small your child thinks it might be, is important.

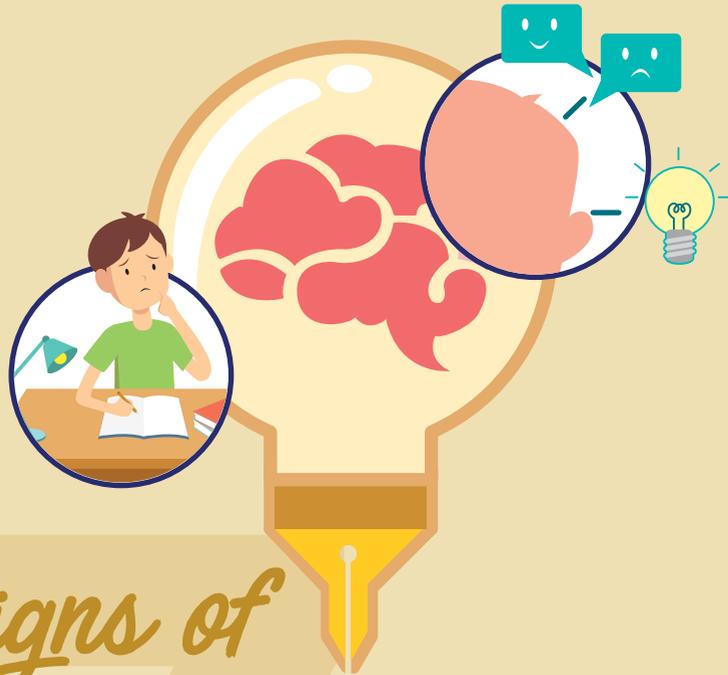
In between completing tasks, it is good for your child to acknowledge what he/she has done, and realise that no accomplishment is too small or insignificant.



Celebrating and enjoying small successes will give your child something positive to look forward to and aim for.

What are some things you can do with your child to celebrate his/her small successes?

Notes



Signs of Learning Disabilities

If your child has learning disabilities, he/she may have difficulty processing and understanding information. This is caused by differences in the way his/her brain is developed. Learning disabilities may not be due to low intelligence. In fact, he/she may have very good thinking and reasoning abilities. With appropriate support and a suitable learning environment, your child can overcome his/her learning difficulties and achieve success.

What are some signs of a child with learning disabilities?

In preschoolers, look for:

COMMUNICATION DELAYS

He/She has slow language development, difficulty with speech, problems understanding what is being said, or problems communicating thoughts.

PROBLEMS WITH MEMORY AND ROUTINE

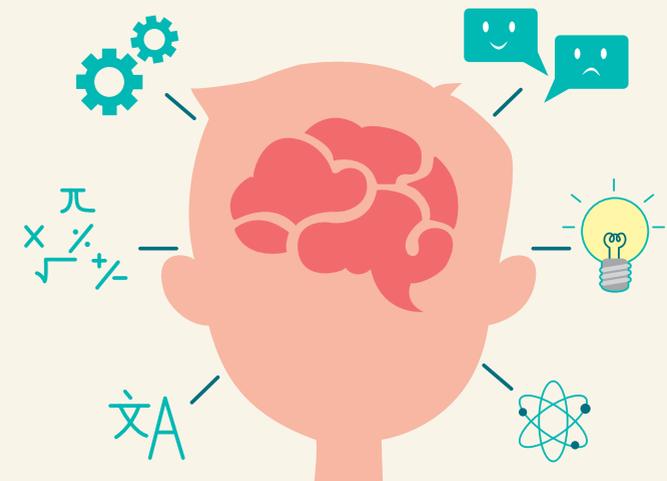
He/She has problems remembering specifics of daily activities, understanding instructions, or remembering multiple instructions.

POOR COORDINATION AND UNEVEN MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

He/She has delays in learning to sit, walk, colour, use a pair of scissors, or form letters and numbers.

PROBLEMS WITH SOCIALISING

He/She has problems interacting and relating with other children.



In primary school children, look for:

PROBLEMS LEARNING PHONEMES & GRAPHEMES

He/She has problems blending sounds and letters to sound out words, remembering familiar words by sight, and has difficulty in reading comprehension.

PROBLEMS FORMING LETTERS

He/She has problems with basic spelling and grammar.

DIFFICULTIES LEARNING MATH SKILLS

He/She has problems doing Math calculations.

DIFFICULTIES WITH MEMORY

He/She has problems remembering facts.

DIFFICULTIES WITH ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

He/She has problems organising materials (notebooks, binders, papers), information, and/or concepts.

DIFFICULTIES UNDERSTANDING INSTRUCTIONS AND EXPRESSING ONESELF VERBALLY

- Some types of Learning Disabilities are not apparent until upper primary or secondary school.
- With increased responsibilities and more complex work, new areas of weaknesses may become more apparent.



Notes

1. Does your child have any signs that may show him/her having learning disabilities?

2. Would you consider engaging professional help?



Effects of Trauma on Learning Performance

Exposure to traumatic experiences may lead to psychological disorders, with one of these disorders being Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), an anxiety disorder. PTSD can alter the brain's functions, resulting in problems with memory, learning, retaining new information, ability to analyse and solve problems, as well as in maintaining attention and motivation, all of which are necessary for your child to succeed in school.

If your child has prior traumatic experiences, he/she may also have a diminished sense of self-worth, expectations of failure, and little or no hope for the future. He/She is also unable to shift away from distressing cues and maintain emotional regulation.

A child's difficulty with educational achievements may be linked to the effects of his/her previous traumatic experiences.

With knowledge of how PTSD may affect a child, you are encouraged to set realistic goals and expectations of your child's learning performance. You should work towards motivating him/her to improve himself/herself holistically instead of focusing solely on the academic aspect.





Managing Expectations as Foster Parents

Unrealistic parental expectations can cause emotional harm to your child.

If your expectations are too high, your child may be discouraged if there is no success, may not put in effort, and may give up easily.

If your expectations are too low, your child may perceive it as a lack of your belief in his/her abilities and hence become unmotivated.

IN ORDER TO SET HEALTHY EXPECTATIONS, YOU CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Respond to mistakes with understanding, kindness, and encouragement to correct future actions.
- Not put undue pressure on your child.
- Empower your child to learn independently.



Ways to Manage Expectations

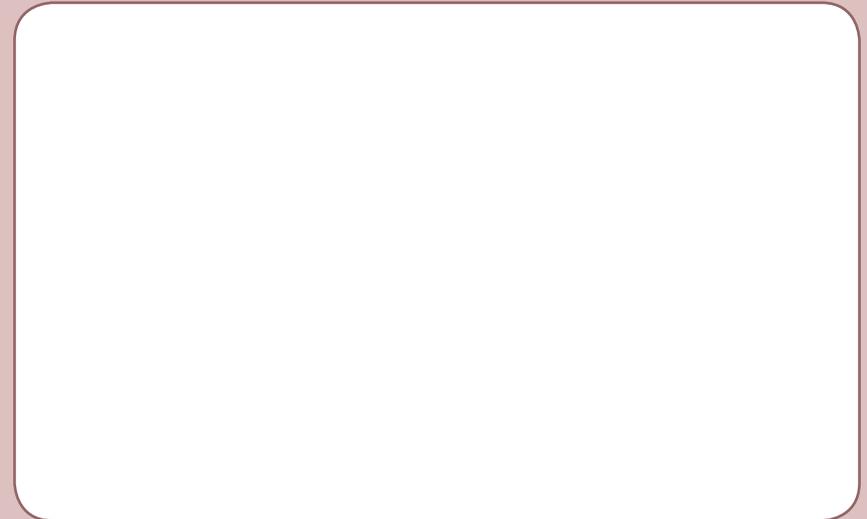
- Set realistic, achievable goals which your child is likely to attain.
- Guide your child to learn to set goals himself/herself.
- Be loving and accept your child for who he/she is.
- Do not assume. Be willing to see things from your child's perspective. Talk to him/her to find out what he/she can or cannot do and find the right balance.
- Make time for each other. Have a fun family dinner or play board games together.
- Practise empathy, negotiate, and compromise.
- Speak constructively. Use kind words and actions to encourage and support your child. It is not what you say but how you say it which will have an impact on your child. Be patient, strong, and persevere when times are tough.
- Be clear, open, and honest when communicating with your child. Clear and honest communication helps to earn a child's trust.

Notes

1. What do you hope to see in your child's results?



2. Is his/her learning performance the same as that of your expectations?





Building Effective Collaboration with School Personnel for a Successful Partnership

Transitioning to an unfamiliar environment can be frightening and unsettling for a child. By keeping lines of communication open and working together, parents, teachers, and school key personnel can ease a child's anxiety and fear about a transition and ensure that the child is coping well and always learning.

Communicating with school staff and getting involved in the school are great ways to create and maintain positive relationships.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS

Establishing a relationship with your child's teachers and school management team before a problem arises is essential as the parents and school strive together for the best outcome for the child.

Find out who your child's Form Teacher is. He/She is usually the person responsible for tracking your child's overall progress at school by monitoring your child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.

The following are some ways in which you can get to know the school staff:

- (i) Discuss with the Form Teacher and any relevant school personnel about your child's needs and concerns. This can be carried out through phone calls or holding meetings at mutually convenient times and places.
- (ii) Talk to your child's teachers where possible, including informal chats before and after school.
- (iii) Volunteer at the school, for example, helping with classroom activities like reading, school outings, fund-raising events, and other school support activities.
- (iv) Knowing the Year Head and individual subject teachers is also important. Getting to know the Student Welfare Officer or School Counsellor might help should you need extra support or expertise.

COMMUNICATING PROACTIVELY

- (i) Many schools make teacher and school e-mail addresses available to parents and encourage their use for day-to-day communication.

You can use this platform to communicate proactively with your child's teachers of things happening at home that might affect the behaviour of your child, e.g. access with natural parents, serious illness of a family member, birth of a new baby, a change or addition of a medication, a fight at home, etc. These are examples of things that can help the teachers understand why a child may be behaving in a certain way.

- (ii) The use of the Student Planner/Communication Book/ Handbook is another excellent way to communicate with your child's teachers.

While students use planners on a daily basis to record homework, test dates, or school events, teachers use them to communicate with parents. You can use the planners to keep up-to-date with your child's homework and class activities, school events, or communicate with the teacher.



PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES (PTCs)

Parent-Teacher Conferences give you the opportunity to communicate with your child's teachers about his/her progress in the different aspects of school life. It allows you to collaborate with the teachers to determine ways to support your child in his/her learning at school.

To get the best outcome for PTCs, do:

- confirm the date and time of your attendance with the teacher
- prepare a list of things/concerns you want to address
- provide feedback on any strategy or solution you have tried or adopted in the discussion with the teacher at the last PTC

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS (PSGs)

Parent Support Groups have been set up in many schools as another communication platform for parents to provide constructive feedback on school policies and programmes.

By participating or being involved in PSGs, you will gain support from other parents in your parenting endeavour. In addition, through this network, you can be kept informed of the happenings in your child's school.

USEFUL CONTACTS

It is important to know where you can seek appropriate help for your child. Please see the list below for useful contacts:

WHAT CAN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (MSF) PROVIDE?

- **Fostering hotline (in the event of emergency)**
- **Foster Care Officers**
 - Support and brokering for a range of services to foster children and young persons
 - Refer foster children and young persons to the relevant agencies for assessment, therapy, or treatment
 - Link foster parents with the school personnel, if necessary
- **Child Protection Officers**
 - Conduct social investigations and provide case management services for children and young persons who have been abused or neglected by their parents or caregivers
 - Look into the permanency plans of the children and young persons to prevent them from drifting in care
- **Clinical and Forensic Psychology Service**
 - Provides assessments and treatments for child and youth victims of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and their families so as to aid in their recovery
 - Provides treatment for parents/caregivers who have physically abused their children
 - Provides emotional support and therapy interventions for traumatised children
- **Counselling Intervention Unit**
 - Therapeutic services for children, young persons, and families known to the Child Protective Service
 - Provides counselling and family therapy

WHAT CAN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE) PROVIDE?

- **Learning Support Programme (LSP)**
 - Specialised early intervention programme aimed at providing learning support to pupils who enter Primary 1 with weak English language and literacy skills
 - Objective of the LSP is to equip pupils with basic literacy skills so that they can access learning in class. Support continues in Primary 2 for pupils who need it.
- **Learning Support for Mathematics (LSM)**
 - Early intervention effort aimed at providing additional support to pupils who do not have foundational numeracy skills and knowledge to access the Primary One Math curriculum
- **School Counsellors**
 - Provide individual and group counselling to students
 - School counselling support for student's mental health and social-emotional development
- **Allied Educators (Learning and Behavioural Support)**
 - Specialise in providing learning and behavioural support to pupils with special needs (i.e. dyslexia, autism, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) in a mainstream school
- **Student Welfare Officers**
 - Act as mentors for students-at-risk and empower them to make informed life choices
 - Link different professionals and provide support for families in need

School Teachers

- Guide, teach, and help students progress in learning
- The form teacher is the contact person who is in charge of the pupils in the class

Education and Career Guidance Counsellors

- Help and support students to explore their strengths and interests in relation to their aspirations in MOE schools, polytechnics, or Institute of Technical Education (ITE)
- Guide students and their parents in planning and making informed decisions for their education and career pathways

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