



Helping your teen find something they are good at

Help your teen find something to build their confidence and get more out of school.



Help your teen find something they are good at so, over time and with the right support, they can grow that spark, build their confidence, and get more out of school. As parenting educator Maggie Dent explains, it may take time, but it will be worth it. By being interested and motivated by something, your teen is learning how to learn, building a sense of self, and experiencing what it feels like to succeed.

Learn about how to talk to your child's school and read about out how your child's spark can make them stronger.

[Music]

Narrator: In the early years, our brains are like sponges. We learn everything we can about everything. But as we reach our teenage years our brains start to change and remodel. It's at this time our teenage brain starts to specialise and prepare for adult life. Your teen is beginning to find their passion, their spark. By being interested and motivated by something; by having a hobby that takes time and energy, your teen is learning how to learn, building a sense of self and knowing what it is to succeed.

Nathan: The key to getting your child engaged is really to find what their passion is. Every child has that x-factor; that spark. Something that absolutely energises them. And we can really help them if we find out what that is.

Narrator: If you can help your teen find a little joy, a little success or a little hope in one area of their life, you can spark a flame that can ignite self-esteem and worth, and fuel a love of life and love of learning.

Maggie: I did have a mum come to me once and ask... 'Maggie, my son. He loves racing motorbikes and he's in year nine. Should I get him, you know, off the motorbike now and kind of get him to focus on schoolwork' and I said 'Can you tell me what his average day is like?' And she said 'Well he gets up early so he can go for a ride before he goes and catches the bus to school. He gets home. He gets his chores done really quick. Goes for a quick ride so he can do his homework, so he can go to bed early, so he can go for a ride in the morning.' So I'm pretty sure what's going on right now is working. Guess what? His enthusiasm for racing motorbikes is giving him confidence and competence, yep, and control; which motivates him to get to school.

Narrator: Your teen may not have found their spark or be so self-motivated yet, but if you can show your teen, prove to them that they can get excited about something, then you can build on that.

Maggie: If they're struggling academically then maybe one of their options; maybe music, maybe art, maybe manual training, whatever it is. We've got to find something they're good at and kind of build that up a bit more. And that will shine a light on the direction we want them to go, not get them stuck in the darkness that they can see sometimes.

Narrator: By finding your child's passion, or spark, you are helping them develop a range of skills they can use in all areas of their life. And it's also giving them purpose, enjoyment, a sense of identity and can help them get the most out of their education. But remember, big accomplishments don't happen overnight. Finding your teen's spark is one thing, helping them use it for learning takes more time, and they'll need you, and their teachers, on their side all the way.

Discover more on the Spark Their Future website.

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