
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Students with self-discipline have highest success in school



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

How do you ensure that students have the tools to succeed in school? The most important tool may be the hardest to develop, but it will be an asset your child can benefit from throughout his or her life: self-discipline.

Also referred to as persistence, perseverance, delayed gratification and grit, this trait is drawing attention from educators and psychologists as a key to academic achievement that surpasses IQ.

In her TED talk, Psychologist and former teacher Angela Lee Duckworth said:

“I started studying kids and adults in all kinds of super challenging settings, and in every study my question was, who is successful here and why? My research team and I went to West Point Military Academy. We tried to predict which cadets would stay in military training and which would drop out. We went to the National Spelling Bee and tried to predict which children would advance farthest in competition. We studied rookie teachers working in really tough neighborhoods, asking which teachers are still going to be here in teaching by the end of the school year, and of those, who will be the most effective at improving learning outcomes for their students? We partnered with private companies, asking, which of these salespeople is going to keep their jobs? And who's going to earn the most money? In all those very different contexts, one characteristic emerged as a significant predictor of success. And it wasn't social intelligence. It wasn't good looks, physical health, and it wasn't I.Q. It was grit.

Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint.”

www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit.html

Duckworth believes that grit can be learned. She is currently conducting further research.

Other related factors that contribute to success in school and later in life are:

- Optimism: believing in a positive outcome
- Passion for the long-term goal or task at hand
- Ambition to set and reach long-term goals

www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200510/the-winning-edge

To see how gritty you are, take Duckworth's grit test, which provides a score and comparison to your peer group: <http://bit.ly/Q2QLLD>.

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Start building grit in your child at an early age

Students should begin building their academic stamina from the very beginning. In a study of preschoolers, researchers found indicators of long-term academic success. Concentration, paying attention and following directions were all markers of how well the students would do as they advanced through the school system.

According to a study conducted at Oregon State University, “Kids who could pay attention to teacher instruction and keep at a difficult task the longest were 50% more likely to earn a college degree than their peers.”

www.educationnews.org/parenting/paying-attention-persistence-are-keys-to-academic-success/

How to teach these skills to young children

In *7 Secrets to Self-Disciplined Kids*, Mark Merrill suggests the following tips for developing self-discipline in young kids:

1. Teach children to come when they are called.

Children who stop what they are doing when called learn to put aside what they would like to be doing to respond to what they need to be doing.

2. Teach children to respond positively to correction.

Most of us do not enjoy criticism or being forced to follow directions from others. Learning to respond positively is important for impulse control and will be a useful skill throughout life and work.

3. A number of social skills require self-control.

Listening, controlling anger and completing tasks all require self-control, a skill that we can work on throughout life.

4. Encourage children to take on activities that build self-discipline.

Help your child practice these skills in group settings and in a variety of extracurricular activities.

5. When a child receives a reward, like payment for a job or a special treat, talk about self-discipline.

External rewards are a good opportunity to talk about internal rewards. Discuss what your child did to earn the reward. This reinforces the connection between his or her effort and the achievement.

6. Use bed times to teach self-discipline.

Set a bedtime, develop a routine for bedtime tasks, and teach your child to stay in bed.

7. Morning routines, chores, and family schedules are opportunities for children to learn responsibility and self-discipline.

Responsible kids complete tasks without constant supervision. Privileges for being responsible should follow. These can include choosing their own clothes when they get dressed on time and staying up a bit later if they prove they can be ready on time in the morning.

www.familyminute.com/articles/parenting/discipline/7-secrets-to-self-disciplined-kids/