

ENJOY THE RAINBOW

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St. Patrick's Day is this month, and along with wearing green and eating cabbage and corned beef, St. Patrick's brings with it stories of Leprechauns. Leprechauns are famous for following rainbows in search of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Oftentimes though, they are disappointed to find that the gold was stolen, or that another Leprechaun has found it as well, and fights often ensue. How unfortunate that the Leprechauns focus so much of their energy on the search for gold. Unfortunately, they often miss out on the beauty that is a rainbow.

It is extremely important for children to have goals in their life. Without them, they would have no direction and little ambition. It would be such a shame for them to miss out on all the beautiful sights and experiences along the road to reaching their goals.

Often parents and teachers focus on final grades, graduation, college, and ultimately a career, instead of encouraging children to enjoy the educational journey. Education offers the chance to discover new things, develop the mind and learn to think in different ways. It stretches our interests and creativity, while it develops and strengthens our character. Education has so much more to offer than a diploma. The learning process is far more important than the grade, and the opportunities exceed the degrees.

If we can instill in our children a life-long love for learning, the world and its people will have so much to offer them. There are never-ending possibilities. Here are some examples of ways to help support your children on their educational journey:

- ♣ Talk with your child daily about school, everyday happenings, and current events.
- ♣ Monitor television programs. Television can be instructional and also relaxing in proper doses. Talk with your child about the programs he or she watches.
- ♣ Provide a quiet, well-lit area in which your child can study. Set up a desk or table designated for study, but don't put it in an area full of distractions. Provide materials such as pens, pencils, a pencil sharpener, paper, a dictionary, and a thesaurus. Some people work best with background music, but for others it is distracting. Get to know what works best for your child.
- ♣ Take an active interest in your child's schoolwork. Assist your child when he or she has an upcoming test and needs to study. Discuss topics being covered in school, and be sure to discuss them with the teacher as well.
- ♣ Provide learning experiences outside of school. Parks, museums, art galleries, ballet, opera, musicals, libraries, zoos, historical sites, and family games offer good learning experiences.
- ♣ Encourage your child to read and write for pleasure.
- ♣ Be a good role model and take time to learn, read, and take on challenges yourself.
- ♣ Spend some quality time with your children and their friends.
- ♣ Take them to colleges to get your children excited and organized early.
- ♣ Have your child volunteer for programs where they can learn skills to help them succeed in their educational career and interests.
- ♣ Get support if needed, tutors, therapists, etc to have a balanced and happy child.

- ♣ Share your success stories and help them share theirs. Some that have already been accomplished and some to achieve in future.
- ♣ Have them go to a career center to assess skills, talents, and interests to get them focused on educational plans and programs.
- ♣ Have them get in the habit of getting letters of recommendation at a young age, both personal and professional. What a great way to build their esteem, by seeing what others think and feel about them.
- ♣ Start a portfolio of transcripts, samples of work, awards, etc. to get them organized and looking professional at an early age in their life.
- ♣ Interview with your child, and practice answering questions. This is important to prepare for the real interview and develop verbal skills, eye contact, voice tone, etc.
- ♣ Choose a few advanced words every month that your child can practice and understand.
- ♣ Award your child for every high grade he/she achieves on the transcript. Set short-term goals that will lead your child to his/her overall goals and grades.
- ♣ Have your child/children participate in a sport activity. Being a part of a team will not only give your child self-confidence and teach them to be a team player, but also keep them healthier.
- ♣ Get your children involved! Students in extracurricular programs, such as drama and sports, find the motivation needed to keep grades on track with their passion as a catalyst. Most programs have grade requirements that keep their students on task. They also offer many scholarship and job opportunities for the future.
- ♣ Eat lots of spinach! Most people know that it is high in iron, but did you know that it also is a good source of vitamin A? Vitamin A plays an important role in learning and memory, so eat up!
- ♣ Have your children start a savings account to plan ahead for their education. This teaches them responsibility and future planning.
- ♣ Keep a journal of daily, weekly, monthly, and annually occurring events, goals, accomplishments, dreams, etc. They are easier to achieve once they are written down.
- ♣ Researchers have found that children who attend high-quality early childhood programs do gain skills normally associated with greater brain development, such as problem solving, language, math, and literacy skills. They also gain other kinds of competencies such as self-control, a higher motivation for learning and social skills. Families benefit, also as they access needed services, develop parenting skills, and participate in an atmosphere that promotes meaningful family involvement.

Continue to help your children find their pot of gold, but also encourage them to occasionally sit back and enjoy the beautiful rainbow.



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