

## CLASSROOM MOTIVATION

August 2012 Love in Action Newsletter

My July 2012 Love in Action Newsletter @ <http://bit.ly/nNyPn6> focused on homework hints and resources for parents. Since school is just starting I am continuing to focus on returning to school. Motivation is one of the most frequently discussed topics regarding classroom behavior. Unfortunately, children receive labels when their school performance or behavior does not meet certain expectations. These labels include not motivated, lazy, manipulative, passive aggressive, bad attitude, oppositional defiant, and doesn't care. If your child has been given this label by you or the school, I want to encourage you to look past your child's behavior. More than likely your child is overwhelmed and stressed out by school. Many times attempts to "motivate" a child only add more pressure. Pressure creates more stress and exacerbates the underlying fear. Your child's behaviors are simply symptoms of underlying, unresolved stress. This is particularly true of children who have experienced trauma. More than likely your child is feeling out of control in school. Their behaviors are helping them gain control in the only manner that they know how. It is their way of maintaining emotional safety. The following suggestions will help reduce your child's fear in the classroom. These suggestions will also help your child feel more in control and improve your child's school performance. These suggestions can be used in the classroom as well as at home.

- \* Give your child choices. Ask "What part of the assignment do you think you can do?" Or "would you rather do spelling or reading first?" or "Are you able to do five of these?"
- \* Develop an emotionally safe relationship with your child. Children have difficulty regulating their emotions. Therefore, the parent or the teacher needs to help them do this. When regulated, children learn and achieve. See your child or student as being afraid. This should automatically adjust your response.
- \* Give encouragement and praise for each small step. Focus on accomplishments and don't put pressure on children by saying you can do better.
- \* Avoid point and reward systems. Rewards only add pressure and will create more stress.
- \* Avoid punishments. Allow natural consequences to happen. Use something visual to show your child their progress and allow them to develop internal motivation to do better.
- \* Do not remove recess or outside activities at home. Poor grades are a natural consequence. Children need physical activity to help release stress and tension. Staying in from recess creates more embarrassment and shame. Children need outlets at home too.
- \* Don't allow homework to become an issue. Teachers and parents need to work together to take the stress off of home. Minimize or eliminate homework if possible. Download my July 2012 Love in Action Newsletter for homework hints @ <http://bit.ly/nNyPn6>
- \* View a child who won't work as a child who can't work. Think of them as being stuck and in meeting support to get going.

- \* Pursue additional resources outside of the classroom in situations where there is a significant history of trauma. Counseling other support search services may be necessary to help that family and that child.

Try these suggestions and if your child continues to struggle you may want to consider phone coaching. Phone coaching is a way to get support for you and your family from the comfort of your own home in a cost-effective, time-efficient manner. To find out more, go to <http://bit.ly/qttJhQ>. Purchase one hour of phone coaching NOW and you will receive an additional 30 minutes FREE. This is a \$112.50 value for \$75.00. Mention you found out about this offer from this month's newsletter in your purchase order.

In Christ,

Ken Thom LPC