

Questions & Answers

Q: My son gets average grades, but I know he could do better. Some parents pay their children for good grades. Is this something I should consider?

A: Parents want their children to do their best in school—and they are constantly looking for effective ways to motivate their kids to achieve. But most experts agree that paying kids for getting good grades is a bad idea. Here are three reasons why. Paying for grades:

1. Doesn't allow your child to enjoy the satisfaction of learning. Kids don't need bribes to want to learn. Children naturally love to learn. As they master new skills or memorize new facts, they gain self-esteem and self-confidence. However, when you pay your child for grades, you actually run the risk of decreasing your child's self-confidence.
2. Doesn't recognize effort. Your child should focus on doing his best. If he's tried his hardest, neither he nor you should worry too much about whether he earns an A or a B. What matters is that he's learning.
3. Decreases motivation. Kids who get paid for doing some things expect to get paid for doing everything. Pretty soon, your child will have his hand out every time you want him to do something, from mowing the grass to taking out the trash to feeding the dog.

So what can you do to get your child's grades up? Help him focus on what he is learning. Help him keep track of his new skills. And praise him for working hard and doing his best!

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