

Encourage your child in their strengths

Now that you have seen your child's *Ability Profile*, you have more information about what areas they excel in. Where do you see your child shining in their strengths? When we notice and call out the good in others, it often starts to multiply!

Nonverbal: *"I saw how persistent you were when you put together that block tower. It might be taller than you!"*

Verbal: *"Your jokes sure do make me laugh."*

Quantitative: *"Wow, I am impressed with the way you solved that big problem!"*

When possible, allow your child to choose extracurricular activities where their strengths can shine. The feelings of success and competence children get in activities outside of school can bolster them in the learning environment. Simply allowing children to play creatively and move their bodies in ways that they choose, especially outdoors, is one of the best ways we can encourage their strengths at home. Play costs us nothing but gives us priceless information about what that child loves and excels at.



Model approaches to bolster weakness

If we have strong quantitative reasoning skills and loved math class, it may be hard for us to accept that our child may have a relative strength in a different area. This also means that the strategies that worked for us to learn mathematics when we were in school may not work for our child. This discrepancy can cause frustration, especially when helping with homework.

How can we as parents honor our child's differences, while encouraging them to strengthen their weaknesses?

One of the best ways we can do this with our children is to allow them to see our weaknesses and learning processes as adults, thus modeling behavior that can help them with their own learning. Sharing our struggles with children in age-appropriate ways gives them tools to manage their own challenges in areas of weakness and push through towards learning and growth.

- In order to learn, we must admit we don't know everything. As parents, we can admit when we do not know or understand something: *"That's a good question. I don't know the answer, but let's find out."*
- Learning requires us to persist through areas of discomfort and challenge. We can model for our children how to handle this when we learn new things. *"I had a hard time keeping up with the moves in my new workout class today. I am going to go back next week and try it again."*
- No one learns without making mistakes. By showing our children that even adults make mistakes, they can understand how to learn from theirs without shame. *"I am trying this new recipe but I made a mistake and missed a step. Next time, I will pay close attention to what order to add the ingredients in. Want to order pizza tonight?"*

- As adults, we often know intuitively when we need to step away from a problem in order to solve it. Model that sometimes when we are learning and growing, our brains need a break to process. *"I'm having a hard time figuring out what to do with my project at work. I am frustrated and I need to sleep on it. I will try again tomorrow."*
- We all need support from others to learn. By modeling for our children that we can ask others for help, they can feel encouraged to do the same. *"I'm struggling with this problem; I am going to call a friend and talk it through."*

As parents and caregivers, we can give children the words they need to narrate their interior lives. When we share our positive beliefs about learning with our child and model desirable behaviors, they can internalize those words to create their own inner narrative that will carry them through school and beyond.

We hope these approaches help you to have continuous age-appropriate conversations with the children in your care about their own learning.

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Additional resources

Mindset
The New Psychology of Success
Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.
2007 | ISBN 9780345472328

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk
Adele Faber, Elaine Mazlish
2013 | ISBN 9781848123090, 1848123094