

## **10 Strategies to Help with Procrastination**

**This one's for your fridge!**

- 1. Keep goals manageable, meaningful, and attainable.** Clarify expectations, and celebrate small achievements. Finding pleasure in reaching goals can be motivating, leading to fulfillment, excitement, and pride.
- 2. Talk with (not to) children about why effort is gratifying.** For example, it's instrumental in building strengths. Encourage kids to reflect upon how they feel when they're successful, and how they can apply their know-how next time they confront a challenge.
- 3. Teach kids about a growth mindset.** Help them appreciate that accomplishment is a step-by-step process that demands time, perseverance, and resilience. Model this pathway to productivity in your own daily life.
- 4. Encourage children to plan ahead.** For instance, they can list the steps involved in what they're going to do, gauge how much time they'll need, and acquire in advance whatever materials they might need. They can also try to anticipate obstacles in order to be better prepared to deal with them.
- 5. Reinforce children's attempts to overcome their procrastination tendencies.** Focus on the initiative and the process, not on the end result. The best kind of feedback is genuine, direct, constructive, and immediate.
- 6. Offer assistance as necessary.** This might be at the outset of a task (when kids may first procrastinate), part way through (if they slow down), or toward the end (when they may need a little boost).
- 7. Rely on routines.** They can be calming. Routines help a person feel organized and in control of what's happening, and able to set a suitable pace. Strive for balance by leaving ample opportunity for breaks, relaxation, exercise, and play.
- 8. Help children and teens recognize their capabilities and limitations.** Be attuned to their successes and their concerns. Help them develop good study habits and time management skills, and to recognize times of day when they work best—when they're most energetic, and less likely to be interrupted or distracted.
- 9. Pick your battles.** Not all procrastination is bad, and not all tasks are pressing. Be circumspect about what to ignore, and when to be patient. Don't get caught up in power struggles. Sometimes kids just have to face the consequences of their actions—or inaction.
- 10. Sorry is not a strategy.** Apologies for recurring procrastination quickly wear thin. Being repentant is best indicated by specific action that remedies the situation. Convey confidence in children's abilities.