Motivation for success at school

For a child to become motivated about school, they need to see learning as an enjoyable experience and believe that it is a sound investment in their future. Here are three steps parents can take to help children be more successful at school:

• Set attainable goals: Teach or help your children to establish many goals within projects, both in school and with respect to everyday activities, such as cleaning their room and getting dressed in the morning.

• Celebrate when your child has achieved a goal: Recognition and praise are powerful factors that encourage motivation. Reward your child with your time and attention. These are more important than anything else you could possibly offer.

• Be specific with your praise: Saying "you did a great job" is not clear enough. Tell your child specifically what you think is wonderful about them and what you liked about what they did. This will highlight the behaviours that you would like to see again and again and again.

"Enrolling your child in an after-school program can help develop their excitement about school and learning," says Jasmina Zurovac, director of corporate donations at RBC. "We've seen thousands of children who participate in these programs develop self-esteem and an increased motivation to excel in school."

Zurovac points out that the tips above were initiated by the RBC employee assistance provider, Ceridian Canada. Since 1999, she added, the RBC After School Project has provided more than $30 million in grants to 248 community-based after school programs in Canada, helping almost 31,000 children learn, grow and reach their full potential. More information is available online at www.rbc.com/afterschool.

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