

# EXPECT SUCCESS



## TEACHING YOUR CHILD GREAT WORK ETHIC

*"Nothing worth having comes easy."  
Theodore Roosevelt*



My 101-year-old grandmother is one of my personal heroes. She taught me the value of hard work and perseverance. The quote above was oft-heard advice from her while growing up. Born in 1915, she grew up in the era of work horses, carrying water from a well and traveling by foot in rural Wisconsin. She raised seven children on a farm during a time when days of the week were reserved for specific chores like hand-washing clothes and baking bread. She only knew hard work.

I wondered how this quote originated and found the full version by President Theodore Roosevelt. *"Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty... I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well."* His words hold great meaning and are needed now more than ever. We live in an era in which the latest inventions are created to make our lives easier and less work. On one hand, this has had a tremendous impact for the good. Machines and technology that do the work are safer and humans are less prone to injury or late-in-life health issues. On the other hand, I fear our natural mental capacity to work hard and persevere have become diminished with time. Kids need the mental and physical stamina to persist so they can reap the results of a job well done.

This month's tips are adapted from a website called All Pro Dad. They are simple, logical suggestions that all parents can use. The article can be found in its entirety at <http://www.allprodad.com/10-ways-to-teach-your-children-a-great-work-ethic/>.

### 10 Ways to Teach Your Children a Great Work Ethic

- 1. Understand the fact that you always teach, regardless of intention:** The question when it comes to teaching at home is not "if?" but "what?" It's important to understand that home is a natural and continuous learning environment. Everything we do instructs our children – so the question is always "What am I teaching?" and "How can I teach the right lessons?"
- 2. Example, example, example:** If parents own a positive work ethic, then we're already halfway there. This is a great opportunity for "do as I do" supporting "do as I say."
- 3. Balance is job one:** Every family has their own take on how much is too much. But it's essential that we teach our children balance in terms of work. A work ethic that sacrifices family turns out to be all work and no ethic.
- 4. Keep family priorities in order:** The simple, "fun after the work is done" associates relaxation with completion rather than relaxation as escape. Kids experience more satisfaction in their leisure when it is paired with satisfactory job performance.
- 5. Work with your children whenever possible:** Question: how is a "guide" different from a "boss"? Answer: a boss typically barks out orders and waits for results – whereas a guide is willing to walk alongside. As parents teaching a work ethic, our role is that of guide.
- 6. Take your children with you when you volunteer:** Pick up garbage together on the side of the street; join a team that fixes things at the park; hook up with volunteer efforts at church or other community groups. Work associated with service is a key building block to the value of work across the board.
- 7. Expose them to stories about heroes who learned the value of work:** There are hundreds of great stories to reinforce this point. Movies, books, articles. Read them together and then live them, day by day.
- 8. Make chores at home a shared responsibility:** Every member of the family should have assigned chores on a routine basis. Change them around; help each other out; take turns with the ones no one really enjoys. Don't wimp out on the chores, and don't let your kids wimp out either.
- 9. Don't pay kids for routine chores:** Paying children to participate in family life sends the wrong message. Work in the family is an intrinsic value and is fundamentally worthwhile. Compliment; encourage; throw in the occasional treat "Because you kids have been so amazingly responsible this week!"... Admire their good work, but don't re-assign the value of expected work to the false value of cash. However, consider paying your children for jobs that go above and beyond their normal responsibilities. It's a wonderful way for them to learn the value of a buck.
- 10. Have a "chore chart" on the refrigerator:** Or feel free to use this one at <http://www.imom.com>