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How Kids Learn to Take Initiative and Overcome Challenges

Marilyn Price-Mitchell, PhD, Founder of Roots of Action



Learning to take initiative is a behavior that helps kids navigate their lives with courage and optimism.

Alfred D. Souza makes a great point: “For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life.”

Indeed, obstacles are a part of life. And often they seem endless, particularly to children. Kids become happier adults when they learn how to overcome challenges and obstacles—to step up and take initiative and involve themselves in activities that are meaningful to them.

A common refrain I often hear from parents of tweens and teens is, “My son doesn’t take initiative. I don’t know how to motivate him.” “My daughter doesn’t stand up for herself.”

This article provides insights about how children learn to take initiative. Parents and teachers are key mentors in the process. Why is taking initiative important?

Taking initiative helps propel life forward in purposeful directions. Initiative directs our attention toward a challenging goal and helps us overcome obstacles. Learning to take initiative is an important aspect of [positive youth development](#).

The ability to take initiative is developed in late childhood and adolescence through mastery experiences and relationships that help kids believe in themselves. Since initiative can be used to accomplish good or evil, it also involves instilling positive attributes in childhood, including empathy, self-awareness, and integrity — and other attributes that are part of [The Compass Advantage](#). Whether young people learn to make a positive difference in their own life or in the world around them, taking initiative requires a combination of inner energy and outer action.

The ability to take initiative is developed through internal rewards, like creativity, dignity, autonomy, making a difference for others, and activities that help kids create their own futures. It is not developed through external rewards like grades, winning, awards, and money.

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<https://www.rootsofaction.com/take-initiative-kids/>

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The Family Café

23rd Annual Family Café

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Hyatt Regency Orlando

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Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)

Video link about services & supports that FIN has for families:

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/468307382>

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER



How Kids Learn

to

Take Initiative and Overcome Challenges

Activities that Help Kids Take Initiative



Kids must choose activities for themselves because it gives them "internal" rewards. Examples include music programs, service-learning, and after-school activities.



The activity must take place in an environment that contains rules, challenges, and complexities inherent in the real world.



Rather than doing lots of activities, it is better for children to focus on a few for longer periods of time so they learn to persevere despite challenges.

Compelling Facts

25%

IQ accounts for less than 25% of life success. Emotional intelligence, including taking initiative, accounts for the rest.

50%

Both honor students and those involved in delinquent activities report the highest levels of boredom in the U.S., many more than 50% of the time.

30%

Traditional classrooms and homework, activities that account for more than 30% of kids waking hours, have limited potential for learning to take initiative.

Communication Tips for Parents

1

When children blame, moan, or whine, turn it into an opportunity to find out what they care about! Uncover hidden convictions that can fuel their ability to take initiative and action in the world.

2

Shift from a language of "Prizes and Praising" to a language of "Ongoing Regard." Instead of giving praise for all the things children "do," communicate appreciation for who they are.

3

Help kids learn to solve their own problems and navigate obstacles. Allow them to fail. Be a mentor to your children as they learn to take initiative and discover interests that motivate them.



www.RootsOfAction.com

Source: <https://www.rootsofaction.com/take-initiative-kids/>



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