

Tip Sheet #13

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S PASSIONATE SPARK

Inside every child lies a powerful “spark”—a passion or interest that excites and empowers. Supporting children’s sparks strengthens their inner drive and motivates them to achieve personal and academic success.

How can you choose good books that support your child’s spark? Try these tips:

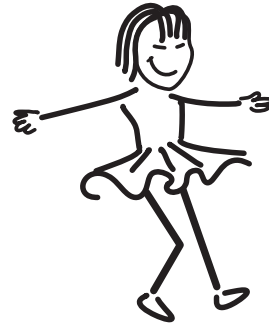


- Listen to your child’s conversation with friends and watch him or her at play. What ideas does your child become excited about, again and again?
- Notice the activity(ies) your child is drawn toward naturally. Is it collecting feathers, singing and making music, or drawing cartoons? Performing magic tricks, kicking a soccer ball, or taking apart and putting together machines? Cooking, caring for animals, or experimenting with baking soda and vinegar? All of these “sparks” have the potential to motivate your child to succeed across various parts of her or his life.
- Make a note to yourself about this special subject. No topic is too silly or unimportant to pursue.
- Look for books that include lots of “how-to” photos or drawings that show your child how to do something or how something works.
- Help your reader choose books at the library on that topic. If it’s a long-term interest (lasting more than a month or so), consider buying books to keep on hand. They don’t have to be new. Secondhand bookstores are a great source.
- Read books aloud together about your child’s favourite subject. Use opportunities like mealtime and “drive time” to encourage your young reader to talk about these books.
- Guide your child’s interests with nonfiction videos from the library or during a careful visit to YouTube.com (place double quotation marks around your search terms like this: “magic tricks”). Watch videos together, and talk about what you see. Then look for more books on the topic!
- Ask your child: What do you like best about this subject?
- Ask yourself: How can our family support an activity related to this interest?
- **TAKE ACTION:** Find an activity related to your child’s spark that you and your child can do together. Mention your child’s passion to teachers, relatives, and other caregivers. Suggest that these adults use your child’s spark to deepen their relationship with your child.
- Talk to your friends and neighbours about your child’s spark, and act on their good suggestions. Your child will benefit greatly, and you’ll appreciate the support you receive.



TRY THESE GREAT BOOKS!

- **The New Way Things Work** by David Macaulay (Houghton Mifflin, 1998)
- **Ed Emberley's Drawing Book: Make a World** by Ed Emberley (Little Brown and Company, 2006)
- **Emma's Rug** by Allen Say (Houghton Mifflin, 2003)
- **A Very Young...**series by Jill Krementz
 - Dancer* (Knopf, 1976)
 - Musician* (Simon & Schuster, 1991)
 - Gardener* (Dial Books for Young Readers, 1991)
 - Actress* (Knopf, 1991)
 - Rider* (Dreamhouse Publishing, 2007)
 - Circus Flyer* (Knopf, 1979)
 - Skater* (Knopf, 1979)
 - Skier* (Dial Books for Young Readers, 1990)



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