

Why So-So Grades Are OK (If Your Kid Has THESE 6 Traits Instead)

By Kathryn Brown Ramsperger

Straight A's aren't that important. Research says PERSONALITY is a far better indicator of success.

You're waiting to pick your children up from school. The mom to your right starts bragging about her son's straight A report card. The mom to your left goes into copious detail about how her daughter is just "too busy" to sleep at night because of all her extracurricular activities. You hear another mom in the distance droning on about her twins' latest school awards. You also know the mom and son coming out the school doors recently started their own non-profit.

Sigh.

But what if your kid doesn't have what it takes? What if she's not the straight-A type? What if he, like most kids, performs strongly in some areas but struggles in others academically? Maybe the chances of your child going to college on a scholarship are slim, but does that mean your kid is not "successful"?

No way! Because YOUR child has the advantage of something even *more* important. Research shows that your child's great personality is a far better predictor of her future success than grades alone.

So, you can relax into that next breath and concentrate on cultivating the qualities she or he already has in abundance, many of which **future employers are desperately searching for:**

1. Emotional Resilience

Having to work a little harder for good grades gives kids much needed grit that is lacking in the today's "entitled" child culture. Kids who repeatedly hear they are brilliant or "perfect" struggle more as school presents increasingly challenging material. These kids come to believe that intelligence is a finite commodity and, if things don't come easily, they quit trying.

A resilient child *wants* to learn and doesn't worry if she doesn't understand something the first time. She keeps trying without beating herself up over it. So, concentrate on congratulating your child for effort instead of outcome, or a great study session instead of a test score.

2. Intellectual Curiosity

Children who are eager to learn are invaluable assets to a company because they think outside the box. They look at learning from unconventional (read: innovative) new points of view.

Today's corporations are looking for this kind of mind because they need people who can generate revolutionary and industry re-defining ideas. People rarely learn this kind of problem solving from a book; they learn it by doing (trial and error).

Look for ways to add to your child's curriculum with multiple modalities, and learn what kind of learner she is. If she's more kinesthetic, she may enjoy a trip to a museum. If she's a visual learner, she may want to read more about a subject online, or create art about a subject she's learning in school.

3. Open mindedness

College professors lament needing to teach core concepts all over again to incoming freshmen—because most high school advanced courses actually speed through a challenging curriculum just to say they covered it. Even more frustrating, these new college students resist this repeat teaching because they believe they "already know it all."

A student committed to a lifetime of learning is a welcome addition to any classroom. He doesn't worry that he doesn't know an answer or has to ask a question, because he knows that, of course, there is always more to learn. To cultivate an open, eager-to-learn mind, try having a family discussion at dinner time making sure there is no judgment allowed. Encourage differences in opinion and stress that everyone's opinion is valuable, interesting, and significant to the conversation.

4. Kindness

Just because your child isn't running a non-profit at age 12 doesn't mean he's not creating change. He has a wide group of friends who depend on him. Make time to get them together more often, or let them choose a charity they're passionate about, and organize a day they can

volunteer there. Whether it's kindness to his community or just kindness to his friends, recognize your child for being kind, as well as smart.

5. Discipline.

Slow and steady wins the race. If your daughter learns from mistakes and figures out how to balance her time, she's ahead of the game.

Recent research shows "hard work and discipline contribute more to school achievement than IQ does." These studies prove that consistent effort that leads to gradual progress outlasts last-minute cramming for a test or not needing to study much at all.

Encourage her to study in small bits daily with breaks (building the habit of self-discipline), and add fun activities to her routine to help her remember what she's studying and bring learning to life.

6. Confidence.

A college admissions rep or a job interviewer is not going to ask your daughter to recite *Hamlet* or finish a Calculus problem. They are more inclined to accept a person who can work both independently and on a team, who displays confidence that she can handle a challenge, and who knows *how to* learn.

Let her start speaking up for herself now with teachers and other authority figures. You might also want to role play with her as she gets older for future interviews, which will also help her feel prepared and confident to embrace that college acceptance or job offer.

So, next time you happen upon another maternal bragging session in the schoolyard, know that you and your kid are just fine. Persistence, creativity, and compassion lead to empowerment and success—not only in school, but in life.

Of course you want to support school performance, but teaching children how to learn and how to thrive socially are just as important. If we let our children's teachers lead them through the facts, figures, and essay writing, we can concentrate on lessons they need to learn *outside* of the classroom.

With this team approach, our kids end up more well-rounded, successful, and happier.