

STRENGTH SWITCH



QUIZ: HOW STRENGTH-BASED ARE YOU AS A PARENT?

A strength based parent helps their child to see and build strengths. Strengths can be skills, talents, abilities, and positive personal qualities. Before starting a journey, you have to know where you are. This quiz will give you an idea of where you are already practicing strength-based parenting (SBP). It will show you where you can build on what you're doing well—that is, play to your strengths —and also spot areas where you can enhance your strength-based parenting.

COMPLETING THE QUIZ

Read the statements below and think about how true they are for *you*. Then use the rating system to select the response that best reflects your experience.

Rating System: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Somewhat disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Somewhat agree 5 = Strongly agree

| NO. | QUESTION | YOUR RATING |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 1 | When it comes to my child's skills, talents, abilities, and personal qualities, I notice those that come naturally to my child more than I notice those that need a lot of effort for my child to improve. | |
| 2 | When a particular skill, talent, ability or personal quality is improving quickly in my child, it really stands out to me. | |
| 3 | I often take note of the skills, talents, abilities, and personal qualities that my child is displaying at above-average levels. | |
| 4 | I regularly observe that there are some skills, talents, abilities and aspects of personality that seem give my child a burst of energy. | |
| 5 | I listen for themes in my child's conversations to get an understanding of the things that are energizing my child. | |
| 6 | I notice subtle differences my child's energy (e.g., tone and volume of voice, posture) when my child is using certain skills, abilities, talents, and aspects of personality, and I use these as clues to know my child's strengths. | |
| 7 | I am very clear about the things that I <i>don't</i> have to remind, nag, or push my child to do. | |
| 8 | It's obvious to me the things that my child is self-motivated to do. | |
| 9 | I can name the hobbies, interests, or activities that cause my child to lose track of time. | |

SCORING THE QUIZ Add your scores for the statements as grouped below:

Statements 1-3 Score: ____/15

Statements 4-6 Score: ____/15

Statements 7-9 Score: ____/15

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UNDERSTANDING STRENGTHS

We often think of strengths as things we are good at, but psychologists have identified that for something to be a true strength it takes more than good performance. Strengths have three elements:

1. **Your child is good at it (high performance).**
2. **Your child feels good and becomes energized while doing it (high energy).**
3. **Your child chooses to do it (high motivation).**

In other words, strengths are things your child does well, does often, and does with energy. Think of the child who is good at playing the piano but consistently resists practicing, doesn't love the lessons, and hates recitals. There's performance, but little energy or motivation. This means that even though they are good at playing the piano, it's not a true strength.

The first step in becoming a strength-based parent is teaching yourself how to look for evidence of the strengths triad: performance, energy, and motivation. The quiz you have just completed tests how you are noticing each of the three elements in your child.

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

Noticing Performance: See your scores for Question 1-3
Noticing Energy: See your scores for Question 4-6
Noticing Motivation : See your scores for Question 7-9

If you scored 11-15 in any of these categories: You're doing well as a strength-based parent. You are noticing and remembering what your child does well and what energizes and motivates him/her.

If you scored 6-10 in any of these categories: You're off to a great start but there's room for improvement. You may be noticing some of elements of your child's strengths, and you now know there is more you can discover. Perhaps you are finding it easier to notice one of the elements, like performance, over the other two elements of energy and motivation. Perhaps you notice all three but not consistently.

If you scored 1-5 in any of these categories: Strength-based parenting is not yet your thing. Don't worry, many of us do not know how to focus on strengths. In fact, about 30%-50% of the population have what psychologist call 'strength blindness.' While some people are naturally good at spotting strengths in others, it's a learnt skill that most of us we were not taught to do. The good news is that seeing strengths in others is something you can practice and get better at. Whatever your score, there's always room to improve. Our brains are pattern detecting organs and the more you practise looking for patterns of performance, energy and motivation in your child's behaviour and conversations, the more these elements of your child's strengths will jump out at you. You may be surprised how focusing on your child's strengths just a little each day sparks a positive

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connection with your child. It's actually easy and fun—and the more you look, the more you'll discover about this beautiful, fascinating being who is your child. Keep your eyes and ears open, and you will be rewarded as you become more and more attuned to the three clues of strengths in your child.

TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY TO SEE STRENGTHS

- 1) **SBP is primarily about observation and communication.** Over the next few weeks take notice of the patterns in your child's behaviour and ask them about their thoughts and feelings. Think about their patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings and then ask yourself 'What are the strengths that underpin this pattern?' Maybe you'll notice strengths like curiosity, analytical thinking, creativity, sociability or physical co-ordination.
- 2) **Take notice of your child's heros and role models** (sports heros, music artists, movie stars, inventors etc..) and think about the strengths of those heros. We often gravitate to people who have similar strengths, or strengths we would like to build in ourselves. The strengths in your children's heros may give you a clue to your child's strengths. Ask your child more about their heros and take interest in your child's latest interests and hobbies. Who are they watching on youtube? In addition to unearthing clues about potential strengths in your child this is a good general parent-child bonding exercise because it shows that are interested in your child's life.
- 3) **Look for particular clues like:**
 - a) Skills that come easily and naturally to your child.
 - b) Talents and abilities where your child outperforms others.
 - c) Personal qualities that are mature and above what you would expect for your child's age (e.g., braver than most kids, more emotionally intelligent, higher in empathy, supremely articulate).
 - d) Shifts in body language and facial expressions that show your child is energized by what they are doing.
 - e) Changes in language (using more positive words) and volume/pitch/speed of language that suggest your child is energized when they are using a certain skill, talent, ability or personal quality.
 - f) Things that are grabbing your child's attention and imagination.
 - g) Task and actions that your child obviously enjoys doing.
 - h) Ways in which your child is choosing to spend their time.
- 4) **Pay attention to consistent themes in their topic of conversation.**
- 5) **Keep a list of when you see performance, energy and motivation and where you see it:** Physical coordination? Intelligence? Social situations? Creativity? Character (fairness, humility, humor)? Make notes on your phone and, when you have time, sit with your child and share with them about what you have observed.