



Motivational Strategies

For many Heart students, the one-on-one format, encouraging adult, and activities at his/her level are enough to stay motivated for 30 minutes. Others need more convincing! Use the ideas below to the extent that your student needs them.

- Review the goals of the notebook and of the session. Does your student know what he/she is learning and what it will take to move to the next notebook level? Be explicit about the math skills needed so that your student can take control of his/her learning. All skills you are working on in Heart are foundationally critical to your student's success in math later on. This type of discussion and goal-setting is appropriate for all ages. You can also let your student know that you personally care about his/her success, and that is why you have decided to spend 30 minutes each week with him/her.
- Keep working to build a strong relationship with your student. Sometimes, he/she will work hard *for you* even if he/she typically is unengaged in academics. Make sure he/she knows that you like him/her as a person and you believe he/she can be successful.
- Set specific behavior and effort goals for the session *that the student can control*. Praise your student verbally and with high fives and stickers when those goals are met. *If necessary*, you can even set up a point system for agreed upon behaviors. Whenever you catch the student doing that specific behavior you have agreed upon, acknowledge it (and/or give him/her a "point"). Some examples of goals that the student can control and you could observe are:
 - Get through two activities.
 - Sit correctly in the chair.
 - Answer in complete sentences.
 - Keep your eyes focused on the activity.
 - Follow the rules and keep a positive attitude in the activities, even if you lose a game.
(In these examples, the student can control his/her ability to get a high-five or point by doing the right thing, even if he/she is unlucky in war or dice races or struggles with the math!)
- Point out the progress your student has made so far, using specific examples. Success breeds motivation for more success. (e.g., "At the beginning of the year, you could only count out 9 cubes. Now you are counting out 22! You have learned something! You will continue learning things! You can learn!")
- Give positive reinforcement whenever possible. Praise students for effort and work well done.
- Make the lessons more interesting using these slight modifications:
 - Explain how the math concepts relate to real life situations. For example, knowing who has more and how much more will help you receive correct change when making a purchase.
 - Relate math word problems to what interests your student. For example, adding two digit numbers could be the scores of a favorite football team.
 - Include a competitive piece for activities, even if it isn't a game. That could just mean that the student gets a point for a correct answer, and at 10 points the student gets a sticker or a 1 minute break.
- Make sure your student is working at his/her correct level. If you believe the material is too easy, call over your program coordinator to ensure he/she has not already mastered the concept.
- Make an agreement with your student that he/she can take a 1-2 minute break in the middle of the session. He/she can get water, color, make conversation, or play with cubes. This breaks the session into a more manageable amount of time, as sitting for 30 minutes can be difficult for some children.