

Youth Presentation ages 8-12

Take Responsibility for Your Own Education

We have all had the experience of trying to teach a child who just wasn't going to take in what we are offering. Learning to use what they are already interested in can help to alleviate that problem. But while we are learning that skill it can be pretty frustrating.

As children get a bit older, eight and up, we can work to give them a sense that they are capable and should take some responsibility for as much of their education as they can.

But the question is what does that really look like for an under 12 child? When we ask them to be responsible it is helpful to show them what that looks like. Just saying "do your work" isn't all that effective.

So in this presentation, the goal is to paint a picture for the children of what they can do and then encourage them to take it on.

Let me mention that when you do this presentation with a group of home school youth in this age group, many of them will be poor readers, writers and spellers. In the group I worked with, that applied to over half of the group. So it is helpful to write on a white board or large pad of paper or create a power point like you will see today. It helps to see what to put on their handouts and how to spell it.

Also remember that it takes time for them to copy it onto their handouts. It might be helpful to let them know that if they don't finish one question to just move on and that you will help them at the end of the presentation.

Actual Youth Presentation

SLIDE - Welcome to Taking Responsibility for Your Education

I. Welcome – Welcome them to the class. Give class title and tell them who you are.

SLIDE – Children are not vessels to be filled...

II. Acknowledge – In this section thank whoever set up the event, the place you are meeting, etc.

III. Enrolling Questions:

How many of you are here today because you want to be?

How many of you are here because someone else wants you to be?

IV. Well I am glad that you are here and I want to tell you what I am going to share with you.

- A reason to take responsibility for your own education
- Twelve practical ways for how to do that for kids your age

SLIDE – Kendon and Math

V. Story of Kendon - age 11 and his math (You can use this story or one of your own to illustrate how scary it can be to be responsible for your own learning)

Kendon and his mom had a constant battle over his math. She always had to ask him to do it and he was always pushing back. When asked what his favorite subject was he replied, “Math”. So I asked him, “Then why do you and your mom have so much trouble over math if you really like it?” He told me that he just didn’t want her telling him when to do it. So I asked him, “How would you feel about having more responsibility for your own education and deciding when to do math or your other subjects.

He said that sometimes he worried about it and wanted someone to tell him what to do. But he also liked being able to decide what to study, whether to do math or science or writing or whatever.

How many of you have had an experience like Kendon? You don't want someone telling you what to do but you are a little afraid to take the responsibility?

Group Activity – Have the group brainstorm and make a list of reasons why they might be afraid to take on the responsibility of their own education? Write their answers on a paper pad, chalk board or white board.

SLIDE – Cake Decorating

VI. MY STORIES – Use mine or your own to illustrate the importance of believing that you can learn and then taking responsibility to learn.

When I was in 9th grade I took Algebra. I worked very hard for two weeks but then I realized that I wasn't learning what was being taught. So I went in after school for over two weeks to get help. One day the teacher told me that I wasn't ever going to be able to learn math and that I should just come to class, not make any trouble and he would pass me. I passed with a D-.

The next year I took geometry. I was no quitter. I had the exact same experience as I had had the year before. I went in after school for a few weeks and the teacher finally told me I wasn't ever going to get it and if I didn't cause any trouble in class he would pass me. After these experiences I believed that they were correct, I couldn't learn math.

In 11th grade I took an art class. One of the first things we had to do was create a sculpture of a head. I worked really hard on mine and I thought it was darned good. When I got it back from the teacher he told me that I didn't have any creative talent and that I ought to just forget it and do something else with my life. I decided that the teacher didn't know everything and I could do it if I wanted to.

I had taught myself to make some sugar Easter eggs the year before. They were as ugly as all get out but I loved them and I thought they were beautiful. From then on I began teaching myself to decorate cakes of all kinds.

In one story I believed what someone else told me about my ability to learn and consequently I never learned what I believe I could have learned. In fact I am doing math homework now because I have decided those teachers were wrong and I can learn math as well as anyone else.

In the other story I took responsibility for my own learning and consequently I have been able to bring joy to others for over 50 years.

A. Writing exercise –

Look at the first section on your handout - How could taking responsibility for your own education change your life? It doesn't need to be a long answer. Ask for help if you need to spell a word you don't know. 2-3 min

B. Partner Share-

Choose the person sitting next to you to be your partner. Decide who will be partner A and who will be partner B. Your job while your partner is sharing is just to listen and smile. Don't say anything.

I'll tell you when to switch. Let's start with Partner B. Tell Partner A what you wrote down. Ok Partner A you share with Partner B what you wrote down. 1 min per partner.

C. Group share

Who is willing to share what they wrote?

VII. Twelve Practical Ways to take Responsibility for your Education

This is where you are going to work on filling in your handout.

SLIDE - Check your spelling

1. (How many of you like Spelling) When writing or using computer, check you're spelling. If you misspell a word on the computer look to see what your mistake was instead of just hitting spell check and never paying attention. If you misspell the same word a second time then try to correct it without looking at spell check or asking someone or using the dictionary.

When you are hand writing have someone read what you wrote and show you the spelling errors. Then look them up and see what you need to change.

SLIDE – Don't ask for information you can get yourself

2. Don't ask others to give you information you can get for yourself. Look up the meaning of words and find your own facts and information instead of asking

mom or dad. The wisest people don't just know stuff; they know how to find the answers to their questions.

SLIDE – What am I willing to learn

3. If you are doing something you don't like ask the question - What am I willing to learn from this class/event/experience.

Example – When we got our first computer I didn't like it. It seemed too hard to learn. Whenever I tried it was just too frustrating for me. My husband was using it but I just felt too intimidated. However, when my children began to learn how to use it I had to make a decision. So I asked myself what I would be willing to learn. I decided that I was willing to take lessons from my husband and kids until I could turn it on, type something and check my spelling.

Now I know more about the computer than my husband. I have a blog and I do many things on my computer.

SLIDE – Recognize your own Sparks

4. Recognize your own SPARKS and then ask for help

SLIDE – Miles

Miles really liked rocks, crystals, gems, everything about the earth. He liked these things so much that he had dozens of rocks that he had collected. He was always in trouble with his mom because he had rocks all over the place and it made her frustrated and angry, especially when she found them in the washer or dryer. One day his mom realized that what Miles loved were rocks. She stopped being upset with him and she helped him learn more about what he loved.

- His mom let him tell her about ALL of his rocks
- She helped him make a rock collection so they weren't all over the place
- Their family went to the planetarium
- The whole family watched a meteorite shower together
- They watched some videos on the earth
- The family took a number of nature hikes to look for rocks
- His mom got tons of books from the library and they read them as a family
- They tied the creation into what they were learning about the earth
- They discovered their neighbor was a retired geologist. He became Mile's

Mentor

- The family took a summer trip to an archeological dig. They also took a trip to dig for gems

Would Miles experience make it worth asking for help?

Use your **Sparks notebook** to write down the things that interest you. Then ask for help.

SLIDE – Your interest isn't silly

Remember your interest isn't silly and you will learn something of value.

Example – Barry

When Barry was eleven he saw a juggler at the fair. He was fascinated with what the man could do. He went to his parents and asked them to buy him a few hacky sacks and a book so he could practice. When he was able to juggle the hacky sacks he asked his parents to help him earn some money so that he could buy some clubs and rings to juggle. He got a newspaper route. He then made some cloth covered boxes to juggle with the help of his mom.

When he could juggle all of these items really well he asked his mom to help him come up with a clown costume. He drew out what he wanted and his mom helped him make it. He made the shoes by himself from a he pair of white tennis shoes and paint.

Once he had his costume he worked out an act. Then he asked if he could have some clown lessons and so his parents helped him find a real Clown teacher. Finally when he was ready he had his mother help him contact some nursing homes and he would give shows to the people who lived there. He was in a city parade.

Juggling might not seem like a very important thing to learn. Not as important as math or English or geography. But remember your interest isn't silly and you will learn something of value.

Barry:

- Had a lot of fun

- Learned to juggle and be a clown and then was able to bring joy to many people
- He learned to sew
- He got a paper route and learned to run his own business
- He budgeted to pay for his material and classes
- If he had been interested in it, he could have had a business juggling at birthday parties to pay for things he needed during high school and college

SLIDE – When you read ask yourself questions

5. When you read ask yourself questions.

- What is happening here?
- What is she really saying?
- Would I act the same way?
- Why would that have happened?
- Is that the right way to be?
- How do I feel about how that dad is acting?

This practice tells your mind that you are interested so then you really become interested and you learn more.

SLIDE – Write when you read

6. Write when you read, even if it is a funny book.

- Journal after each chapter. – What did you like, what didn't you like, how did this chapter make me feel. You don't have to write a whole page just write a few lines.
- Answer your questions in writing. Why did she do that? What would I have done? What should have happened?
- Get a “**MY READING**” notebook.

Example – In the book “Ramona and Her Mother” there is a chapter in which Ramona squeezes out a whole tube of toothpaste. - You might write something like this – “Have I ever felt like Ramona when she squeezed out all of the toothpaste? She just longed to squeeze the tube for as long as she wanted to! Yes, once I wanted to turn the whole garden into a big mud puddle. I couldn't even help myself. I got in so much trouble!”

SLIDE – Use what you learn right now

7. Use what you learn right now. Teach someone else!

Example – These are my two sisters. I am on the right and my sister Cindy is in the middle and Shirley is on the left. We are all one year apart in age. When I was about 10 I was able to take ballet lessons. I loved those classes and I was so proud of what I could do. My sister Cindy used to beg me to teach her what I was learning but I didn't. I regret that now. I would have learned so much more, remembered so much more if I had shared what I was learning with my sister.

When you earn something cool about science, math, art or anything teach one of your brothers or sister or a friend. You will remember it far better and longer if you do.

SLIDE – Make your own books or videos

8. Make your own school books or make a video of what you are learning.

SLIDE – Science and History pictures

When you are doing your school work keep it all in notebooks. You could have a science book, and English book, a spelling book and a math book. You will be able to look back at them and see how much you are learning.

SLIDE – Have contests with yourself

9. Have contests with yourself or set a goal and then give yourself a reward.

- When I finish this chapter I am going to take a walk, eat a cookie or take a bath.
- I am going to read 2 chapter books this month.
- I am going to see if I can do 2 pages of math in 20 minutes.
- I am going to sew a simple bag by the end of the month.
- I am going to beat my own record and do 30 pushups.

Learn to be in competition with just yourself and to measure your success on your own terms and not based on what someone else is doing. Work at doing whatever it is better today than you did yesterday.

SLIDE – Encourage your family to read together

10. Encourage your family to read together. Read all kinds of books, even books that you don't always like or understand. Sometimes kids can pick the books and sometimes moms and dads can pick the books. The important thing is to read together.

Set a family rule that while you are reading anyone can ask a question or make a comment on what is happening in the story.

SLIDE – Pick a subject to study

11. Pick one subject that you are afraid to learn and then study it. Maybe you can watch a video on the internet about it or read a book or have your family read a book about it in family reading time. You could make your own flashcards. Maybe you can have your mom and dad get you a work book about it. Be brave because you are only in competition with yourself. Maybe you could learn something about:

- Science
- Fractions
- Triple digit division
- Spelling
- Reading better
- Pottery

We don't usually do this, not out of laziness, but out of fear. Sometimes we don't do it because like Kendon, we don't like being told to do it.

You have nothing to lose by using this learning tool of studying something that is scary because you have assigned yourself the task of learning. You have no grade; your parent isn't invested in it because they didn't tell you to. It is just you learning because you can. And you never know, you might become really good at it.

I am 64 and I am learning math! So go learn something!!

SLIDE – Ask questions

12. Step out of your comfort zone and learn to ask questions. Questions that aren't asked are the dumb ones. If you don't understand, ask. If someone laughs then they are the ignorant one.

XIII. Writing Exercise – get into groups of three – Come up with two additional ways you can take charge of your education – 2 min

XIV. Group Share – Pick a spokesman and share what your group came up with.

XV. REVIEW the 12 Ways to take responsibility for your education

- Check your spelling
- Don't ask for information you can get yourself
- Ask, what am I willing to learn from this class, event, or experience.
- Recognize your own Sparks and then ask for help. Keep a Sparks notebook.
- Your interest isn't silly and you will learn something of value.
- When you read ask yourself questions.
- Write your feelings after each chapter or book.
- Use what you learn right now. Teach someone else.
- Make your own school books with your work.
- Have contests with yourself.
- Encourage your family to read together.
- Pick one subject that you are afraid to learn and study about it.
- Ask questions.

Here is your challenge before you go to bed tonight – look over the 12 ways that will help you take responsibility for your own education. Then pick two that you will commit to work on for the next month. If you are willing to take this challenge on raise your hand. Way to go!

When you take responsibility you are a super hero. Stand up, take a super hero stance and say I am an education super hero.

SLIDE - Summary

XVI. Summary

- Understand that learning is not passing a test, pleasing someone else or getting a grade of any kind.
- Begin believing that the power to learn is in you. Wisdom is gaining knowledge and then using it correctly. Be wise! .
- Stop being afraid of doing some mental work – after all it is for you.
- Don't be afraid of new things. Be OK with not knowing yet.

How many of you will commit to sharing your hand out with your mom or dad today?

Turn to your neighbor and say “I can take responsibility for my own education” and give them a high five.

