Keep It Positive. Keep It Simple. Keep It Real.

Un-Challenge Day Eight
Critical Keys #8: Stick With It

One of the most powerful predictors of school and life success is persistence. Sometimes called grit or determination, this factor has been shown to be a better predictor of life success than highest degree received or even overall intelligence. Students who "stick to it" are much more likely to do well in school and are much better prepared to face the challenges of college and work.

20 MINUTE ACTIVITY

Mini Golf

This activity can easily turn into way more than 20 minutes if you want to go all out. One golf hole takes about 20 minutes, but once you have one you might need a whole course! I also had a teacher friend who did "progressive" golf over quarantine. She challenged her students to create a hole then she went to each of their houses to play! You could do this with a group of neighbors.

Trampoline Golf!?

You need:

- Stuff - literally anything goes - check out the photos!
- Maybe tape
- Golf Ball and Club - Dollar Store ones are fine!

Steps:

- Your kids might need some background knowledge on what a mini golf hole looks like if you haven't played before.
- Have kids create a situation in which you can hit a golf ball to follow a path to a "hole" (this can be a cup or lid or piece of paper).
- Easy and engaging way to encourage creativity and perseverance!

Kayak Golf?!

Parent Tip: This is another chance to use the design process from Day One!

DAILY DOINGS

Everyday: Model Perseverance

Kids often think that everything is easy when you are an adult. Showing kids how to self talk through a tough situation illustrates how parents also need to "stick with it". Saying things like "I know this will be hard or I feel a little scared to do this" shares your vulnerability.

Following up with "I know I can get help or I know I will feel really great when I complete this" shows kids how to work through challenges.

Common Parenting Challenge: My kids give up easily. "I can't do this."

First, we need to decide:

- is the task too difficult to do independently?
- the kid just doesn't want to do the task?
- they need to develop more "stick-with-itness"

Each of these need a different strategy, but lets' focus on the third situation with is really about grit and stamina. When developing grit, think of yourself as your child's coach. Coaches develop skills, but they don't play the game. Never do anything for a kid that they can do for themselves.

To develop stamina, timers are great tools! If I want to get my kids to read for longer amounts of time, I start with a 5 minute limit (you can do anything for 5 minutes), then next week it's 7 minutes.

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PRE K - 2 ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

Academic Standard: Analyze data from tests of two objects designed to solve the same problem to compare the strengths and weaknesses of how each performs.
Home Connection: This is the "fix it up" standard. When building the mini golf hole, ask "which way works better?" as your child tries different ideas. You can also add ideas from the Gather Data Critical Key: "What did you notice about your first try?"

3RD - 5TH ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

Academic Standard: Plan and carry out fair tests in which variables are controlled and failure points are considered to identify aspects of a model or prototype that can be improved.
Home Connection: This is a great time to introduce the term "variable" to 3rd - 5th graders. What can changes in our mini golf hole? The "green" can be longer, the ramp can be steeper etc.

6TH - 8TH ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

Academic Standard: Develop a model to generate data for iterative testing and modification of a proposed object, tool, or process such that an optimal design can be achieved.
Home Connection: Test and improve based on evidence! This is the design process in action. When kids have engaging tasks, they are more willing to "stick with it" to retest their design.

Activity Extensions & Alternatives:

Rube Goldberg machines are elaborate strings of reactions used to complete a simple task. Use these videos to pique your child's interest in this grit building activity:

The Swish Machine

When Life Gives You Lemons

These are both really enormous, but kids love to watch them! Here is an example that is more doable:

Ring a Bell or Pop a Balloon

To get started, gather fun items from around the house and try a three reaction table top machine! Here is a link to step by step instructions.