



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXAM SEASON: PARENTS PRIORITISE MENTAL HEALTH OVER TOP GRADES

- Parents concerns over children's mental health changing narrative around academic achievement.
- Research shows 8 in 10 parents reward children to show appreciation for hard work.

London, 15 May 2024 - Exam season is upon on us. As students try to cope during this pressure-cooker time, many parents are turning to reward children for their hard work not just exam success according to a survey by [nimbl](#), the leading pocket money card and app for 6 to 18 year olds.

The survey highlights that although parents want their children to do well, getting the top results is not the number one priority for the majority of those surveyed, with 8 in 10 primarily want to show their appreciation for their child's efforts and 6 in10 want to motivate them to work hard.

Parents surveyed expressed that the motivation to reward their child for academic achievements has broadened. More than half the parents want to help foster important life skills such as goal setting, time management, focus and a good work ethic. This signals an attitudinal shift from previous years where focus was more on rewarding children to achieve top grades.

The majority of parents (8 in 10) believe that rewards help their child understand the connection between hard work and financial rewards, with over 1 in 2 believing it was very important to give rewards to encourage them to work hard in school. 4 in 10 parents felt that Introducing monetary rewards early on can prepare students for the competitive nature of the workforce, helping them develop valuable skills such as discipline, time management, and goal setting.

“The rewards should be varied and discussed - something that the children will appreciate and not always expect as a given. This shouldn't stop them from aiming to work hard but rather motivate and encourage them. They need to understand the reward is given not because of their high scores but because of the dedication they have put in and developing a work habit that they can keep throughout their lives,” said mum, Sylvia from Luton (son aged 17 years).

With the growth of children's mental health issues reaching crisis point according to the [NHS](#), the nimbl survey found that 47% of parents prioritise their child's mental health over academic success and 49% want to achieve a balance their child's academic success with their overall happiness and mental health.

The survey highlighted that support for academic achievement also came from other family members and friends (6 in 10), with grandparents playing a key role in rewarding their grandchildren, nearly 1 in 2.

Although many parents and family gave money as rewards (6 in 10 parents), parents also favoured incentives that encouraged family time, the outdoors, curiosity and learning through experiences such as day trips, eating out, concert/sport tickets and driving lessons.

Experts argue putting a price on exam success or academic achievements may undermine the intrinsic motivation for learning. When students are solely motivated by money or receiving a reward, there is a risk that the joy of learning and personal growth may take a back seat. Critics fear that this approach may lead children to associate success only with rewards, potentially neglecting the importance of intellectual curiosity and passion for knowledge.

Ultimately, there is no right answer and parents can feel conflicted even when they are using incentives for good grades and question if it is putting more pressure on their child. The Nimble survey showed 1 in 10 parents often feel conflicted and 3 in 10 sometimes feel conflicted.

Alana Parsons, nimbl, Chief Executive, said: “As you would expect there are many opposing views on incentivising children to study. But what the nimbl survey does signal in Mental Health Awareness month is that whatever side of the fence you sit on, we need to address the narratives around academic achievements and the values we nurture in our children's formative years to pave a way to a healthier and more successful society and future workforce.”

- ENDS -

Notes to Editor

nimbl researchers surveyed 353 parents of children aged under 11 – 18 years old.

About nimbl

nimbl is an award-winning pocket money card and app, designed with parents, carers and young people in mind, offering a safe, secure environment to support financial responsibility, independence, and confidence from an early age.

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