

The Start Switch

His engine isn't broken — it just runs on a different fuel. A worksheet offers **importance** and a grade that's a week away; his brain runs on what pays **now**. You can't threaten focus into him. You can hand him, on the outside, the immediate reward his brain can't make on the inside yet — the same four things the game delivers every few seconds:

IMMEDIACY · NOVELTY · CHALLENGE · FEEDBACK

How to use this page: pick one task he stalls on — tonight's, not every task — and work down the page. Change one thing this week. Just one. Stick it where the homework actually happens.

1 Pick the stalled task — name the fight, don't fix the whole evening

THE ONE TASK WE FIGHT ABOUT MOST

the worksheet, the reading log, the piano practice — one, not the whole night.

2 Shrink the start — a brain that can't feel a finish line can still do the next ten seconds

☐ Write his name at the top

TONIGHT'S 60-SECOND FIRST STEP

☐ Read question one out loud, together

☐ Set out the two pens he needs

not "do your homework" — the smallest thing that counts as started.

3 Make the finish line — and the win — visible — the feedback the game gives and the worksheet never does

☐ Turn the task into boxes to tick right on the page [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

☐ Start a visual timer he can watch empty — beat the clock, not the teacher

☐ Mark each step done the second it's done — a star, a tick, said out loud

4 Break the flat sameness — rotate one thing to spark novelty & challenge

☐ Move it: three at the table, three standing at the counter

☐ Switch the tool: gel pens, a whiteboard, a highlighter

☐ Race it: "can you beat the three-minute timer on this one?"

5 Sit down beside him. Not doing it for him — just a calm body at the table. It turns an impossible solo task into a doable shared one. You being his frontal lobe, for getting started.

Small, immediate, and certain beats big, distant, and threatened — every single time. You're not lowering the bar. You're moving it to where he can reach it. Not twelve hours of magic — ten minutes of started.

Stick this where the homework happens. You're not buying his focus — you're building the on-ramp to it.

For information only — not a substitute for care from your own child's doctor or teacher. You already knew that.