

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

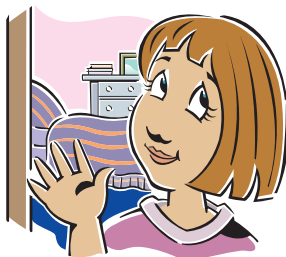
George Read Middle School

Guiding Students for School Success

Fundamentals make discipline easier

Which deserves more attention—good behavior or misbehavior? The answer is good behavior. That's because attention is a kind of reward, and good behavior should be rewarded! Here are some other discipline basics:

- **Keep it simple.** Instead of making a long list of rules, focus on the essentials. Explain them briefly and clearly to your child.
- **Be consistent.** Stick to key rules, even when it's tempting to give in. Your child will learn that she always has to obey them.
- **Expect success.** When you believe in your child, it's easier for your child to believe in herself.
- **Address problems.** If a pattern of misbehavior develops, talk about it. Review your expectations—and what will happen if they are, or aren't, met.
- **Discipline respectfully.** Choose fair, sensible consequences that help your child learn. You might say, "You didn't get ready to go, so now you'll miss the movie."
- **Show acceptance.** Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Compliment your child's strengths and be loving—no matter what.
- **Encourage self-discipline.** Kids should take pride in good behavior. Say things like, "You organized your room so neatly. Wow! That must feel great!"



Source: Sal Severe, Ph.D., "10 Principles of Practicing Good Behavior," iVillage, <http://parenting.ivillage.com/gsgsbehavior/0,,h44s-1,00.html>.

Avoiding problems can make them worse

Solving problems is as important in life as it is in the classroom. But



there are ways *not* to solve a problem. For example, don't:

- **Deny it.** Your child may hope that if he ignores a problem, it will go away.
- **Worry.** Instead of writing a big paper, your child may spend all his time fretting about it.
- **Quit.** Your child might want to take the easy road and give up.

Teach your child to face his problems—before they grow.

Help your child learn to deal with defeats and disappointments. Yes, it's important to celebrate successes, but it's just as important to let your child know it's okay to fail. Be loving and supportive. When the crisis has passed, help her think about what went wrong on that math test—and how she might change her study habits, for example.



Help your foster child deal with anger

Does your foster child become aggressive when she's angry? Teach her to express her anger more constructively. Here's how:

- **Be a role model.** Let her see you handle irritating situations calmly.
- **Don't take the bait.** Instead of responding to your angry child with more anger, step away and cool off. That in itself is a lesson to her.
- **Offer words.** Help your child describe what's wrong. Talk about concepts like frustration and nervousness.



Source: Michele Borba, Ed.D., "6 Ways to Help Foster Kids Express Anger Constructively!" Foster Care & Adoptive Community, www.fosterparents.com/articles/borba.html.

Telling tales isn't the same as telling lies

Your kindergartner loves telling "tall tales" about his day, but does that make him a liar? Not necessarily. Young children (around four to five years old) often invent stories because it's fun. It doesn't mean they're "lying" about events or need to be punished. Of course, if he's still spinning such yarns a few years from now, it'll be time for a serious chat about honesty!



Source: "Children and Lying," American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, www.aacap.org/page.www?name=Children+And+Lying§ion=FACTS+for+Families.

Replace nagging with real motivation

If you find yourself nagging a lot, perhaps your child needs a boost in self-motivation. Try to:

- *Encourage her natural interests*—things she loves to do.
- *Show excitement about learning.* It may be contagious!
- *Set reasonable expectations.* Too much pressure can be counterproductive.
- *Help your child develop routines,* such as studying at the same time each day.
- *Avoid solving all of your child's problems.* Let her see that she's capable.
- *Be a role model.* You might pay bills during study time, for instance.
- *Give genuine, specific compliments.* Recognize your child's successes.



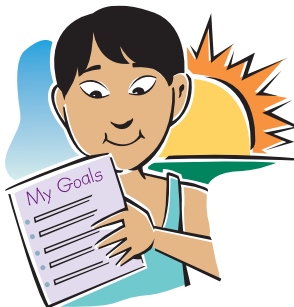
Source: Mary Garner Ganske, "The Secrets to School Success," FamilyCircle, www.familycircle.com/fc/story.jhtml?storyid=/templatedata/fc/story/data/1156275511145.xml&catref=fmc27&page=2.

Questions & Answers

Q: My fourth grader was often in trouble this year for talking too much in class. What can I do over the summer to help him behave better next fall?

A: You're wise to start taking action now. By working on your child's behavior during summer break, you may help him have a more successful school year the next time around. Here's how to work on getting his chattiness under control:

- *Emphasize the positive.* Before talking with your child about what went wrong with his behavior this year, spend some time praising him for what went right.
- *Tell it like it is.* Let your child know exactly what the problem is. "You've been in trouble way too many times for talking in class. We're going to work on that this summer."
- *Make a plan.* With your child, brainstorm ideas for tackling his behavior. "We agree that you're too talkative sometimes. What can we do to keep you from getting too chatty when you're supposed to be quiet?" Help him write his ideas down and post them on the refrigerator or in his room.
- *Set small goals.* Don't expect your child to correct his behavior immediately—or never slip up. So take baby steps. "Let's see if we can get through our trip to the library without anyone asking you to quiet down."
- *Reward progress.* When your child genuinely strives to do better, celebrate his efforts. Let him know that you appreciate how hard he's trying—and that you don't expect him to be perfect.



Better self-esteem = better behavior

To find out if your child has a problem with low self-esteem, ask yourself whether he:

- *Worries a lot.*
 - *Is overly shy* around others.
 - *Feels "not good enough"* and compares himself to peers.
 - *Is overwhelmed* by everyday challenges.
 - *Argues about meaningless things.*
- If this sounds like your child, talk to his teacher or counselor about getting help. Improving self-esteem may go a long way toward improving his overall behavior!

Source: "What Is Self-Esteem?" NotMYKid.org, www.notmykid.org/parentArticles/SelfEsteem/default.asp.

Exercise your child out of a bad mood!

Exercise doesn't just improve your child's physical fitness—it may improve behavior, too. According to research, regular exercise can give kids:

- *A sense of vitality.*
- *The ability to manage stress.*
- *An instant mood lift.*
- *More self-confidence.*

Even better, when the whole family exercises, everyone shares these mood-enhancing benefits. So grab your child and your walking shoes and get moving!



Source: "Benefits of Exercise," MentalHelp.net, http://mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=4380&cn=288.

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