

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

George Read Middle School

Guiding Students for School Success

Teach tolerance when communicating

Communication involves more than words. In fact, communication is often more nonverbal than verbal. Imagine all the ways people “speak” without words. They shake hands. They clap. They smile. To show this, role-play some situations with your child silently. Pretend to:

- *Ask someone* to sit next to you.
- *Tell a friend* to “Go for it!”
- *Be hurt* by someone’s words.
- *Feel sorry* about something you did.
- *Look for* an item you lost.
- *See someone* after a long time apart.
- *Be bored* during a telephone conversation.
- *Tell everyone* you’re okay after falling down.
- *Thank someone* for helping you.
- *Have no idea* how to answer a question.
- *Believe you’re right* and someone else is wrong.



Then discuss how nonverbal signals sometimes get misinterpreted, especially in a diverse culture with many customs. Someone from Indonesia, for example, might smile if embarrassed. In France, the American sign for “okay” has different meanings. It can represent “zero” or “nothing.”

If something is unclear, teach your child to say something like, “I’m confused about how you feel.” That’s better than jumping to a conclusion or starting an argument. Talk about times you have been misunderstood. What happened? What did you learn from it?

Source: “The ABCs of Conflict Resolution,” Teaching Tolerance, www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?ar=869&cpa=3.

Teach your child to mean it when he says, “I’m sorry.” For his apology to be sincere, your child should:

- **Understand** what he did and take responsibility.
- **Realize** how his behavior affected someone else.
- **Offer** to fix anything he may have damaged.
- **Explain** how he plans to do better next time.



Source: “Apologizing,” Parenting.org, www.parenting.org/archive/flight/life_lessons/2001-02/Jun02_apologizing.asp.

Keep tabs on TV time

Research shows that 51% of kids live in homes where the TV is left on nearly all the time. But inappropriate shows can impact behavior. To monitor your child’s TV time:

- **Know exactly** what she’s watching.
- **Learn to set** your TV’s v-chip to block unsuitable programs.
- **Set rules** about what she can and can’t watch.



Source: “Watching Television with Your Children,” www.freemanpta.com/uploads/Watching_Television_with_your_Children.pdf.

Develop character through reading

When you read with your child, you build her reading skills—and you can also build her character. Choose books that reflect your values.

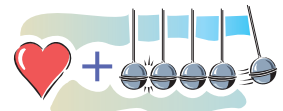


For example, one school reads Mary Hoffman’s *Amazing Grace* to teach about diversity and inclusion, and Dr. Seuss’ *Oh, The Things You Can Think!* to promote creativity.

Ask a librarian to help you find books that match your ideals.

Source: Patti Ghezzi, “Teaching Kids About Character,” PTO Today, www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/454-teaching-kids-about-character.

React to misbehavior with love and logic



Discipline can be a great challenge to parents. One popular discipline method emphasizes two key factors—love and logic. Instead of yelling and nagging:

- **Empathize.** Understand what your child might be thinking and feeling. “You’re frustrated that you can’t go first.” Remember, your goal is to help your child.
- **Be consistent.** Enforce sensible consequences in a kind, calm manner. Let your child see the results of his choices. “You still haven’t picked up your toys. I’m afraid we won’t have time to go to the park now.”

Source: “How to Use Love and Logic Discipline,” eHow, www.ehow.com/how_2106256_use-love-logic-discipline.html.

Help your child handle divorce

Sadly, about half of all marriages end in divorce. If yours is soon to be one of them, it's crucial to understand how it might impact your child's behavior. According to research, kids whose parents divorce may:

- *Become angry or depressed.*
- *Act out.*
- *Begin doing poorly in school.*

Although you can't soothe all of your child's divorce-related stress, you can minimize it if you:

- *Are honest about what's happening.*
- *Remind him it's not his fault.*
- *Stay supportive and loving.*



Source: "Children and Divorce," American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, <http://aacap.org/page.ww?name=Children+and+Divorce§ion=Facts+for+Families>.

Questions & Answers

Q: My third grader called another child names the other day. I couldn't believe it! I already punished her, but how do I make her understand that what she did was, well—mean?

A: Kids aren't born mean. But if emotions like kindness and empathy aren't nurtured, some less pleasant emotions may come out. To promote those friendlier emotions in your child and help her recognize her mean behavior:

- **Focus on the behavior itself.** If you hear your child call another child names, for example, resist the urge to lecture her or tell her she's "bad." Instead, emphasize her behavior. "Calling that little girl names is unkind. It hurts her feelings, and I'm not going to allow you to do it."
- **Teach her empathy.** If your child doesn't understand why what she did was hurtful, she may not stop herself from doing it again. So make sure she knows *why* it was wrong. "That little girl is crying now. How do you think your name-calling made her feel? How would you feel if someone called you names?"
- **Offer alternatives.** Don't assume your child will know what to do next time, so give her ideas. "You know it's not okay to call her 'four eyes.' So how about complimenting her on her cool blue glasses instead?"
- **Give her a chance to make things right.** If possible, have your child apologize. This encourages her to take responsibility for what she's done and to acknowledge it to her victim.



Source: Michele Borba, Ed.D., *No More Misbehavior*, ISBN: 0-7879-6617-7 (Jossey-Bass, 1-800-225-5945, www.josseybass.com).

Encourage gratitude

Studies show that grateful people tend to be happier and more resilient than those who are less grateful. To keep your child from becoming an ungrateful child this holiday season:

- **Remind him** of some of the things he should be grateful for.
- **Let him hear** you express gratitude. "Aren't we lucky to get such pretty snow?"
- **Have him write** thank-you notes when he receives gifts.



Source: Dr. Caron B. Goode, "Teaching our Children the Joy of Being Grateful," More4Kids.info, www.more4kids.info/184/teaching-gratitude.

Offer support when your child feels sad

Do you swoop in to rescue your child the moment she gets upset? Stop! It's okay to let her experience sad feelings that follow consequences of a misstep, such as irresponsibility.



- **Be understanding.** "I've messed up before, too. It's frustrating."
- **Validate her feelings.** "It's okay to feel sad."
- **Listen.** "We can talk about it if you like."
- **Be supportive.** "I'm here and I love you."

Source: Deborah Critzer Fox, "Children's Feelings," PositiveParenting.com, www.positiveparenting.com/resources/feature_article_008.html.

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