

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

George Read Middle School

Guiding Students for School Success

'Schedule' a solution to your child's homework issues

Your child has been at school all day. Now she's home, and it's time for homework. What should you do if she resists? Give her more time to relax? Insist that she sit down and work? Think creatively. You might:

- **Help her make a schedule.** Talk with your child about ideas. Some kids want to finish homework right after school. Others need free time first. Whatever works best for your child, work together to make a schedule—and stick with it!
- **Pick an appealing study spot.** Any comfortable, non-distracting area will do. A simple place, such as the kitchen table, is just fine. But make sure key supplies are nearby.
- **Do some preparation.** To avoid interruptions, see if your child needs a snack or bathroom break before she gets started. Remember that your help may be needed, so make yourself available.
- **Offer guidance.** If your child is struggling with an assignment, help without doing work for her. Say things like, "Let's look at the sample problem together" or "Would it help to read the instructions again—or aloud?"
- **Know what to expect.** Sometimes homework is intimidating to kids because parents want to see perfection. Ask about the teacher's expectations and then help your child meet them.



Source: Pam Abrams, "Homework Hassles." Parents.com, www.parents.com/parents/story/jhtml?storyid=/templatedata/parents/story/data/5562.xml.

Practice being a good sport

Playing sports is an opportunity for kids to become good sports. But that's tough if parents aren't setting a good example. You should:

- **Cheer** for kids on both teams.
- **Be friendly** to parents from both teams.
- **Resist** calling out advice.
- **Thank** officials after the game.



Source: Shane Murphy, Ph.D., "The Blame Game," MomsTeam, www.momsteam.com/alpha/features/cheersandtears/five-ways.shtml.

Anger can take a lot of energy.

Uncontrolled anger can also lead to violence. Tell your child it's okay to feel anger, but it's not okay to hurt someone.

Instead, teach him to:

- **Count** to 10.
- **Take** deep breaths.
- **Talk** it out—even to the dog! Say, "I'm angry."
- **Draw** a picture of what made him angry.



Grandma's input does matter!

Grandmothers have more influence than they may think.



Research shows that moms are likely to take their mothers' advice when it comes to discipline. And grandmas are likely to value their daughters' approaches to discipline, too.

In other words, grandmothers alter their advice to fit how their daughters are already disciplining the grandkids. This shows that moms and grandmas value one another's input!

Continue to model your mutual respect. Your children will pick up on it.

Source: A.M. Tomlin and R.H. Passman, "Grandmothers' advice about disciplining grandchildren ... ?" National Center for Biotechnology Information, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=1863387&dopt=Abstract.

Show your child the 'behavior-consequence connection'

Teach your youngster about the "behavior-consequence connection." Show how the things he does impact what happens to him—good or bad. A "good consequence" of studying hard might be earning better grades.

And a bad consequence? The next time he "forgets" to do his homework by bedtime, set the next morning's alarm 30 minutes earlier. The crack-of-dawn work session can be his consequence for slacking off the night before.

Source: Ruth A. Peters, Ph.D., "Kid got a bad attitude? Here's how to change it," MSNBC.com, www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5846776.

Teach about stress relief

Everyone deals with stress—including children. But kids don't have the same coping skills as adults. To help your child through stressful times:



- **Notice stress.** You might say, "You seem worried about that test on division." Give your child opportunities to talk about it—and then listen. Show that you understand.
- **Name feelings.** For example, say to your child, "Being jealous—wishing you had what someone else has—is normal." This teaches your child about describing his emotions.
- **Brainstorm.** Help your child consider solutions. He doesn't have to come up with perfect answers, but encourage thoughtfulness and good ideas.
- **Be there.** Kids don't need to discuss (or even fix) every little problem. Just knowing you're there to listen and to help is reassuring.

Source: "Helping Kids Cope With Stress," KidsHealth, www.kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/stress_coping.html.

Questions & Answers?

Q: My two children fight so much that I feel more like a referee than a parent! What can I do to fix this problem?

A: Constant fighting—plus the noise and chaos that come along with it—isn't healthy for anyone. To restore peace in your home:

- **Remember that kids are individuals.** Don't compare your energetic older child to his laid-back little sister (or try to make him be more like her). The more you compare your kids, the more they may resent each other. And resentment can quickly lead to more fighting.
- **Keep out of it.** As much as possible, stay neutral when your kids start bickering. You don't want it to seem like you're choosing sides or always protecting one child from the other.
- **Know when to step in.** If your children are hitting each other or using foul language, you must intervene. Separate them until things cool down, but don't dwell on "who started it." Once they're calm, encourage them to resolve the issue by compromising.
- **Set ground rules.** You can't end sibling rivalry, but you can insist that your kids obey the house rules when they squabble. These rules could include no hitting or name-calling. If a child breaks a rule, enforce a consequence—regardless of who started what.
- **Promote goodwill.** Spend one-on-one time with each child. Do fun things together as a family. If your kids still quarrel too much, hold regular meetings with them to review the rules and brainstorm solutions.



Source: Dan Harkness, Ph.D., and Jennifer Shroff Pendley, Ph.D., "Sibling Rivalry," KidsHealth, www.kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/sibling_rivalry.html.

Parenting solo? Give yourself a break!

Raising kids is tough, especially if you're going it alone. As a single parent, it's important to take breaks from your child once in a while. Ask family members or friends to pitch in while you go shopping or take a walk. A breather now and then may help you be a better parent—one who sets loving limits and sticks to them.

Source: "Parenting Tips," American Academy of Family Physicians, <http://familydoctor.org/368.xml>.

What works? Being firm and clear!

Your child left her school papers all over the floor. Again. Here's what not to do:

- **Clean** them up yourself.
 - **Nag** her.
 - **Overreact** or call her "lazy."
- Instead, be firm and clear:
- **Tell her exactly** what to do. "Gather your papers and put them in your backpack."
 - **Set a time limit.** "If it's not done by dinnertime, no more TV tonight."
 - **Follow through.** "Your mess isn't cleaned up. The TV goes off. Now."



Source: Jonathan Brush, Ph.D., M.D., "Good Kids, Bad Behavior," FamilyEducation.com, <http://life.familyeducation.com/behavior/bad-habits/29732.html?page=1&detoured=1>.

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