

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

George Read Middle School

Guiding Students for School Success

Teach trustworthiness in simple steps

The older children get, the more aware they become of the nuances of honesty. Is honesty *always* the best policy? Why does dishonesty sometimes seem “successful”—such as in advertising? To help your child understand the “truth” about honesty:

- **Discuss sticky situations regarding honesty.** For example, what if a friend asks, “Do you like my new outfit?” and your child doesn’t like it? He could say, “I think it is very interesting.”
- **Talk about how honesty is portrayed** on TV and in books. What happens when a character lies or tells the truth?
- **Review the real results of telling lies** and being truthful. How do these actions affect others? What does it feel like to *be* honest or lie? What does it feel like to *hear* the truth or a lie?
- **Mention that honesty leads to trust.** On the other hand, lies can lead to distrust at home, with friends and in the classroom.
- **Explain that honesty involves meaning what is said.** For instance, when someone promises something, it’s important to try to follow through.
- **Set an honest example for your child.** Think about how you want him to behave and then model that behavior.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, “Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen: Activities 1,” www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_Activities_1_Helping/.

You don’t need complicated charts or lists of rules to influence your child’s behavior. Just spend time with him! The more low-key moments you share, the more time you’ll have to talk about your values and model proper behavior. Easy, free ways to spend time together include:

- **Taking** walks together.
- **Playing** catch.
- **Fixing** things around the house.
- **Shooting** baskets.



Let your youngster face consequences

Show your child that her actions have consequences! If she doesn’t pick her schoolwork up off the floor, let her experience:

- **A natural consequence.** The dog runs past and wrinkles her papers. That’s a *natural* consequence.
- **A logical consequence.** If you spend time picking up her school things, she owes you time tidying other parts of the house. That’s a *logical* consequence.



Design a successful chore chart

Setting up a chore chart for your child? To make it effective:

- **Be realistic.** Don’t expect your child to take on more chores than she can reasonably handle.
- **Get your child involved.** Let her be part of the chart-making process (even if she doesn’t have veto power!).
- **Explain the jobs.** Make sure your child understands exactly what you want. “Clean your room” might mean something different to each of you.



Source: Sarah Aguirre, “12 Chore Chart Tips For Success,” About.com, <http://housekeeping.about.com/od/involvingfamily/a/12tipschrcharts.htm>.

Time your rewards

Parents often “bribe” kids who are misbehaving. (“If you stop complaining about errands, we’ll go to your favorite store.”)

But this can teach a risky lesson: **Misbehavior leads to rewards.** Try using rewards *before* problems arise. (“Please help me find everything on this shopping list. Then we’ll have time to stop at your favorite store.”) Use rewards sparingly, too, so your child won’t always expect them.



Source: Deborah Carpenter, “Better Than Bribery,” Parenting.com, www.parenting.com/article/Child/Behavior/Better-Than-Bribery.

How do you use an allowance?

You want to give your child an allowance, but you may not be sure how—or when—to start. Experts advise parents to:

- **Use an allowance** to teach important lessons about money management. It will help your child learn to make responsible decisions. Let him experience spending mistakes.
- **Start giving** an allowance early—when your child starts wanting to buy material things. This is often around age five.
- **Discuss how** the allowance will be spent. What is your child expected to purchase (such as toys and CDs)?
- **Separate allowance** from chores. Emphasize that housework is part of being a family. It's okay, though, to pay for out-of-the-ordinary tasks.



Source: Lynne Ticknor, "Should your kids get an allowance?", MSN Money, <http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/CollegeAndFamily/RaiseKids/ShouldYourKidsGetAnAllowance.aspx?page=1>.

Questions & Answers

Q: I'm not perfect when it comes to disciplining my child. In fact, I'm not perfect when it comes to any part of parenting! How can I tell if I'm doing a good job?

A: By cutting yourself some slack! No one—repeat, no one—is a perfect parent. And no one is perfectly firm, fair and consistent when it comes to disciplining a child. The best you can do is simply to do your best! Remember to:

- **Love your child.** Let her know she's cherished every single day. Give her plenty of hugs and kisses when she needs them (or "just because") and offer her a hand when she stumbles.
- **Make her feel secure.** Be sure your child knows you'll protect her and keep her safe. Support her when she's scared or unsure.
- **Bring order to her life.** Kids thrive on routines, so be sure your child knows what to expect as far as bedtime, dinnertime and homework rules go. She'll appreciate the structure (even though she might complain about it).
- **Give her responsibilities.** Treat your child like the capable person she is! Assign her age-appropriate, reasonable chores to do.
- **Praise her.** Did she just do something well? Congratulate her! On the flip side, if she does something she shouldn't have, criticize her actions—not her.
- **Listen to her.** Be there for your child when she wants to talk. You don't need to have all the answers—just be available when she asks the questions!



Source: "Parenting Tips," FamilyDoctor.org, <http://familydoctor.org/368.xml>.

Build a 'support team'

Parenting is tough—especially when you're dealing with your child's behavior issues. So don't go it alone! Instead, build a "support team" by connecting with:

- **Your partner.** Nurture your relationship with your partner. It will make you better able to parent your child.
- **Neighbors.** Get to know the people around you.
- **Other parents.** Make friends with parents of kids your child's age. Support and encourage one another, especially during rough times.

Source: "Build Your Team," MVParents.com, <http://mvparents.com/article.php?aid=41&cid=1>.

Use family fun time to squash sibling rivalry

Going nuts over your kids' constant squabbling? Try having more fun together as a family! The less time you spend on enjoyable activities, the more time for sibling rivalry.

To boost family's togetherness:

- **Break out** the board games.
- **Make** dinner together.
- **Enjoy** a friendly touch-football match.
- **Bundle up** to watch the stars on a clear night.



Source: Kyla Boyse, R.N., "Sibling Rivalry," the University of Michigan Health System, www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/sibriv.htm.

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