

# Firm, Fair & Consistent®

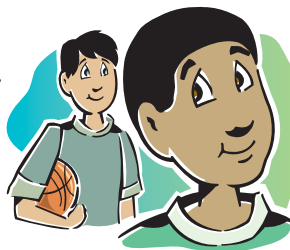
George Read Middle School

Guiding Students for School Success

## Satisfying friendships can take work

Is your child having difficulty with friendships? If so, it's important to help—without hurting his self-esteem. Strive to:

- **Listen.** How does your child feel about his friendships? If he's content with one or two good friends, that may be fine. But if he's unhappy, take his concerns seriously.
- **Be a role model.** Children are excellent imitators. Behave the way you'd want your child to act. Be polite, confident and considerate.
- **Talk with his teacher.** How are his social skills at school?
- **Role play.** This is a good way to practice skills. For example, what are some ways to join a group of kids playing a game? What if the kids are welcoming? What if they're not? Take turns playing different parts. With a younger child, using puppets can help.
- **Supervise.** Invite children over to play and stay nearby to be supportive. Choose guests carefully and plan cooperative activities. Set the stage for success. Give compliments when things go well and help resolve disagreements before they grow.
- **Be positive.** Tell your child exactly what he does right. "I know you really wanted a turn, but you waited patiently. That was impressive!" Give plenty of attention to behaviors you want to become habits. If problems don't improve, talk with a professional.



Source: Dr. Victoria Samuel, "Friendship problems ...," Supernanny.com, [www.supernanny.co.uk/Advice/-/Learning-and-Education/-/4-to-13-years/Friendship-problems.aspx](http://www.supernanny.co.uk/Advice/-/Learning-and-Education/-/4-to-13-years/Friendship-problems.aspx).

## 'Facing the music' does matter

It's tough to let your child face the consequences of her actions, but do it anyway. For instance, does she often leave assignments at home and expect you to bring them to school for her? Stop being her safety net! Let her experience the fallout of her actions—even if it means getting a failing grade on a project. After all, a little pain now may make her more responsible in the long run.



Source: "Ask Our Expert: Learning Responsibility," [RaisingKids.co.uk](http://RaisingKids.co.uk), [www.raisingkids.co.uk/9\\_13/ex06\\_pre28.asp](http://www.raisingkids.co.uk/9_13/ex06_pre28.asp).

Is your kids' bickering driving you batty? Take a deep breath. Believe it or not, sibling squabbles are a normal part of childhood. Of course, if those squabbles turn physical, you need to jump in. But beyond that, take a step back and let them hash things out on their own. At the very least, it may help save your sanity!



Source: Robin Greene Hagey, "Bickering, Bloodsport of Siblings," *Los Angeles Times*, [www.latimes.com/features/printedition/home/la-hm-bickering17mar17,1,4021048.story?page=1&coll=la-home-printedition](http://www.latimes.com/features/printedition/home/la-hm-bickering17mar17,1,4021048.story?page=1&coll=la-home-printedition).

## Take a positive tone with discipline

Take a new approach to taming your child's physical exuberance! Instead of telling her what she *can't* do, emphasize what she *can* do.



For example:

- **Old approach:** "Don't touch anything at the museum!"
- **New approach:** "We need to keep our hands to ourselves in the museum. But when we're finished, let's go to the library and find some books about your favorite exhibit."

This way, she'll still get the "how to behave" message, but it'll sound much more positive and upbeat.

Source: Jeremy Jewell, Ph.D., "Defiant Children," *Southern Illinois University Edwardsville*, [www.siu.edu/~jejewel/Defiant%20children.html](http://www.siu.edu/~jejewel/Defiant%20children.html).

## Encourage thank-you notes with simple steps

It's important for children to say "thank you" for gifts. You can encourage this by:



- **Making a "thank-you note basket."** Fill it with supplies such as colorful pens, stickers, note cards and stamps.
- **Creating a sample thank-you card** that gives your child ideas. Include a simple message on which he can build.

Source: Lynne Ticknor, "Manners Do Matter," *Washington Parent*, <http://washingtonparent.com/articles/0712/pep.html>.

## Optimism may affect school success

Is your child's attitude helping or hurting her school performance? When kids are pessimistic, research suggests, they may do poorly in school.



To help boost your child's positive attitude:

- **Plan for fun.** Make time for regular, enjoyable activities together, such as going for walks on Saturdays. This is a reassuring way to show love.
- **Think again.** If your child is grumpy about something ("Going to Grandpa's will be boring!"), offer a different view. ("Maybe. But it might be fun. He has all that cool stuff in his attic. And he always has a good joke to tell!") Don't let your child back out of events she's likely to enjoy.
- **Set a good example.** Show your enthusiasm about life—and especially about school.

Source: Alison Bell, "Turning a Pessimist into an Optimist," Parenting, [www.parenting.com/parenting/child/article/0,19840,1643133,00.html?stage=812](http://www.parenting.com/parenting/child/article/0,19840,1643133,00.html?stage=812).

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** Boredom brings out the worst in my child! How can I keep him busy—and meltdown-free—this summer?

**A:** There's nothing like too much downtime to turn your darling into a challenge. So it's a good idea to have a few tricks up your sleeve for keeping him occupied over summer break. You shouldn't fill every moment of his vacation, though; he needs to learn to handle boredom appropriately.

To keep your child engaged and out of trouble this summer, try these simple activities:

- **Start a play group.** Plan a once-a-week activity with other kids in the neighborhood. It's a great way for your child to boost his social skills and have fun at the same time.
- **Hit the books.** Does your local library sponsor a summer reading program? Enroll your child. It'll keep his reading skills sharp during summer break. And just as importantly, the structure may help keep his "school skills" strong.
- **Tackle a puzzle.** Don't let that 1,000-word jigsaw puzzle sit in its box anymore! Get it out of the closet and work on it with your child. Anytime he's bored, challenge him to put a few pieces together. Who knows? You may complete the whole thing by summer's end.
- **Create a memory box.** Give your child stickers, markers, etc. and have him decorate a shoebox. All summer, have him fill it with interesting treasures—from shells to ticket stubs. When September rolls around, he'll have a box full of great memories to share with his school friends.



Source: Polly Schlafhauser, "Summer Boredom Busters," Families with Purpose, [www.familieswithpurpose.com/summer-boredom-busters.html](http://www.familieswithpurpose.com/summer-boredom-busters.html).

## Raise a good sport



Lace up your cleats: The summer sports season is nearly here! To make sure your favorite athlete is a good sport on and off the field:

- **Talk about what it means** to win (and lose) graciously.
- **Be sympathetic** when your child blows a play.
- **Encourage her to talk** to her coach if she gets frustrated.
- **Set a good example** from the bleachers. Never yell at the officials or argue with the other team or other parents.

Source: "When Good Kids Are Bad Sports," Family Education Network, <http://life.familyeducation.com/behavioral-problems/sports/30147.html?detoured=1>.

## You can't punish your child into being more generous!

Is it really better to give than to receive? Not as far as your youngster is concerned! So what should you do if your child is selfish? Well, there's one thing you should *not* do: Punish him.

Punishment will make him resent the whole idea of giving. Instead, praise him when he is generous. The positive reinforcement may be all the encouragement he needs to become a more giving person.

Source: Karen Miles, "How to Teach Your Grade-Schooler to Share," BabyCenter LLC, [http://parentcenter.babycenter.com/0\\_how-to-teach-your-grade-schooler-to-share\\_67702.pc](http://parentcenter.babycenter.com/0_how-to-teach-your-grade-schooler-to-share_67702.pc).

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