

# Firm, Fair & Consistent®

George Read Middle School

Guiding Students for School Success

## Respond to lies appropriately

It's an unpleasant fact of life—children sometimes lie. To prepare for this, discuss honesty and plan how to handle fibs.

Experts suggest that you:

- **Expect the truth.** Send the message that honesty is a priority in your family. Your child will live up to your expectations.
- **Give examples.** Discuss stories (real and pretend) that teach values. A TV show character, for example, may have told a lie that got him into deeper trouble.
- **Encourage honesty.** You might say, "Sometimes it's really hard to tell the truth. But when people are honest, they feel better about themselves."
- **Be positive.** Don't go on and on about the negative aspects of lying. Explain that you appreciate honesty.
- **Learn lessons.** If your child tells a lie, consider its consequences. How does he feel? What would he do differently next time? What can he do about it now?
- **Set an example.** Show your child how to be honest. He'll learn from what you do, not just what you say.
- **Get support.** If your child's lying is out of control, consider talking with a professional. This is a problem that needs to be resolved.



Source: Matthew S. Robinson, "A Little Fib or a Big Fat Lie? Teaching Kids Honesty," Parenthood.com, [www.parenthood.com/article-topics/article-topics.php?Article\\_ID=8516](http://www.parenthood.com/article-topics/article-topics.php?Article_ID=8516).

Your child has the best chance of learning responsible behaviors when you set rules and limits that are:



- **Important.** Children have a hard time remembering too many rules at once.
- **Consistent.** Your child needs to know what to expect. If rules change from day to day, he will get confused—and learn to disregard them completely.

## Avoid spoiling your child

What do milk and kids have in common? They're both pretty unpleasant when spoiled! To keep from spoiling your child:

- **Be her parent,** not her friend.
- **Give her chores** to do.
- **Talk about good behavior** and values.
- **Stay connected.** Eat breakfast and dinner together.
- **Make—and enforce—house rules.**



Source: Shmuley Boteach, "Spoiled Children," Oprah.com, [www.oprah.com/xm/sboteach/200803/sboteach\\_20080324.jhtml](http://www.oprah.com/xm/sboteach/200803/sboteach_20080324.jhtml).

## Choose homework time with care

When is the best time to do homework? It depends on your child.



Ask yourself:

- **When does my child** have the most mental energy?
- **What motivates my child?** (Playing outside after studying?)
- **Does free time help my child** transition from school to home?
- **When does my child** start to get tired in the evening?

Once you find the right time, stay with it. Consistency will make it even better!

Source: Gwynn Mettetal, "When is the best time to do homework?" parentcenter.com, [http://parentcenter.babycenter.com/404\\_when-is-the-best-time-to-do-home-work\\_71701.pc](http://parentcenter.babycenter.com/404_when-is-the-best-time-to-do-home-work_71701.pc).

## Raise a 'stick-to-it' kid

If your child gets overly frustrated when she falls short at something, teach her to persevere! To build a can-do attitude in your child:



- **Help her set goals** that are reachable. Whether her goals revolve around grades or scoring goals, encourage her to start small.
- **Celebrate her effort.** She didn't get an A on the science test? Applaud how hard she studied anyway!
- **Set a good example.** She's watching, so don't let setbacks derail you, either.

Source: Marie Faust Evitt, "How to Teach Kids Perseverance and Goal-Setting," Parents.com, [www.parents.com/family-life/better-parenting/parenting-style/how-to-teach-kids-perseverance-goal-setting](http://www.parents.com/family-life/better-parenting/parenting-style/how-to-teach-kids-perseverance-goal-setting).

## Teach compassion through experience

Telling your child to “be kind” is one thing. *Practicing kindness* is another. It shows your child, “Here’s how to be nice, and it feels great!”

For example:

- **Include your child in adult projects.** If you serve meals at a homeless shelter, ask what your child can do, such as make sandwiches.
- **Consider your child’s ideas.** How would she like to help others? Talk about her interests, such as caring for animals. Brainstorm together.
- **Give your child a fun responsibility.** Give her a title, too, such as “chief illustrator” if you’re making cards for others. Compliment her kindness!



Source: Amanda L. Freeman, “Raising a kid who cares,” *Parenting*, May 2008 (Bonnier Corporation, 1-800-234-0847, [www.parenting.com](http://www.parenting.com)).

### Questions & Answers

**Q:** I try to stay calm when dealing with my child, but his backtalk really sets me off sometimes. What is the best way to discipline him effectively—when I’m seeing red?

**A:** It’s too bad that kids don’t come with a “pause” button. If they did, you could just freeze them when things got frustrating, step away for a moment and come back when you’ve regained your cool. Unfortunately, it doesn’t work that way.

This means that it’s up to you to develop your own pause button when you’re feeling overwhelmed. It may not solve your child’s particular misbehavior, but it will help you deal with that behavior more effectively.

Here’s what to do:

- **Be honest.** If you’re about to blow your top, let your child know. Tell him about it as calmly as you can. “I’m really angry right now, so we’re going to need to deal with this a little later.” Then leave the room.
- **Settle yourself down.** Try counting to 10. Do a few deep-breathing exercises. Drink a glass of water. Just find a simple and quick outlet to help defuse your anger.
- **Get your heart pumping.** A brisk walk around the block may leave you feeling better able to cope with your misbehaving child. The fresh air will do you good, too.

Recognize a true problem. If you get so angry that you’re afraid you might actually harm your child, you must get help. Talk to your doctor, a school counselor or a trusted friend about how to get help.



## Develop your child’s self-discipline

Rather not be involved in your child’s discipline issues forever? Boost his self-discipline skills!

To nurture your child’s ability to discipline himself:

- **Insist** that he respond when you call him.
- **Praise** him when he does demonstrate self-control.
- **Encourage** him to participate in an activity such as music lessons. These require commitment and focus.
- **Create** daily routines and have him stick to them.

Source: “Helping Children Develop Self Discipline,” *Effective Parenting*, [www.effectiveparenting.org/tips4.asp](http://www.effectiveparenting.org/tips4.asp).

## Fewer lectures = more obedience

Your child balks at doing what she’s told. You patiently outline the top 100 reasons why she should obey. Her eyes glaze over. You tack on 100 more reasons.



What’s wrong with this picture? Too much talk! When you want your child to do something, keep your request to 10 words or fewer: “Books off the couch, please. Now.” Unless you’re standing at a podium, save the speech.

Source: Jane Nelsen, “Eighteen Ways to Avoid Power Struggles,” *PositiveDiscipline.com*, [www.positive-discipline.com/articles/power.html](http://www.positive-discipline.com/articles/power.html).

### Firm, Fair & Consistent®

*Guiding Students for School Success*

Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Managing Editor: Pat Hodgdon.

Editor: Erika Beasley.

Writers: Susan O’Brien, Holly Smith.

Illustrations: Maher & Mignella, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Copyright © 2008, The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc.

P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525

[www.parent-institute.com](http://www.parent-institute.com) • ISSN 1545-7737