

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Springer Municipal Schools

Guiding Students for School Success

Make good attendance a family goal

Research shows that attendance is critical to student success—and school success. And parents have more influence than anyone else. Remember: Attendance isn't just about being at school. It's also about being on time.

Develop these helpful family routines:

- **Plan ahead.** Designate a spot for everything that needs to go to school the next day. A box by the front door works well. Your child can place her backpack, soccer cleats and other items she'll need in the box. That way, she can get to the bus stop—and to class—on time.
- **Enforce bedtime and use an alarm clock.** It's important to go to sleep on time, get plenty of rest (at least 10 hours for school-age kids) and wake up at the same time each day. Consistent, quality sleep makes waking hours more pleasant and productive.
- **Plan vacations carefully.** Although it's tempting to schedule vacations when school is in session (instead of on busy holidays), doing so hurts learning. If travel can't be avoided on school days, give the school as much notice as possible.
- **Schedule appointments far in advance.** Occasional appointments during school hours are understandable. But routine appointments can often be scheduled after school or even on weekends. Every minute your child spends in school is another opportunity to learn!



It's okay to delay!

It's important to mete out a consequence when your child misbehaves. But finding an appropriate one isn't always easy.

When you know your child deserves a penalty, but you're not sure what it should be:

- **Buy some time.** "Andy, you've neglected your chores again, so now you've earned a consequence. We'll discuss it after you finish your assignment."
- **Use those extra moments** to decide on a fitting consequence. It may keep you from acting rashly!



Source: R. Burke, Ph.D. and others, *Common Sense Parenting: Using Your Head as Well as Your Heart to Raise School-Aged Children*, Boys Town Press.

When does worry become worrisome?

A little anxiety is normal—and probably nothing to worry about.

According to research, school-age kids tend to fret most over:

- **Their grades.**
- **Their looks.**
- **Fitting in.**

But when does simple worry become a more serious problem? When it's especially frequent or intense. If that sounds like your child, ask her guidance counselor or pediatrician about getting help.



Source: P. Foxman, Ph.D., *The Worried Child: Recognizing Anxiety in Children and Helping Them Heal*, Hunter House Publishers.

Cursing may be an everyday part of pop culture, but that doesn't make it okay!



If you need to rein in your child's "potty mouth":

- **Be a good role model.** If he shouldn't use four-letter words, neither should you.
- **Be clear.** "Cursing is not okay and we will not tolerate it in our family. Period."
- **Define a penalty.** Decide on a consequence and enforce it every time!

Source: J. O'Donnell, "Are Your Kids Cursing? Here's How to Stop It," About.com, <http://tweenparenting.about.com/od/behaviordiscipline/a/TweenCursing.htm>.

Example is the best teacher

Do you find yourself lecturing your child on proper behavior? Save your breath! Rather than *telling* your child how to behave, *show* him!



For example, the next time you're tempted to hold forth on "the importance of prepping the night before," let him watch you load papers in your briefcase and pack your lunch. When he sees how relaxed you are the next morning, he'll start to get the message.

Proper table manners are important

Good manners help kids get along with parents, teachers, peers and others. And meals are a daily opportunity to practice. What's reasonable to expect at the dinner table? Everyone should:

- **Help with preparation.** This invests the whole family in the meal's success.
- **Use polite language.** "Please pass the rolls." "This is delicious!" "No thank you."
- **Ban technology.** No cell phones, video games, TV or other distractions.
- **Enjoy themselves.** Review basic manners, but talk about fun subjects, too.
- **Ask to be excused.** Kids may be allowed to leave the table before parents.



Source: M. Galehouse, "Lesson for Thanksgiving: table manners for kids," chron.com, www.chron.com/life/article/Lesson-for-Thanksgiving-table-manners-for-kids-1741443.php.

Questions & Answers

Q: My child has no self-discipline! Whether it's sticking with her hand out of the cookie jar before dinner, she can't seem to control herself. What should I do?

A: Start by reminding yourself that developing self-discipline is a process. It's not something she'll grasp overnight. It's also something lots of kids—and adults—struggle to master.

To help your child learn self-discipline (and have fun at the same time), try these wonderful activities:

- **Bake bread.** It sounds simplistic, but bread-baking is one of the original exercises in delayed gratification. Assemble all the ingredients with your child and read through the recipe together. Explain to her that yeast needs time to rise and rushing the process will result in a disappointing, flat loaf. Your child may balk at waiting, but when she tastes her masterpiece fresh from the oven—and notices how wonderful the house smells—she'll be getting a concrete lesson in how waiting can be worth it.
- **Read a long novel.** Help your "gotta have it right now" child put on the brakes by reading a multi-chapter book together. This can be particularly helpful if her usual approach to reading involves racing through shorter stories. Read aloud to her each night, but don't rush. Let the suspense—and her interest—build over several days or weeks. Show her that anticipation can make a good book just that much better. Ask a librarian for compelling titles to try.



Make the most of school setbacks

Your child is disappointed in a grade at school. Now she wants to give up. Instead, help her persevere! Teach her to:

- **Brainstorm solutions.**
- **Set a new, reasonable goal.**
- **Imagine success** and how it will feel.
- **Make a step-by-step plan.**
- **Take pride in hard work**, no matter how things turn out.

Source: M.F. Evitt, "How to Teach Kids Perseverance and Goal-Setting," Parents.com, www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/style/how-to-teach-kids-perseverance-goal-setting/?page=2.

Does violent TV lead to violent kids?



Can exposure to TV violence spark aggression in kids? According to more than 1,000 studies, including reports from the Surgeon General's Office, in some children it can.

In fact, The American Psychological Association estimates that up to 15 percent of kids' aggressive behavior is directly tied to watching TV violence.

The lesson? It's not enough just to limit your child's screen time. It's vital that you monitor *what* he's viewing, too.

Source: M. Borba, Ed.D., *No More Misbehavior*, Jossey-Bass.

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

1-800-756-5525

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