

# Firm, Fair & Consistent®

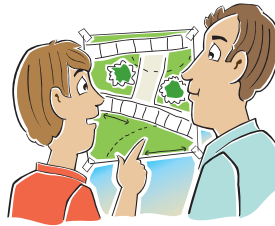
Springer Municipal Schools

Guiding Students for School Success

## Build trust with interesting activities

When you treat your child with respect and love, he will learn to trust you—and your rules. He won't *always* obey, of course, but he's more likely to try! While spending time together, try some of these fun and trust-building activities:

- **Walk with your eyes closed.** Start somewhere safe without too many obstacles, such as a yard or park. Have your child close his eyes and let you guide him. Say, "Take two steps. Stop. Okay, now walk to the left. We're going around a bench ... ." Then, when he's ready, let him guide you.
- **Confide in each other.** At the dinner table, have each person share the best—and toughest—parts of the day. Focus on respect, understanding and solutions (not judgment or criticism). "Wow! That was challenging! But you learned from it. What would you do if it happened again?"
- **Collaborate on a project.** Pick something you and your child will enjoy, such as planting a garden. Listen to your child's ideas, make a plan together, and be willing to compromise. Then give him age-appropriate responsibilities. Follow through on your duties, too. Show that you can depend on each other.



Sources: C. Perles, "Team Building Activities for a Family Group," eHow, [www.ewhow.com/list\\_6110640\\_team-building-activities-family-group.html](http://www.ewhow.com/list_6110640_team-building-activities-family-group.html) and J. Zurick, "10 activities to do with teens to build trust," Examiner.com, [www.examiner.com/rebuilding-trust-in-baltimore/10-activities-to-do-with-teens-to-build-trust](http://www.examiner.com/rebuilding-trust-in-baltimore/10-activities-to-do-with-teens-to-build-trust).

If your list of house rules

runs several paragraphs, it's too long! Effective rules aren't just clear and brief—they're also sparse.

A good rule of thumb when developing house rules is to use your child's age as a guideline.

When your child was five, five rules were plenty for her to absorb and follow. When she was six, six would do.

And now that she's eight or nine? Well, you get the idea!

Source: Dr. B. Bailey, *There's Got to Be a Better Way: Discipline That Works*, Loving Guidance, Inc.



## Support your school's discipline policies

Teachers have rules that make classes run smoothly. But do you know what they are?

If not, ask about them. Find out what is expected of students. How is good behavior rewarded? How is misbehavior handled?

This will help you understand and support your child's school experiences. You may even decide to use similar strategies at home.



## Avoiding homework headaches is simple

It's easy to get frustrated with your child when you're trying to help her with homework—especially if the assignment is tough.



There is a simple way to avoid meltdowns and misunderstandings between the two of you. Follow these "homework ABCs":

- A - Accept** her for who she is.
  - B - Believe** in her.
  - C - Communicate** clearly with her.
- This approach won't make homework more fun. But it may keep it from becoming a headache!

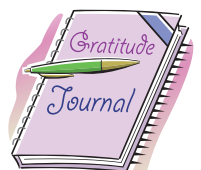
Source: J.S. Schumm, Ph.D., *How to Help Your Child with Homework: The Complete Guide to Encouraging Good Study Habits and Ending the Homework Wars*, Free Spirit Publishing.

## Use a journal to teach gratitude, perspective

Are you tired of listening to your child grumble about what he does not have? Teach him to appreciate what he *does* have!

Give him a notebook labeled "Gratitude Journal." Each day, have him add one thing he's thankful for. It can be anything from "earning a B on my science quiz" to "the spring weather."

Whenever he feels like complaining, get his journal and remind him of how terrific his life really is!



Source: M. Taylor, "How to Raise Grateful Kids," *Kiwi*, October 2011, May Media Group LLC.

## Develop a habit of being respectful

Respecting others takes thought and practice. Thankfully, it can also be fun! To help your child with this:

- **Look up the definition of respect.** Talk about how you've shown respect this week. How have others shown it? Notice examples in real life, on TV and in books.
- **Sing about respect.** Make up a song or rap about respect. Include the meaning of respect and how it makes the world a better place.
- **Challenge yourselves.** List ways to show respect with words, such as *please* and *excuse me*. Then list respectful actions, such as holding a door for someone or listening without interrupting.



Source: M. Borba, Ed.D., "35 Activities Your Students Can Do To Learn Respect," MicheleBorba.com, [www.micheleborba.com/Pages/BMI05.htm](http://www.micheleborba.com/Pages/BMI05.htm).

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** I want my child to become an upstanding person, but with so much bad behavior on TV and online, I feel like it's me against the world! How can I encourage morality in my child?

**A:** First of all, you have more influence than you think. While it's true that pop culture is full of less-than-shining examples of behavior (which is one more reason to limit screen time!), it's also true that your child takes his earliest—and perhaps longest-lasting—behavioral cues from you. That's the good news.

The better news is that there are several things you can do to actively help him grow into a moral person. You can:

- **Talk to him.** Discuss things like honesty, trustworthiness and compassion with your child. Explain why you believe these traits matter, and then ask him how he feels about them. To make sure he understands what you're talking about, have him give you an example of someone who exhibits those traits.
- **Role-play.** Pose a scenario to your child. "Pretend you're in the grocery store and you see a man drop his wallet and keep walking. What would you do?" Although he'll ideally say, "I'd give it back," don't get angry if your child responds differently. Instead, view his reply as a chance to illustrate the right thing to do.
- **Explain the benefits.** Remind your child that good behavior has good consequences. The more often he does the right thing, the more likely he is to be treated as an ethical person.



Source: J. Ireland, "How to Teach Morals to Children," LiveStrong.com, [www.livestrong.com/article/176293-how-to-teach-morals-to-children/](http://www.livestrong.com/article/176293-how-to-teach-morals-to-children/).

## When does anger become a problem?

It's normal for kids to get angry. But how can you tell if your child's anger is out of control? Ask yourself, "When



my child gets upset, does she:

- **Destroy property?**
- **Threaten** to harm herself?"
- **Stay angry** for an hour or longer?"
- **Lash out** at others?"

If you answered mostly yes, it's possible that your child may be dealing with more than garden-variety anger. Talk to her guidance counselor about where to find help.

Source: "Can Anger in Children be a Sign of Something Serious?" Help-Your-Child-With-Anger.com, <http://tinyurl.com/443b8cd>.

## Some of the best rewards are free

Rewarding your child's good behavior doesn't have to be pricey. In fact, it can be free!

The next time your child earns a positive consequence, offer a no-cost reward, such as:

- **A later bedtime.**
- **A sleepover.**
- **Extra time** on the computer.
- **No chores** tomorrow.
- **The choice** of a dinner menu.
- **A trip** to the playground.

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.

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