

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Medford Township Public Schools
Elementary School Counselors

Guiding Students for School Success

Teach respect by daily example

You want your child to show respect for you, his teachers and people in general—not to mention respect for rules and belongings. Teaching respect is a big job. But thankfully, research shows a specific method to use.

Children learn respect when they are *treated* with respect. So make these simple efforts a daily habit:

- **Communicate with respect.** Listen attentively to your child. Don't interrupt. Make sure you understand what he is saying. Focus on the positive.
- **Practice solving problems calmly.** Use "I statements" ("I feel ignored when you don't answer me") instead of hurtful accusations ("You always ignore me").
- **Take responsibility.** When you make an agreement with your child, stick to it—and expect him to do the same. If something goes wrong, the person responsible should make amends and learn from the experience.
- **Care for belongings.** Cleaning up is a way of showing respect for things around the house. Talk about this with your child. What if no one pitched in? What steps, such as organizing toys, could make the job easier?
- **Be encouraging.** Support your child's interests and strengths. Talk about values, including those your family has passed down for generations. What does your child value? How can he show this? Strong character should be a source of pride.



Source: "What Does 'Strong Character' Mean? II," U.S. Department of Education, www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/part5.html.

Teach that all actions have consequences

Children's experiences with the world are limited, so it's hard for them to imagine the possible results of their actions. They need parents' help. So even if your child knows whether a choice is right or wrong, help her consider the pros and cons. What could happen in the short and long term? After talking with you, the right choice may be more clear.



Source: Loren G. Yamamoto, MD, MPH, MBA, "Tidbits on Raising Children," The University of Hawai'i System, www.hawaii.edu/medicine/pediatrics/parenting/c32.html.

It's a new year, so turn over a new leaf! If you've been a little lax in the discipline department lately, resolve to:

- **Set reasonable rules.**
- **Be consistent** about enforcing those rules.
- **Remind yourself** that discipline is not punishment. Keeping these resolutions just may mean a year of smooth sailing for you and your child!



Use goal-setting to motivate your child

Help your child set goals and you may help her do better in school.

How? By giving her something to work toward—and achieve. Have your child ask herself:

- **What do I want to achieve?**
- **What am I doing to achieve it?**
- **Are the things I'm doing** really helping?



The more specifically she can answer these questions, the better able she may be to set—and reach—her goals.

Source: "Motivating Your Child to Achieve," Jeffco Public Schools, Golden, CO, http://jeffcoweb.jeffco.k12.co.us/communications/csrr/school_newsletters/2004.01.09/assess_news_art.doc.

Poor behavior: Is it a pattern or a phase?

Will your child's bad behavior last, or is it just a phase?

Ask yourself:

- **Are his actions** age-appropriate?
- **Are many of his peers** acting the same way?
- **Has the behavior lasted** six months or fewer?

If the answer to these questions is *yes*, chances are your child is going through a phase. But if the answer is *no*, look for other possible causes for his behavior.

Source: Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D. and Christine M. Benton, *Your Defiant Child*, ISBN: 1-57230-321-2 (The Guilford Press, 1-800-365-7006, www.guilford.com).



Share the school's discipline goals

Your child has misbehaved, and the principal calls you at home. Suddenly you're wondering about the school's discipline policy. To avoid this situation, read the policy ahead of time and review it with your child.

It is likely to:

- **Promote** the safety of students and staff.
- **Make** the school a better place to learn.
- **Focus** on respect for others.
- **Explain** ways to resolve conflicts.
- **Define** discipline problems.
- **List** possible consequences.



After reading the policy, write down any questions. Talk with school staff about them. It's much better to prevent problems than to face them later.

Source: "Discipline K-12 at home and school," Partnership for Learning, www.partnershipforlearning.org/category.asp?CategoryID=11.

Questions & Answers

Q: My third grader has almost no self-control! I know I should be helping him develop it, but I honestly don't know where to start. What can I do?

A: First, don't be too hard on yourself. Chances are you've been nudging your child toward self-control all along—he just hasn't mastered it yet. Even the most well-behaved kids act up (or melt down) sometimes. It's a normal part of childhood.

The key is to help your child develop enough self-control so that he behaves appropriately most of the time—at school, at home and out in public. Just remember: Like discipline in general, learning self-control is a long-term process.

Here are some ways to help your child develop self-control:

- **Be consistent with the rules.** It's critical that your child know exactly what's expected of him. Make sure your rules are simple, fair and consistent.
- **Ignore minor misbehaviors.** Is your child acting up to get attention? Don't reward him by giving him any. This alone might help him rein in his behavior.
- **Point out the positives.** Praise your child when he behaves well. This gives him a huge incentive to continue his good behavior, rather than lapse into bad behavior.
- **Help him succeed.** If your child fusses about being hungry the moment you enter the grocery store, offer him a healthy snack before leaving home. If he's whiny and bored during errands, assign him a fun task to complete while you're running them. In other words, make it easier for him to control himself.



Source: Robin F. Goodman, Ph.D. and Anita Gurian, Ph.D., "About Discipline—Helping Children Develop Self-Control," NYU Child Study Center, www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/discipline.html.

Banish bullying—teach your child to CARE

Nip bullying in the bud! How? By teaching your child to CARE.

Michele Borba, author of *Parents Do Make a Difference*, suggests responding to your child's unkind behavior by:

- Calling attention to it.
- Asking your child how she'd feel if she were the victim of the behavior.
- Recognizing the consequences. Explain how unkind actions make others feel.
- Expressing disapproval.

Teach your child empathy today, and who knows? You may prevent full-blown bullying tomorrow.

Source: Michele Borba, *Parents Do Make a Difference: How to Raise Kids With Solid Character, Strong Minds and Caring Hearts*, ISBN: 978-0787946050 (Jossey-Bass, 1-877-762-2974, www.josseybass.com).

Don't sabotage your child's attitude toward homework!

You know the old saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Well, it applies to attitudes about homework, too. Studies show that when parents look down on homework, their kids tend to do the same. So don't darken your child's attitude toward assignments. If you think homework is a hassle, keep it to yourself!



Source: Harris Cooper, *The Battle Over Homework*, ISBN: 1-4129-3713-2 (Corwin Press, 1-800-233-9936, www.corwinpress.com).

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