

## Remember, School Success Requires Teamwork

When families and schools work together, it's a winning combination. Schools don't expect all parents to be able to volunteer in the classroom, but there are simple things you can do to support the school—and help your child succeed academically. You can:

- **Encourage your child** to do her best in school. Show her that education is the number one priority in your family.
- **Support school rules.** Read the school handbook with your child.
- **Contact your child's teacher early** if you see a problem. Let the teacher know you want to work together to help your child succeed.
- **Monitor homework.** Ask your child about assignments when she gets home from school.
- **Teach your child about responsibility.** If she breaks a school rule or doesn't do her homework, she needs to accept the consequences.
- **Make sure your child goes to school** on time every day. She can't learn if she's not in class.
- **Attend parent-teacher conferences** and other school events. You'll show support and gain important information.



## Avoid Power Struggles With Your Child

Parents have to set limits. Often, when those limits are tested, the easiest thing to do is simply to say *no*. But that can sometimes lead to a power struggle.

Suppose your child asks if he can watch a movie. You might say, “No, because you have reading to do.” Well, your child probably stopped listening after hearing the word *no*.

Here are some ways to set limits without resorting to the word *no*:

- **Give a conditional yes.** Say, “Yes, you can watch a movie when you have finished your reading.” That way, your child will keep listening to hear what he has to do to be allowed to watch the movie.



- **Offer another choice.** You might say, “You can invite a couple of friends over on Saturday and watch a movie together. I’ll make popcorn.”
- **Take time to think.** Sometimes, kids can wear parents out. That’s when you’re likely to say *no* simply because you’re tired. Say to your child, “I’d like to think about it for a minute.”

## Discipline With Praise, But Make Sure It's Meaningful

Your child wants your approval, and your praise can help him gain the confidence he needs to be successful in school and beyond. But the *way* you praise your child shapes how he'll handle any challenge he'll face along the way.

Your child may be wonderful, but if you over-praise him by telling him that everything he does is perfect or the best, your praise will lose its meaning. Instead, here's how you can give your child plenty of deserved praise:

- **Praise specific behavior.** Make it clear which actions you're complimenting. "That was a tough math problem. I like how you stuck with it."
- **Acknowledge his effort** as much as the outcome. Did he practice all week for the spelling test, but only earned a B? Hang it on the fridge, anyway!
- **Notice his hard work.** "It's not fun to stay in and study when your friends are playing outside, but I'm so proud of you for sticking with it."
- **Focus on the process rather than your child.** Say, "I'm so proud of the effort you put into your school-work" and not, "Wow. You're so smart."



# Teach Your Child the Skills To Resolve Conflicts

From minor misunderstandings to major disagreements, conflicts are a normal part of life. But sometimes disagreements can escalate.

To help your child resolve conflicts peacefully, teach her to:

- **Talk about problems** before they become conflicts. When little things are ignored, they can grow into major disputes.
- **Talk about her feelings**, not the other person's mistakes. Instead of, "You always ...," your child could say, "I feel angry when you ..."
- **Avoid playing the "blame game."** Tell your child that, no matter whose fault it is, pointing fingers will never solve a problem. It's a good idea to call a time-out, then work together to find a solution.



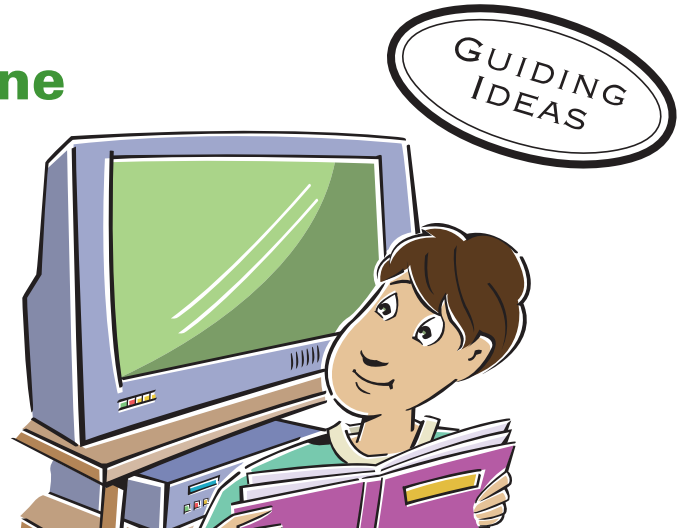
- **Listen.** Listening to another person's point of view is an important part of resolving conflicts.
- **Be willing to cooperate and compromise.** To resolve disputes, everyone has to make some changes.
- **Talk to an adult.** Parents, teachers and other trusted adults might see solutions kids might not think of.

## The Best Kind of Discipline Is Self-Discipline

The dreams you have for your child's future success depend, in part, on his self-discipline. Will he behave well? Will he get along with others? Will he be responsible? Will he be able to overcome challenges?

To help your child develop self-discipline:

- *Encourage him to participate* in an after-school club or sport. These activities require commitment to himself and to his team.
- *Establish daily routines* and have him stick to them. If the routine is to begin homework at 6:30, he'll have to develop the self-discipline to postpone watching TV or playing video games until after he's finished.
- *Let your child make minor decisions*, even if you don't always agree with them. Kids learn



from their successes and failures. He might spend his allowance too quickly, for example, and learn from that mistake. Offer your guidance when he needs it.

- *Remember to praise your child* when he demonstrates self-control.

## Discipline Not Working? Check With Your Child

**Y**ou've established some pretty clear rules, along with consequences for breaking those rules. But lately, your discipline strategies don't seem to be working. What should you do?

For discipline to be effective, consistency is crucial. The rules you set yesterday should also apply tomorrow—but not necessarily forever! While time-out may be appropriate for a young child who misbehaves, sending an older child to her room may result in a slammed door and a missed opportunity for you to communicate.

School-age children develop at a rapid pace. If you find that your discipline techniques are no longer working, it may be time to step back and examine your child's developmental stage.



Are the behavior expectations you established still age appropriate? Do rules need to be adjusted?

Sit down as a family and review your rules. Acknowledge your child's developing responsibility. Ask for her input. If her suggestions are reasonable, you may want to agree on some changes.