

# Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Gayhead Elementary School  
PTA - Parent Education Committee

Guiding Students for School Success

## Your expectations help with choices

A classmate asks to copy your child's homework. Another suggests they try smoking after school. During lunch, a friend uses foul language. How will your child react? There are no guarantees, but your involvement makes a big difference. Consider that research shows:

- **Kids are less likely to smoke marijuana** if their parents have discussed its risks. (Sadly, research also shows drug use can start even in elementary school.) To begin a discussion, you might ask, "Do kids at school talk about drugs?"
- **Almost half of seventh graders** say they have copied homework. In addition to discussing with your child why cheating is wrong, reduce the temptation to cheat. Help your child keep up in class and understand confusing topics.
- **A majority of tweens admit cursing at school.** Talk about the effects. How does it make other people feel? If cursing is a problem for your child, explain that you and the teacher will stay in touch about bad language at school.
- **Eighty percent of 10-year-old girls have dieted.** Often, parents don't know about it. Avoid criticizing yourself or others regarding weight. Meanwhile, don't overemphasize looks in any way. Simply focus on healthy habits for the whole family.



Source: "They're back in school. Do you know what your tweens are really up to? A guide for parents," WebMD, [www.webmd.com/parenting/guide/tweens-back-in-school?page=2](http://www.webmd.com/parenting/guide/tweens-back-in-school?page=2).

## Use praise to soothe homework blues

Are you tired of tears and tussles at homework time?



Boost your child's mood—and her attitude—by praising her when she works hard.

Be specific. "You answered nine out of 10 math problems correctly!" But also be honest. If you start gushing that she's "the best student in the world," your praise will ring hollow. It may lead to some major eye-rolling on her part, too.

Source: Jeanne Shay Schumm, Ph.D., *How to Help Your Child with Homework*, ISBN: 1-57542-168-2 (Free Spirit Publishing, [www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com)).

## Bullying doesn't just hurt the victim

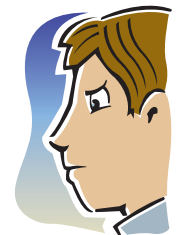
Victims of bullies may suffer, but the bullies themselves do, too. Studies show that kids who bully are more likely than other kids to:

- **Drink or smoke.**
- **Do poorly in school.**
- **Spend time in prison** (as adults).

In fact, one study showed that nearly 60 percent of boys who regularly bullied others had a criminal record by age 24.

Clearly, bullying is a serious issue. So take it seriously!

Source: José Bolton, Sr., Ph.D., L.P.C. and Stan Graeve, M.A., *No Room for Bullies*, ISBN: 1-889322-67-9 (Boys Town Press, [www.girlsandboystown.org/btpress](http://www.girlsandboystown.org/btpress)).



## Stop coming to the rescue!

Did you remind your child again—and again—to put his finished homework in his backpack? And did he ignore you each time? Then think twice about rescuing him when he calls from school tomorrow morning to say he forgot it.

Instead, consider letting your child face the consequences. If you do, it may inspire him to behave more responsibly next time.



When you teach your youngster to respect rules, it's best to



lead by example. Ask yourself:

- **Do I obey** speed limits?
- **Do I return** library books and movies on time?
- **Do I honor** the age limit on kids' menus?

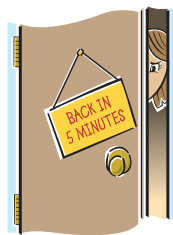
The more you "walk the walk" when it comes to respecting rules, the more likely your child will be to do the same. So keep up the good work! Remember, he's watching!

## Plan to prevent outbursts

Doing the right thing can be hard at times—for you and your child alike. As a family, you can practice this skill with these helpful strategies:

- **Make a plan.** Parents and kids know there will be times when everyone won't get along. Decide ahead of time how to handle it. "If I need to calm down, I'll go to my room for a few minutes." Or, "I'll take deep breaths to help me relax."
- **Choose your words.** Decide exactly what each of you will say. For example: "I need to be alone for a little while." Use positive thinking, too: "I'm angry, but calm. Taking a break will help."
- **Find role models.** Discuss people who handle challenges well. They can be real or fictional, such as historical figures or book characters. (*The Little Engine That Could*, for instance, encourages a positive attitude.)

Source: Peg Dawson, EdD. and Richard Guare, PhD., *Smart but Scattered*, ISBN: 978-1-59385-445-4 (Guilford Press, www.guilford.com).



## Questions & Answers

**Q:** I'm having a horrible time getting my child to class! Whether it's a sudden headache or mystery cough, she always has a reason to stay home. What should I do?

**A:** Your child's school success hinges on good attendance, so it's vital that she get to class every day. If it's obvious her "illnesses" aren't really illnesses, you'll need to figure out why she wants to skip class so badly. To solve the puzzle:

- **Talk with her.** Listen for clues as she describes the school day. If she comments that "the kids are mean," it could be a sign she's being picked on. If she mentions that she's "too dumb" for school, it may mean she's overwhelmed by the workload.
- **Go to her teachers.** If there's a specific reason why your child is avoiding school, talk to her teachers about how to handle it. A problem like bullying is serious, but it can be remedied. Her teacher needs to know about it. And tutoring can ease the stress of a difficult class. Whatever you decide to do, tell your child about it. It will show her that, yes, you take her attendance that seriously.
- **Lay down the law.** If it turns out your child is avoiding school simply because she'd rather stay home and relax, it's time to get tough. Spell out your expectations—"You need to be in class every single day"—and enforce a consequence if she disobeys. Staying home may be less attractive if there's no TV or Internet to fill the hours.



## Fewer 'you' messages mean fewer arguments

The next time your child does something wrong, try focusing more on "I" than "you." For instance:

- **Instead of:** "You always leave your school papers all over the floor!"
- **Try:** "I get frustrated when your schoolwork is scattered everywhere."

By avoiding "you" statements, your words may seem less accusing. And the less accusing they sound, the less likely they may be to lead to fussing or arguing.

Source: "Behavior Problems Guide," KeepKidsHealthy.com, www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/treatment-guides/behavior.html.

## Monitoring screen time gets results

It can be difficult to limit the time kids spend on TV, video games, instant messaging and going online.



But as a parent, you *should* set limits. Use these simple guidelines:

- **Allow only** one or two hours of viewing a day.
- **Keep the TV** and computer in a supervised location (not your child's room).
- **Set priorities**, including watching age-appropriate shows together and putting schoolwork first.

Source: Lisa Rosenthal, "Managing Your Child's Screen Time," GreatSchools, www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/650.

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