

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Guiding Students for School Success

Salem Lutheran School

Dr. Mary Beth Gaertner, Principal

Refresh some basic discipline skills

No matter how good you are at disciplining (teaching) your child, you'll always have new parenting challenges ahead. That's why it's important to remember some basics that can help in many situations. For example:

- **Be consistent.** It's reassuring for your child to know that rules and consequences will be enforced every time. Otherwise, she will try out all kinds of things to see what happens. Set a few specific, age-appropriate limits, explain them to your child—and don't forget to follow through.
- **Use praise.** You've probably noticed that your child loves attention, so it's no surprise that compliments work! Be specific about your child's successes. "Wow. You put away every single video game. That's so helpful!"
- **Set a good example.** It's not enough to tell your child how to behave. You must show her, too. It isn't easy, for instance, to stay calm when you're angry. But try your best. If you do something wrong, apologize.
- **Emphasize behavior.** When your child misbehaves, correct her actions without labeling her. Say, "That word is inappropriate," not, "You're so rude." Help her behave well and take pride in herself.



Source: Susan Korones Gifford, "Discipline Lessons That Last," Parents.com, www.parents.com/parents/story.jsp?page=2&storyid=/templatedata/parents/story/data/3128.xml.

Mom to the rescue? Not so fast!

"Mom, I left my history homework on the table—can you bring it to me?" Those are familiar words in many homes. Forgotten soccer cleats, lunches, permission slips—if you make the delivery run, you may be setting him up for a lifetime of bad habits.

Instead, help your child develop a daily routine. When he enters the workforce, he'll have to manage schedules and deadlines. Start now to prepare your child *for a lifetime of responsibility!*



Most parents understand that discipline is necessary for schools to run smoothly, for teachers to teach and for children to learn.

The best way to prevent discipline problems is to show your child that you support the school's rules. Get a copy of the school's policy on discipline and review it with your child. Make sure you both understand what's expected.



Is it depression—or just a bad mood?

Your child has been "down in the dumps" lately, and your best efforts at cheering her up aren't working. Don't wait for her to "snap out of it." Contact a



health professional if her mood:

- **Lingers** for several weeks.
- **Affects** her schoolwork.
- **Interferes** with sleep.
- **Causes** her to shun family and friends.

Watch for increased signs of hopelessness. Above all, make sure your child knows that you're there to help. Tell her again and again.

Source: "Understanding Depression," KidsHealth.org, http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/understanding_depression.html.

Name-calling can hurt

It's not just sticks and stones that can hurt your child. Name-calling can be painful, too. In fact, it can be so hurtful that your child may not want to go to school. If your child is being called names:

- **Sympathize.** Don't say the teasing is "no big deal."
- **Role-play.** Practice ways your child can respond.
- **Let your child know** you're proud of how he's handling things.
- **Work with the school.** Verbal attacks are a form of bullying.



Source: Beth M. Levy, MA, CAGS, NCSP, "Behavior Problems: Name-Calling and Teasing," National Association of School Psychologists, www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/name-calling%20template%209_04.pdf.

Understand the importance of sleep

When preschoolers act cranky, parents often ask, “Are you tired?” And as children get older, many parents may relax bedtime rules. But research suggests that sleep affects health and learning. So it’s important to:



- **Stick to a good bedtime.** On weekends, don’t change bedtime by more than one hour each night (or two hours total for the weekend).
- **Create a relaxing atmosphere.** Make a smooth transition from activity to rest. Your child might get ready for bed, get tucked in and read a story.
- **Try other techniques.** To ease into sleep, have your child imagine a peaceful setting, pay attention to breathing or gradually relax his whole body.

Source: Patti Teel, “Teach Children to Relax to Sleep,” DisneyFamily.com, <http://family.go.com/parenting/article-SK-184099-Teach-Children-to-Relax-to-Sleep-t>.

Questions & Answers

Q: I’ve always had to get after my daughter about doing her homework. As she gets older, I’d like to stop being the “homework police.” How can I stop nagging and get her to be more responsible?

A: As long as you’re nagging, the responsibility for homework is yours. And nagging can also backfire. Your daughter might become angry and not do her homework at all. To help your daughter be more responsible for her learning:

- **Put her in control.** Let her decide when, where and how she will complete assignments. Have her choose a set time to do homework every day—then stick to it!
- **Help her set learning goals.** Make sure they’re realistic—like turning in a book report on time or raising a grade from a C to a B. Make sure she knows how to get the resources and help she needs.
- **Help her get organized.** One of the best ways to keep track of school assignments is to use an assignment planner or chart.
- **Show that you value school.** Ask questions. Show an interest in what your daughter is learning. Don’t just ask, “How much homework do you have?” or “Is your homework finished yet?”
- **Don’t let her “off the hook.”** Make it clear that you expect her to complete her homework. Reward her with a fun activity if she finishes with time to spare. And if she doesn’t finish her work, let her get that zero from the teacher.



Build your daughter’s expectations for increased independence. Make it clear that the more she demonstrates responsibility in doing her homework, the sooner you’ll be able to give her more control in other areas.

Don’t give in to school avoidance

There is nothing more critical to school success than regular attendance. But what if your child always complains of headaches or stomachaches and refuses to go to school?

School avoidance affects up to five percent of students and can occur for reasons such as: anxiety about riding the bus, using the school bathroom or being separated from parents.

Talk with your child and his teacher or counselor to determine the cause. But be sure to keep him in school. Giving in can only reinforce his anxiety.

Source: “School Refusal/Avoidance,” Anxiety Disorders Association of America, www.adaa.org/GettingHelp/FocusOn/children&Adolescents/sra.asp.

Support positive traits

Everyone talks about building “character” in children. But what does this mean? Some signs of good character include:

- **Compassion.**
- **Honesty.**
- **Fairness.**
- **Self-discipline.**
- **Respect for others.**
- **Responsibility.**
- **Self-respect.**



Add your own ideas to the list and then encourage these positive traits!

Source: “What Does ‘Strong Character’ Mean?—Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen,” U.S. Department of Education, www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/part4.html.

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