

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Pine Ridge Elementary

Parents Guiding Students for School Success

Discussions help with tough choices

If your child has reached middle school, you may have noticed that the pressure is on. A classmate asks to copy her 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 can make a big difference. Studies report that:

- **Kids are less likely** to get involved in risky behavior if their parents have talked to them about it. To begin a discussion with your child, you might ask, “Do kids at school talk about smoking or drugs?”
- **Many students admit** to having copied homework. Talk to your child about why cheating is wrong. To reduce any temptation to cheat, help her keep up with her schoolwork. If she is having trouble with a subject, it’s time to talk to the teacher.
- **Teachers hear it a lot:** cursing at school. Many kids who use foul language don’t even mean to be offensive; it has simply become part of their lexicon. Talk with your child about how profanity is *never* acceptable—and that you won’t tolerate her using it. And remember that you are your child’s role model. Watch your language as well.

Talk about your expectations and help your child make smart choices. Focus on healthy habits and your family’s values.

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/features/tweens-back-in-school.



Teach the importance of perseverance

Achieving success in school often requires sheer perseverance! Some key elements of perseverance are:

- **Understanding** that hard work pays off.
- **Refusing** to quit easily.
- **Figuring out** how to overcome challenges.
- **Learning** from unsuccessful strategies—and trying new ones.



Talk with your child about the benefits of determination. Look for examples in people’s lives, including your child’s. Recall some times when he stuck with a task until he succeeded. Discuss what would happen if people didn’t persevere.

Encourage positive qualities in your child. Support and praise him as he tries hard.

It’s a good idea to turn over a new discipline-related leaf this fall. But don’t flip the whole tree at once! If you’ve been lax about enforcing bedtimes, chores and responsibilities:



- **Pick** a reasonable hour for lights-out—and enforce it.
 - **Assign** one or two chores to start—then evaluate.
 - **Review** responsibilities.
- Remember not to overwhelm your child with a dozen new rules at once. Start small and make adjustments as needed.

Give your perfectionist some perspective

Some children drag their feet on school projects because they’re obsessed with getting everything perfect. In real life, of course, there’s no such thing as perfect.



To help your perfectionist lighten up:

- **Put** things into perspective for her. Her future success does not ride on one assignment.
- **Praise** her effort, not only her achievement.
- **Set** time limits on her work. No hours of fretting allowed!

Source: K. Abel, “Help Your Child Beat Procrastination,” FamilyEducation.com, niswc.com/perfection.

When your child struggles

Does your child struggle in school?



Discovering a passion may help—and lead to success.

Help your child find an activity that he loves. By doing something outside of class that he’s passionate about, your child may:

- **Experience the thrill** of excelling at an activity.
 - **Begin to feel better** about himself, knowing that he *is* capable.
- The positive feelings he gets from his activity might translate into doing better in school!

Source: K.N. Condrell, Ph.D., *The Unhappy Child: What Every Parent Needs to Know*, Prometheus Books.

Honestly, it's best to lead by example

You want to instill honesty and respect for rules in your child. What's better than talking about these traits? Demonstrating them! To lead by example and be a good role model for your child:



- **Play by the rules.** If the library book is due back by next Saturday, return it by next Saturday.
- **Don't fib at the ticket counter.** Is your child 11 years old? Then don't claim he's 10 so you can buy the cheaper ticket.
- **Own up to your mistakes.** "You're right, officer. I was speeding, and I'm sorry."

The more you "do as you say" when it comes to teaching about honesty and respect for rules, the more likely your child will be to do the same. So keep up the good work. Remember, your child is watching!

Questions & Answers

Q: I know I'm supposed to limit my child's screen time to two hours a day, but it seems impossible! How can I get her to "unplug" without causing a big argument?

A: First, remind yourself that a little grumbling on your child's part is no reason to give up on the "two hours per day" rule! The American Academy of Pediatrics established that guideline for a reason. Kids who spend too much time in front of a screen (whether it's a TV, computer or tablet) may be more likely to become obese. They may also have trouble concentrating in school and be more likely to behave aggressively.

This doesn't mean screen time is bad for your child. But it does mean that setting reasonable limits is a good way for her to benefit from high-quality TV or computer programs without becoming a "couch potato."

To enforce screen-time limits for your child:

- **Talk about it.** Let her know she'll get two hours of daily screen time from now on. She may grumble at first. But once she sees that you're serious, she'll adapt to her two-hour limit.
- **Rethink family viewing habits.** The TV shouldn't be background noise. Unless someone is watching a specific program, shut it off.
- **Set a timer.** If the honor system doesn't work, set a timer whenever your child logs on or plugs in.
- **Unplug during play time.** Enforce a "no screen" rule when your child has a friend over. Don't allow them to be in the same room, communicating with each other via electronic devices.



Source: D.M. Maniccia and others, "Review Article: A Meta-analysis of Interventions That Target Children's Screen Time for Reduction," *Pediatrics*, July 2011.

Silence is golden

Having conversations with your child is a wonderful way to stay connected. But sometimes, these conversations are not productive.

Parents often:

- **Presume to know** what their child is going to say before she says it.
- **Mentally "judge"** their child's words as she's speaking.

Unfortunately, this approach to communicating doesn't help the conversation—it quashes it!

To have a truly meaningful talk with your child, simply *listen*. You will learn a lot.

Source: Dr. M. Marshall, *Discipline Without Stress, Punishments or Rewards*, Piper Press.

Nip whining in the bud

Many parents place whining near the top of kids' irritating behaviors. But keep in mind that your child is not whining to upset you. His whining is learned behavior.



Teach your child to ask for something in a polite manner. When he does, acknowledge him with a calm response. If you don't respond to a polite request, he will know exactly how to get your attention!

The next time your child starts to complain about his math homework, instead of saying, "Stop whining and just do it!" say, "Let's talk about why you don't want to work on your math assignment."

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