

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Sunnyside Unifed School District
Elementary School Counselors

Guiding Students for School Success

Define respect with actions & words

Respect and *obedience* are not the same things. It's important for children to obey out of respect, not fear. To encourage this:

- **Build your child's self-respect.** Help him feel good about himself. "You finished your book report early. How responsible! You must feel so proud!"
- **Be respectful yourself.** Children learn by watching parents' behavior. Show that you value yourself, belongings, other people and the law.
- **Develop mutual respect.** When talking with your child, be a good listener and respond positively. Show that you care about his feelings and opinions.
- **Stay in control.** It's hard to be respectful when someone treats you poorly. But this is the perfect time to set a good example of self-control.
- **Be creative.** Look for ways to model respect. Say *please* and *thank you* frequently. Knock before entering your child's room. Speak politely about opponents when you watch athletic events.
- **Expect respect.** Discuss your family's values. How should people treat each other? What are the benefits of respect? What if someone is rude? It's not okay, for example, for anyone to belittle someone else. Compliment your child's respectful—and self-respectful—choices.

Source: L. Bueno, "Teaching Children About Respect," education.com, www.education.com/magazine/article/teaching-children-respect/.



Emphasize effort over intelligence

Your child got an A on her quiz. Should you praise her for being so "smart"? Maybe not.

Research shows that kids do better when they're applauded for *effort* over intelligence. That's because intelligence can feel like something they're "born with," whereas effort is something they can control—and improve.

So congratulate your child for her hard work: "All your studying really paid off!"

It may inspire her to buckle down next time, too!

Source: "The Right Way to Praise," *Kiwi*, April/May 2011, May Media Group, LLC.



Discipline influences school success

Good discipline helps things run smoothly at home and it also helps improve school performance. Studies show that students do better when parents:

- **Are warm,** positive and also supportive.
- **Treat their children** with respect.
- **Support good homework** habits.
- **Have high expectations** for their children.
- **Emphasize the importance** of effort and success.
- **Give their children compliments** and affection.

Source: M. Caspe and others, "Family Involvement in Elementary School Children's Education," Harvard Family Research Project, www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/family-involvement-in-elementary-school-children-s-education.



It is often said that good character is "doing the right thing—even when nobody's looking." To develop this good character in your child:



- **Explain it.** Don't assume he knows what good character means. Talk about what it means to be kind, reliable, trustworthy, etc.
- **Model it.** If you don't want your child to lie, then you shouldn't lie.
- **Reinforce it.** Did your child just behave admirably? Praise him!

Joy of reading reduces homework woes

Nurture a love of reading in your child and she'll fuss less about doing homework. As a bonus, your bookworm will become a lifelong learner!



- To encourage your child to read:
 - **Read for pleasure** yourself.
 - **Surround her with words.** Keep books, magazines and newspapers on hand.
 - **Limit TV time.** Don't let her "veg out" in front of the screen! She's more apt to grab a book if the television isn't tempting her.

Make self-control a parenting priority

How important is it for kids to have self-control? Critical! A recent study shows that lack of self-control is linked to many problems, including trouble in school and dropping out of school. Kids with less self-control are also more likely to develop problems as adults—with health, money and crime. Experts say the most effective parents:



- **Listen to kids' opinions.** You're the parent, and you're in charge. But it's good to consider your child's views, too.
- **Set and explain reasonable limits.** For example, you might say, "Keep your hands and feet to yourself. That helps everyone stay safe."
- **Stay firm but supportive.** Enforce rules with love and encouragement. Use natural and logical consequences. Believe your child's self-control will grow.

Sources: T. Moffitt and others, "A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, www.pnas.org/content/early/2011/01/20/1010076108.full.pdf.

Questions & Answers

Q: School has barely started, and my fourth grader is already trying to avoid class! How can I deal with his constant "mystery ailments" and tantrums and make him see that attendance is important?

A: Start by saying just that: "Attendance is important!" Tell your child that going to school every day is his job.

Unless he's legitimately ill, do not allow him to stay home. Period. The more immune you are to his whining and complaining, the sooner he may realize this won't earn him a day off.

On the other hand, if his "illnesses" and tantrums only get worse, you may be dealing with a case of school avoidance, which can be trickier to handle.

A child experiencing school avoidance:

- **Regularly complains** of vague discomfort like achiness or nausea. Concrete symptoms—such as fever or vomiting—are rare.
- **Seems anxious** or fearful about something (or someone) at school.
- **May flat-out refuse** to go to school, even if it means he'll be punished.

If this sounds like your child, to tackle the problem:

- **Rule out true illness.** A trip to the doctor is in order.
- **Speak with his teacher.** Is he being bullied or teased in class? It's critical that you find out.
- **Be sympathetic.** Let him know that you care and want to help.
- **Make him return to school.** The longer he stays away, the worse the problem may become. Insist he keep attending school while you continue to be supportive and search for solutions.

Source: "School Avoidance," Healthy Children, www.healthychildren.org, <http://tinyurl.com/6an8can>.



Expect your child to succeed—and she will

Your child will likely do as much—or as little—as you expect of her. So set the bar high!

Don't demand perfection, of course. But do expect her to work hard in school.

If she hates spelling, for instance, don't let her skip studying for the upcoming test because she claims she's



"no good at it, anyway."

Instead, insist she keep trying. Then offer to quiz her on the words!

Strive for rules that are clear and concise

Your child can't follow the house rules if he doesn't know them. So clarify your family's dos and don'ts!

When you do, remember that effective rules should be:

- **Simple.** Your child can't obey what he can't understand.
- **Limited.** Aim for a maximum of three to five regulations.
- **Positive.** Focus on what your child *should* do—and not what he shouldn't do. Say, "Keep your schoolwork organized," not "Don't scatter your papers all over the floor!"

Source: J. Wolf, "Create a Set of House Rules for Your Kids," About.com, <http://singleparents.about.com/od/discipline/a/groundrules.htm>.

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