

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

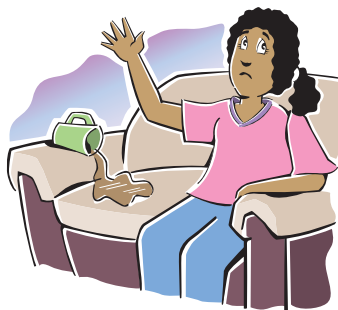
Phelan Elementary School
Stacey Stewart, Principal

Guiding Students for School Success

'Fessing up' teaches important lessons

Does your child have trouble admitting her misbehavior and facing the consequences? If so, prepare to handle excuses such as:

- **"It was an accident!"** Your child drank hot chocolate on the couch, even though she knew that food and drinks must stay at the table. So was staining the couch really a "mistake"? Sort of. Your child didn't mean to do it, but she also wasn't following the rules. Review the rule and have her help you clean the fabric.
- **"I didn't do it!"** Your child took candy from your purse. What should you say? Give her a chance to be honest. ("It looks like you're eating the candy that was in my purse.") If she denies it, avoid making her defensive. ("When you're ready, let's talk about what really happened.") When she confesses, compliment her, but apply consequences, too.
- **"She started it!"** Your child gets in an argument with a friend, who calls her a name. She responds with a rude comment. Teach your child that she's responsible for her actions—no matter what others do. Discuss how it feels to be insulted. To help her learn from the experience, ask, "What would you do differently next time?"



Source: Sally Marshall, "How to Teach Kids to Accept Responsibility for Their Actions," Parents.com, www.parents.com/big-kids/discipline-behavior/discipline/its-not-my-fault.

Morality begins at home for your child

Where is your child most likely to learn good morals? At home, of course! To strengthen her sense of morality:

- **Be an example.** Let her see you modeling traits like honesty and dependability. As always, actions speak louder than words.
- **Expect good behavior.** Studies show that kids whose parents *expect* them to behave morally tend to do so.
- **Offer praise.** When you "catch" your child demonstrating good morals, tell her!

Source: Michele Borba, "10 Tips for Raising Moral Children," Child Care Aware, www.childcareaware.org/en/subscriptions/areyouaware/article.php?id=46.

Rethink those rewards

It's fine to reward your child's good behavior once in awhile, but keep in mind that rewards:

- **Aren't the best incentive.** Simply acknowledging your child's proper behavior may be more effective.
- **Can send a false message.** In real life, there aren't "prizes" for doing the right thing, nor should there be.
- **Don't always work.** This is especially true if your child doesn't want the particular incentive you're offering.



Source: Dr. Marvin Marshall, *Discipline without Stress, Punishments, or Rewards*, ISBN: 0-9700606-1-0 (Piper Press, www.piperpress.com).

Sure, weekends are for relaxing. But your child's daily routine



shouldn't go completely out the window once Saturday rolls around! In fact, scrapping routines on the weekend may make Monday morning that much more stressful.

To keep your child's good school-week habits intact:

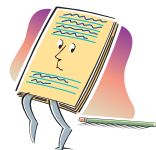
- **Enforce a bedtime**, even if it's a bit later than usual.
- **Make time** for quiet activities.
- **Don't let homework** be put off until Sunday night.

Make consequences make sense!

Your child rushes through homework or puts it off so long that half of it doesn't get done. Is banishing him to his room the best option? Maybe not.

To send a clear message about his behavior, choose a logical consequence. For example:

- **Insist he redo** his entire assignment more neatly.
- **Have him complete** unfinished work over the weekend.



Source: Shari Steelsmith, *Go to Your Room! Consequences that Teach*, ISBN: 0-9650477-2-5 (Raefield-Roberts and Parenting Press, www.parentingpress.com).

Support learning with healthy habits

Life is so busy these days that sometimes the basics—including sleep, exercise and nutrition—fall by the wayside. Yet making time for these necessities improves other parts of life, including learning.

Experts say:

- **Children with poor sleep habits** are more likely to have academic difficulties. School-age kids still need plenty of sleep (up to 12 hours, depending on age).
- **Exercise is good for the body—and the mind!** It stimulates the brain in ways that help with learning.
- **Healthy meals help kids** do their best in school. Meals eaten at home tend to be more nutritious than meals eaten elsewhere.



Sources: Michael J. Breus, Ph.D., “How Much Sleep Do Children Need?” WebMD, www.webmd.com/parenting/guide/how-much-sleep-do-children-need and “Helping Raise Healthy Children,” Colorado Department of Education Nutrition Unit, www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/HlthyChldrn102003.pdf.

Questions & Answers

Q: My fifth grader always whines about chores, so I usually cave and let him get away with doing nothing. But now I've created a problem! What can I do?

A: It's time to teach your child some responsibility! Not only will being more responsible make your child more helpful at home, it will improve his ability to do well in school. After all, responsible kids tend to be responsible students, too.

To encourage your child to become more responsible:

- **Ignore the whining.** If you routinely give in to your child's whimpers, it's vital that you stop. Remember: Whining is a form of manipulation, so don't take the bait.
- **Spell out his duties.** Saying, “I want you to pitch in more” probably won't mean much to your child. Instead, be specific when you outline what you expect. “You need to put your dirty clothes in the hamper before bed, feed the dog every night after dinner and take out the recycling on Tuesdays.”
- **Make him part of the team.** Let your child know that you don't just need his help—you value it. “It's so great when you help me around the house. I really appreciate how hard you work!”
- **Be patient.** You may wish your child would transform into a responsible, helpful youngster overnight, but it's likely not going to happen that way. Chances are it took a while for his “I don't want to help” attitude to develop. It will take time to reverse it, too.



Reprogram your little procrastinator

Is your child's response to every request, “I'll do it later”? Then nip his put-it-off ways in the bud! To keep him from procrastinating:

- **Set concrete tasks.** Don't give him open-ended jobs to do.
- **Talk about goals** and how to set them.
- **Encourage breaking large** school assignments into smaller parts.
- **Let him make his own choices** whenever possible.



Source: Anna Weinstein, “Why Kids Procrastinate and How to Help,” Education.com, www.education.com/magazine/article/Why_Kids_Procrastinate.

Attendance matters!

As your child begins to move up in grades, she'll also start to become more independent. But it's not the time to relax about attendance.



Children who don't attend school regularly fall behind and score lower on tests. They can have a hard time making and keeping friends—especially in elementary school.

A recent study of the nation's fourth graders showed that almost one in four had been absent from school three or more days in the last month.

Let your child and her teachers know that you know attendance counts!

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

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