

# Firm, Fair & Consistent®

SAINT MARY INTERPAROCHIAL SCHOOL  
Mrs. Jeanne Meredith, Principal

Guiding Students for School Success

## At-home habits lead to school success

You can't go to school with your child, but you *can* influence his success all day long. To support your child's learning experience:

- **Establish sleep routines.** Kids who get enough rest are better able to concentrate and follow rules.
- **Have him clean out his backpack daily.** You're sure to find important papers, notes and permission slips.
- **Keep a class schedule handy.** This makes it easy to ask specific questions about school, such as, "What did you do in P.E. today?"
- **Get organized.** Does your child always know where to find his backpack, jacket, glasses, shoes and other items? Pick special places to keep them.
- **Practice manners.** Role-play challenging situations. "You and a classmate disagree about who is first in line. What should happen next?"
- **Answer questions.** Encourage your child to ask you—and his teachers—if he's confused. "What does that word mean?"
- **Read together.** In addition to reading to your child and listening to him read, read the same books separately and discuss them.
- **Play school.** If your child has to do an oral presentation, have family members be the "teacher" and "class" while he practices.
- **Make a study spot.** Choose a quiet, comfortable homework location. Stay nearby and offer support.



Source: Diane Debrovner, "15+ Ways to Boost School Success," Parents.com, [www.parents.com/kids/development/intellectual/school-success](http://www.parents.com/kids/development/intellectual/school-success).

## What does positive reinforcement look like?



You may have heard that "positive reinforcement" is crucial when it comes to encouraging proper behavior in your child. But what *is* positive reinforcement?

Simple! It's noticing when your child does the right thing and then giving her:

- **A hug** or pat on the back.
- **A big smile.**
- **A kind word.**
- **An extra privilege** or other treat.

Source: J. Burton Banks, M.D., "Childhood Discipline: Challenges for Clinicians and Parents," American Academy of Family Physicians, [www.aafp.org/afp/20021015/1447.html](http://www.aafp.org/afp/20021015/1447.html).

## Help your child learn to work smarter



What's the most important thing to remember about your child's homework? That it's *your child's* homework! So never do his work for him—even if he begs or throws a fit.

Instead, help your child help himself during study time by:

- **Showing him how** to chop large assignments into smaller pieces.
- **Reminding him** to tackle the toughest tasks first.
- **Teaching him** to prioritize.

Source: Jennifer Trachtenberg, M.D., *Good Kids, Bad Habits*, ISBN: 978-0-06-112775-5 (HarperCollins, [www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com)).

## Is your child cheating?

Your first grader peeked at a classmate's worksheet. Does that make him a cheater? Not necessarily.



According to research, young kids usually aren't trying to cheat when they glance at another student's paper. Instead, they may just be trying to keep up with the class. It's not until the age of eight or nine that kids begin *consciously* cheating.

So talk to your child about his "wandering eyes." But don't label him a cheater.

Source: Judy Molland, "Why Children Cheat and What to Do about It," Parenthood.com, [www.parenthood.com/article-topics/why\\_children\\_cheat\\_and\\_what\\_to\\_do\\_about\\_it.html](http://www.parenthood.com/article-topics/why_children_cheat_and_what_to_do_about_it.html).

## Teach your child to persevere



By now, your child probably realizes that achievement in school can be challenging. You can help by *expecting* her to succeed. Explain that setting goals is the first step. Discuss something she'd like to accomplish. Then make a specific, step-by-step plan. Celebrate her hard work!

Source: "A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Do Well in School," National Education Association, [www.nea.org/assets/docs/50251\\_NEA.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/50251_NEA.pdf).

## Making choices builds responsibility

In order to *build* responsibility, kids need to be *given* responsibility. This includes letting them make age-appropriate decisions—and probably some mistakes along the way. To be effective:

- **Offer options.** Instead of allowing your child total freedom (“When do you want to do your homework?”), give reasonable choices (“Would you rather do your homework right after school or after an hour of playtime?”).
- **Provide guidance.** Help your child with dilemmas. Asking questions is a good approach (“What might be the results of that choice?”). Remember that mistakes are opportunities to learn.
- **Be a role model.** Teach your child that when making choices, it’s important to gather information, list options, consider outcomes and seek help when necessary. Let mistakes be a motivator to do better next time.



Source: Michelle Anthony, M.A., Ph.D., “Ready for More,” *Scholastic Parent & Child*, October 2009 (Scholastic Inc., www.parentandchild.com).

### Questions & Answers

**Q:** I’m fine when it comes to giving my child stern looks if she misbehaves. But actually following through with a consequence? Not so much. How can I do a better job of making her “face the music” when she acts up?

**A:** Discipline needs to be *consistent* in order for it to work. If your child knows she can get away with something because you’re too busy, too distracted or “too whatever” to enforce a penalty, she may be more tempted to break the rules. To do a better job of following through on discipline:

- **Admit past mistakes.** Sit your child down and be honest with her. “I haven’t done such a great job of enforcing the rules around here, but I will work to change that.”
- **Look at your house rules.** Do you have an extremely long list of dos and don’ts? That could be part of the problem. So trim your list to its simplest, most critical parts. It’ll help clarify what you expect from your child.
- **Define the penalties.** Decide what you’ll do if and when your child misbehaves and write it down. “When she talks back, I’ll send her to time-out.” Seeing your plan on paper may be just the nudge you need to stick with it.
- **Expect resistance.** Be prepared for your child to balk at your new attitude toward discipline. But stay the course, anyway. The work you put in now when it comes to positive discipline may just pay dividends later!



## Good discipline starts with respect

There’s no “perfect” approach to discipline. But there are things you can do to make sure your particular approach is effective. Be sure to:

- **Treat your child** like you’d want to be treated. (This goes for when you’re scolding him, too.)
- **Enforce consequences** that are firm but fair.
- **Be clear and consistent** about what you expect from your child.
- **Model good behavior.**

Source: “Discipline,” American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts\_for\_families/discipline.

## Why bedtime matters

Enforcing a regular bedtime for your child won’t just keep you sane—it will also keep him healthy. Studies show that sleep-deprived kids may have problems with:

- **Memory.**
- **Sense of well-being.**
- **Behavior.**
- **Concentration.**

Experts suggest elementary schoolers get between 10 and 11 hours of shut-eye per night.

So if your child’s bedtime routine has been gathering dust, shake it off and start using it again!



Source: Madison Park, “Enforcing Bedtimes Improves Kids’ Health,” CNN.com, www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/09/14/bedtime.children/index.html.

### Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Guiding Students for School Success

Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Editor: Erika Beasley.

Writers: Susan O’Brien, Holly Smith.

Illustrations: Maher & Mignella, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Copyright © 2010, The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc.

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

1-800-756-5525

www.parent-institute.com • ISSN 1545-7737