

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

SAINT MARY INTERPAROCHIAL SCHOOL
Mrs. Jeanne Meredith, Principal

Guiding Students for School Success

Focus on fundamentals of character

It's never too early to help your child develop good character and morals. A recent Josephson Institute study reported that an alarming number of kids acknowledged lying, stealing and cheating on tests in the past year.

Talk to your child about family values, such as:

- **Trustworthiness.** Show and tell your child that you believe in honesty, following through on promises and doing the right thing.
- **Respect.** Practice the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Tell your child this means always being considerate.
- **Responsibility.** Emphasize that it's important to fulfill commitments, try hard, make decisions carefully and apologize for mistakes.
- **Fairness.** Teach your child about compromise. Playing games is a good way to practice sharing, working as a team and being a good sport.
- **Caring.** Encourage compassion. Teach your child to be understanding, kind, thankful and forgiving. Tell him to always look for ways to help others.
- **Citizenship.** Contribute to your community's success. Simple steps, such as being a respectful neighbor, make a big difference.



Source: "The Six Pillars of Character," Josephson Institute, <http://charactercounts.org/sixpillars.html>.

Are 'sugar highs' for real?

Your child may overdo it on the holiday candy, but will she really end up with a "sugar high"?

Maybe—or maybe not. Some research shows sugar highs are a myth. But other studies claim kids *can* seem more energetic after eating sweets.

The bottom line? Although the jury is still out, limiting sugary treats is wise for your child's overall health. But during the holidays, at least, a few indulgences probably won't hurt!

Source: Karen Ravn, "Tricky side of treats—Does all that Halloween candy turn kids into little monsters? Many parents say yes—but in fact the sugar high may be a myth," The Los Angeles Times, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/oct/29/health/he-candy29>.



As your child gets older, your time together



is as critical as ever—even if hanging out doesn't come as naturally as it once did. To make the most of downtime:

- **Skip the agenda.** Simply enjoy being together.
- **Follow your child's lead.** What would he like to do?
- **Don't criticize.** Now isn't the time to let loose about missed chores or a bad grade.

Show your support

"I'm on your side" is a powerful phrase, but don't motivate your child by simply *telling* her she has your support. *Show* her. Here's how:

- **Be attentive.** If your child can't wait to talk about the cool thing she learned in class, stop what you're doing and listen.
- **Support her interests.** Is your child intrigued by insects? Join her outdoors on a bug-finding adventure.



Use common sense to teach respect

Your child should respect your authority even if she's unhappy with you. After all, *you're the parent!*

- **Hold steady.** If you're confident that your rules are right, don't crumble when your child starts complaining about them.
- **Pick your battles.** Don't feel you must "win" every issue.

Source: Dr. Ruth Peters, *Laying Down the Law*, ISBN: 1-57954-773-7 (Rodale, www.rodalestore.com).



Routines can end bedtime struggles

Kids are experts at delaying bedtime. The result can be family exhaustion and less achievement at school from an over-tired child. To promote good sleep habits, follow a routine that includes:

- **The basics.** Post a to-do list that matches your child's needs. For example, he can pack his schoolbag, choose the next day's outfit, brush teeth, bathe, put on pajamas and read.
- **Start and stop times.** Begin and end the routine at the same time. Instead of nagging your child, motivate him. "You're really moving! You might have extra time for reading!"
- **Stay positive.** Notice your child's success. On weekends and special occasions, it's okay to adjust the routine for special activities—within reason.



Source: Dr. Sylvia Rimm, *How to Parent So Children Will Learn*, 3rd edition, ISBN 13: 978-0-910707-86-2 (Great Potential Press, Inc., www.giftedbooks.com).

Questions & Answers

Q: I admit it: When it comes to disciplining my child, I'm all over the map. How can I start being more consistent and bring peace (for her and me) back to my home?

A: You've already hit upon the key: *consistency*. Without it, your discipline style will fail. Worse, your child won't benefit from the sense of well-being that fair, consistent discipline can provide.

To get yourself on track and bring consistent discipline back to your home:

- **Commit for the long haul.** Making over your discipline style takes time, so don't expect miracles—or cooperation—from your child overnight. Remember: She's adjusting to your new outlook as much as you are. It's only natural for her to balk at the beginning.
- **Choose your priorities.** Resist the urge to "reinvent the wheel" and create new house rules for every little thing. Instead, start by focusing on the behaviors you'd most like to change. For instance, does your child always whine about doing homework? Then concentrate on reining in her fussing.
- **Mind the timing.** Is a big holiday event looming? Then now might not be the best time to make a huge adjustment to your house rules. Keep working on small changes, but save the "major behavior overhauls" for a less stressful period.
- **Expect push-back.** It's normal for your child to bristle at your new approach to discipline. After all, she's used to having things her way. But don't let her complaints derail your commitment!



Source: Sarah Henry, "Seven tricks to staying consistent on discipline," *BabyCenter*, www.babycenter.com/0_seven-tricks-to-staying-consistent-on-discipline_3657214.bc.

Make consequences more meaningful

Sure, your child ought to face a consequence when he does something wrong. But whenever possible, insist that he make amends, too. In other words, if he's able to "right the wrong," he should.



For example, if your child breaks his friend's favorite pen, ask him to apologize. Then have him make amends by:

- **Repairing the pen**, if possible.
- **Using his allowance** to replace the pen.
- **Giving his friend** his own nicest pen in exchange.

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

Teach your child to resolve conflicts

Whether it's an argument on the school playground or a fight between siblings, all kids sometimes get involved in conflicts.

Teach your child to resolve conflicts peacefully by:

- **Talking about problems** before they become serious conflicts.
- **Not playing the "blame game."** Spend time fixing the problem instead.
- **Being willing to cooperate** and compromise.

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