

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Savannah Lakes Elementary
School Counselor - Bonnie George

Guiding Students for School Success

How is your child doing at 'work'?

If your child goes to school, she has a job: being a good student. This responsibility—particularly the part associated with homework—can be challenging for many young kids. Here's how you can help:

- **Talk with the teacher.** What's expected of you and your child? For example, how long should homework take? How much help should you give? Should you make sure your child corrects any mistakes? Or is it better for the teacher to see them?
- **Make a schedule.** Have your child do homework at the same time—and in the same place—each day. Pick a spot that's free of distractions, especially the TV. This consistency makes studying easier and prevents arguments.
- **Offer breaks.** Some kids need an after-school break before doing homework. Breaks can also help during study time. Set a timer while your child works. When it beeps, she can walk around, get a snack and reenergize if needed.
- **Reward success.** Kids respond better to rewards than to punishment. When your child does homework responsibly, show your pride! If homework is a frequent struggle, talk with the teacher about causes and solutions.



Source: B. Potts, "Homework Tips for Reluctant Child," FamilyEducation, <http://school.familyeducation.com/homework/organization/42416.html?detoured=1>.

Your child just got into big trouble at school. Should you drop the matter once he gets home? Not necessarily.



You and the school are partners in your child's education. And partners support each other. If your child seriously misbehaved in class, he may need to experience some serious consequences at home, too.

This will serve as a vivid reminder to your child that you expect proper behavior wherever he is!

Daydreaming child? No worries!

Is your nine-year-old daydreaming again?

Don't despair! Not only is it normal—it's expected.

Kids' brains at this age are actively changing and growing. And one of the areas doing most of the growing affects—you guessed it—concentration.

So unless your child is seriously unable to focus in class, take his "spacing out" with a grain of salt. Like childhood itself, this too shall pass.

Source: Dr. R. Melillo, *Reconnected Kids: Help Your Child Achieve Physical, Mental, and Emotional Balance*, Penguin.



Good sportsmanship matters—on the field and off!

Team sports aren't just fun. They also offer an opportunity for teaching good sportsmanship. To make sure your child gets the lesson before the next game, remind her to be:

- **Respectful** to teammates and opponents.
- **A good winner** (no bragging).
- **A good loser** (no whining).

Research shows that kids who hear this "good sportsmanship" message before competing demonstrate better conflict resolution skills than kids who don't. Better yet, those skills may spill over into the classroom!

Source: G. Dewar, Ph.D., "Social skills activities for children and teenagers: Ideas inspired by research," Parenting Science, <http://tinyurl.com/ybhxx9l>.



Don't give up—change directions

Hard work often leads to success. But what if it leads to failure?

Imagine your child does poorly on a math test, even though she studied. Talk calmly about what happened. She may realize she needs to practice multiplication every day, for example, and not just before tests.

Remember that failure can lead to future success!



Source: M.H. Raskind and R.J. Goldberg, "Life Success for Students With Learning Disabilities: A Parents' Guide," www.ldonline.org/article/12836.

Correct the behavior, not your child

Out of frustration, parents often resort to criticizing their children. “You’re such a baby!” “Can’t you learn anything?” “What’s wrong with you?” But such words don’t help a child correct inappropriate behavior. Instead, they make him feel he can’t do anything right—so why try?

The best way to get the behavior you want is to:

- **Praise positive behavior when you see it.** “I love the way you helped Mrs. Nelson with her bags.” Or, “I can see you put a lot of effort into this project.”
- **Praise progress.** “You spelled every word correctly on your test this week. Your extra review time really paid off.”
- **Encourage positive thoughts.** “I appreciate your being so kind to your sister.” This tells your child, “I am capable of being kind.”

Source: S. Marston, “There’s No Such Thing as a ‘Bad’ Kid: Focusing on the Behavior, Not the Child,” *OurChildren*, National PTA.



Questions & Answers

Q: My son, who is small for his age, was teased quite a bit last year at school. I’m still upset about it. How can I “bully-proof” my child so it’s not a problem again this year?

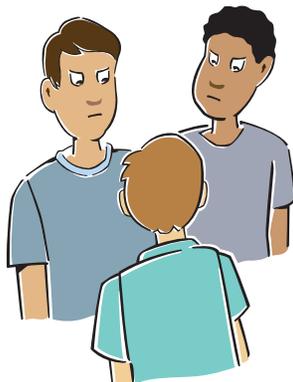
A: Good for you for addressing the issue before it gets out of hand! Bullying is extremely common and it doesn’t just affect kids who are “too small,” “too big” or “too whatever.”

Studies show that up to 50 percent of school children will be picked on at some point. And an unlucky 10 percent of those will be teased regularly.

But “common” doesn’t mean “harmless.” Bullying can do serious damage to the victim—impacting his self-esteem and his grades. In extreme cases, the victim may try to avoid school altogether.

To “bully-proof” your child this year:

- **Talk to him.** Find out what’s happening in school. Don’t grill your child for details but do try to get a sense of how he’s feeling.
- **Pay attention to problem areas.** Most bullying occurs when kids are left to themselves. That means the playground, the lunch room and the restroom are prime teasing spots. Find out whether (and to what degree) these areas are supervised.
- **Encourage your child to be assertive.** Very often a convincing “Leave me alone!” may stop a bully. So help your child role-play his responses to being teased. If he practices asserting himself often enough, he may become more comfortable doing it for real.



Source: “Bullying,” American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, <http://tinyurl.com/3skzqcf>.

Do your prep work the night before

What’s worse than night-before-school fatigue? Morning chaos!

Get most of your child’s school-day prep work done before heading to bed, including:

- **Packing her lunch.**
- **Loading up her backpack.**
- **Choosing her outfit.**

Tackling these tasks can be tough when all you want to do is collapse on the couch after a long day. But do it anyway—and as much as you can together with your child.

When you wake up to a calm, peaceful morning—and child—you’ll be glad you did!



Avoid an authoritarian approach to discipline

It may be tempting to adopt a “my way or the highway” approach to parenting, but it’s not a good idea.

Studies show that children with overly strict parents tend to be:

- **Unable** to express their feelings.
- **Sullen** or withdrawn.
- **Depressed.**
- **Unmotivated.**

So commit to being firm, fair and consistent when it comes to discipline. And resist the urge to rule with an iron fist!

Source: M. Mamen, *The Pampered Child Syndrome: How to Recognize It, How to Manage It, and How to Avoid It*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

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