

Helping Children Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

INDIAN LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL
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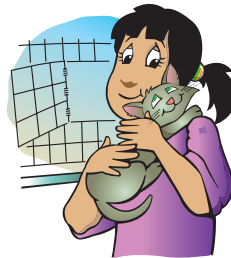
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BUILDING CHARACTER

Build resilience by helping others

Resilient children learn to handle challenges and bounce back from disappointment. They make decisions and solve problems. To build your child's resilience, encourage her to help others. For example:

- **Find ways your child can contribute** to the household. Ask what she likes to do. Avoid labeling her responsibilities "chores." Just say you really need her help. Show her how to do certain tasks. Then make a schedule with deadlines.
- **See if your child can mentor a younger student**, such as a kindergarten learning to read. Or perhaps she can assist her teacher with duties at school. She might help straighten desks or hand out supplies.
- **Research community service projects** your child might enjoy. If she adores pets, visit an animal shelter. She could learn about its needs (such as toys and pet food), and start a collection. If your child likes going to the park, your family could volunteer to help clean it up.
- **Discuss ways to solve problems in the community.** Then be a role model. Vote in elections, recycle or donate items to charity. When your child is able to pitch in, compliment her work.



Source: Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein, *Raising Resilient Children*, ISBN: 0-8092-9764-7 (Contemporary Books, 1-877-833-5524, <http://books.mcgraw-hill.com>) and Robert Brooks, "Resilience—Help Your Child Learn To Bounce Back: Five to Eleven," Sesame Workshop, www.sesameworkshop.org/parents/advice/article.php?contentId=80940.

IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

Promote regular school attendance

Being in school every day—and on time—will help your child do well. If he's not in school, he can't learn. If he's late, he may miss something important. To promote regular attendance:

- **Tell your child** that you expect him to go to school *every day*. What's important to you is important to him.
 - **Don't accept excuses.** Not feeling like getting out of bed isn't a good reason to stay home.
 - **Schedule medical appointments** outside of school hours.
 - **Plan family vacations** during school breaks.
 - **Help your child** set the alarm clock earlier if he has trouble getting out of the house and to school before the bell.
- Of course, if your child is truly sick, do keep him home—especially if his illness is contagious.

Source: "Fingertip Facts," School Attendance Improvement Handbook, California Department of Education, www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/pdf/Atten_formletters.pdf.

YOUR CHILD AND YOU

Slow your child down

Students who rush, don't always do their best work. If you are concerned about your child rushing:

- **Focus on achievement**, not completion. Tell your son you are proud of him when he takes his time and does an assignment correctly.
- **Comment positively** on papers that show he took his time. Post those on your refrigerator.

BUILDING MATH SKILLS

Enjoy math fun with a scale

Your bathroom scale can be a great learning tool. To help your child practice subtraction, have your child weigh herself. Then have her weigh herself holding the family dog. What does she weigh now? Subtracting her original weight from her weight holding the dog will tell her how much the dog weighs. (No dog? Try a heavy book.)

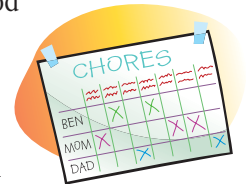


Source: Scott Flansburg, *Math Magic for Your Kids*, ISBN: 0-688-13548-X (William Morrow & Company, 1-800-843-9389, www.harpercollins.com).

MOTIVATING YOUR CHILD

Chores have many benefits

Chores are more than a way to keep the house clean. They build children's pride and responsibility. They send the message, "I trust you to do a good job." Make sure you explain how to do tasks step-by-step. Compliment your child's hard work, even if it's not perfect. Be sure to schedule enough time for your child to be able to complete chores *and* homework.



Source: Sarah Aguirre, "Age Appropriate Chore Charts," About.com, <http://housekeeping.about.com/od/chorechart1/a/ageapprchores.htm>.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How can parents encourage struggling readers?

Q: My third grader is struggling with reading this year. He can sound out words, but he just doesn't seem to like to read. How can I help him?

A: Your son is at the point in elementary school where kids stop *learning to read* and start *reading to learn*. So you're right to be concerned. To boost his reading skills now:



- **Schedule weekly trips to the library.** If your son doesn't have his own library card, get him one. Ask the librarian to help him find interesting books at his reading level.
- **Suggest a series book.** If he gets attached to a character in one book, he may want to read others in the series.
- **Use the newspaper** (many have pages just for children). Find an interesting article. Ask your son to read it and then tell you about it in his own words.
- **Subscribe to a magazine** on a topic that interests your son. Whether it's sports or animals, there's sure to be a magazine just right for him.
- **Talk with his teacher.** Ask her how you can reinforce reading skills at home.

Remember, reading is a skill just like riding a bike. The more your child reads, the better at reading he'll be.

PARENT QUIZ

Are you promoting healthy habits?

Today, one-third of all children are obese or at risk of becoming obese. Parents play an important role in fighting this health crisis. Answer the following questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're helping your child develop healthy habits:

- ___ **1. Do you avoid** keeping sugary drinks in the house? (Water is a healthy drink for kids.)
- ___ **2. Do you exercise** daily with your child?
- ___ **3. Do you involve** your child in active chores, like washing the car?
- ___ **4. Do you limit** the amount of time your child spends watching television?
- ___ **5. Do you eat** meals together regularly?

How did you do? Each yes answer is a big step towards a healthier life for your child. For each no answer, consider trying that idea from the quiz.

“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”
—Mother Teresa

Teach your child to treat others with respect

Is your child rude and disrespectful? Check your own behavior. If you're rude to your child, she's going to be rude to others. Model the behavior you expect. Comment positively when appropriate. Say, “I noticed how you spoke to Mrs. Smith in the library today. You were so respectful.”

AFTER SCHOOL

What should you do if your child wants to quit?

Your child begged to play baseball and now he wants to quit. What should you do?

- **Ask why he wants to quit.** Listen to his reasons.
- **Consider his schoolwork.** Is being on the team affecting his progress?
- **Talk with other parents.** Are their children discouraged? Is there a problem that needs to be addressed?

Kids learn responsibility by sticking with a team. But in some situations, you may allow your child to quit before he loses his love of the game altogether.

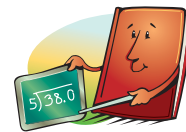
Source: Stacy M. DeBroff, *Sign Me Up*, ISBN: 0-743-23541-X (Free Press, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 1-800-223-2336, www.simonsays.com).

HOMEWORK

Handle homework problems

If your child asks for help with a math problem, help her figure out the answer on her own. Have her:

- 1. Review the directions.** Make sure she clearly understands what to do.
- 2. “Teach” you** using the sample problems in her textbook. Have her explain step-by-step what she is doing. Once you finish these two steps, your child is likely to say, “Now I get it!”



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