

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Guiding Students for School Success

Patrick Henry Academy
Patriots

Attend parent-teacher conferences with a 'Go Team' attitude

Parents sometimes approach parent-teacher conferences with a mixture of anxiety and interest. "What does the teacher think about my child?" "And what does the teacher think about me as a parent?"

Rather than worry, be confident! No child, teacher or parent is perfect. Research shows that it takes teamwork to create school success.

To arrive at your next conference prepared:

- **List the topics you want to discuss.** It's tempting to chit chat with the teacher, but time is short, so address priorities first. You might ask questions such as, "Is my child reading at grade level?" or "Is my child getting along well with other students?"
- **Be open-minded.** Listen to what the teacher has to say about your child's strengths and weaknesses. Remember that you both want your child to succeed. Discuss how you can work together toward progress. Be specific. Ask what will help at school. Ask what you can do at home.
- **Stay in touch.** Plan how you'll follow up after the meeting, such as by email or telephone. You might even volunteer in class and observe how your child is doing. Assure the teacher that you want to stay informed and involved.



Silence encourages better communication

Conversation is a wonderful tool for staying connected to your child. But don't assume you always know how to talk to her.

Research shows that parents may:

- **Presume to know** what their child is going to say before she says it.
- **Mentally "judge"** their child's words as she's speaking.

Unfortunately, this approach to communicating doesn't help the conversation—it squashes it! To have a truly meaningful talk with your child, start by *listening*.



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

Your perfectionist may need perspective

Kids who demand perfection from themselves may give in to frustration on school projects because they're obsessed with getting everything "just right."

In real life, of course, there's no such thing as perfect. To help your child:

- **Remind him** that "good enough" sometimes really can be just that.
- **Set time limits on his work.** No long hours of fretting allowed!
- **Put things into perspective** for him. His future does *not* ride on one assignment.

Source: K. Abel, "Help Your Child Beat Procrastination," *FamilyEducation.com*, <http://life.familyeducation.com/behavioral-problems/responsibilities/36530.html>.

As your child gets older, she may start to disagree with you more often. You should still expect her to:



- **Be polite.** "I don't want to go to piano practice today" is much better than "I hate piano!"
- **Explain herself.** Listen to her reasons and keep an open mind. You may even decide she's right!

Source: K. Miles, "Twins: The New Toddlers?" *Parenting*, www.parenting.com/article/Child/Development/Tweens-The-New-Toddlers.

Honestly, it's best to lead by example

What's better than talking to your child about honesty?



Demonstrating it!

To be a role model of honesty:

- **Play by the rules.** If the DVD is due back to the store by tomorrow, return it by tomorrow.
- **Don't fib when you buy tickets.** Is your child 11? Then don't claim he's 10 just so you can buy a cheaper ticket.
- **Own up to your mistakes.** "You're right, officer. I was speeding and I'm sorry."

Teach the importance of perseverance

Achieving school success is tough for many children. It requires perseverance! In a lengthy study involving kids with learning disabilities, this character trait was linked to adult success. People with perseverance:

- **Know** that hard work pays off.
- **Refuse** to quit easily.
- **Figure out** how to overcome challenges.
- **Stop** unsuccessful strategies—and try new ones.

You can encourage these qualities in your child. Talk about the benefits of determination. Look for examples of it in people's lives, including your child's. Discuss what would happen if people didn't persevere. Support and compliment your child as he tries hard!



Source: M. H. Raskind and R. J. Goldberg, "Life Success For Students With Learning Disabilities: A Parent's Guide," LD OnLine, www.ldonline.org/article/12836.

Questions & Answers

Q: I know I'm supposed to limit my child's screen time to two hours a day, but it seems impossible! How can I get her to "unplug" without causing a big argument between us?

A: First, remind yourself that a little grumbling on her part is no reason to give up on your "two hours per day" rule!

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that guideline for a reason. Kids who spend too much time in front of a screen (whether it's a TV, computer or video game) may be more likely to become obese. They may also have trouble concentrating in school and be more likely to behave aggressively.

This doesn't mean screen time is bad for your child. But it does mean that setting reasonable limits is a good way for her to benefit from high-quality TV or computer programs without becoming a "couch potato."

To set screen-time limits for your child:

- **Talk about it.** Let her know she'll get two hours of daily screen time from now on. Yes, she may gripe at first. But once she sees you're serious, she'll probably calm down and respect your rule.
- **Rethink your viewing habits.** The TV shouldn't be background noise. Unless someone is watching a specific program, shut it off.
- **Use a timer.** If the honor system doesn't work, set a kitchen timer whenever your child logs on or plugs in.
- **Unplug during play dates.** Enforce a "no screen" rule when your child has a friend over. This is a great time for creative play.



Source: J. Wolf, "Practical Ways to Limit Screen Time," About.com, <http://singleparents.about.com/od/parenting/ss/limitscreentime.htm>.

Discover your child's interests and passions

Does your child struggle in school? If this leads to behavior issues, look at where her interests lie. Then help her find an activity she loves outside of class!

By doing something that she's passionate about, your child may:

- **Experience the thrill** of excelling at an activity.
- **Broaden her horizons.**
- **Feel better about herself.**

Those positive feelings she gets from her activity just might translate into a better mood (and better grades) in school!

Source: Kenneth N. Condrell, Ph.D., *The Unhappy Child: What Every Parent Needs to Know*, ISBN: 978-159102419-4, Prometheus Books.

No whining, please

Nip your child's whining habit in the bud! The next time he starts whimpering about something, try:

- **Sending him** to the "whine" room. Okay, it's just his bedroom. But in he goes.
- **Recording him.** Play it back. He may not realize what he sounds like.

Naturally, it's important to set a good example. So if you don't want him whining about his math homework, don't moan about balancing the checkbook!

Source: J. Tilsner, "No More Whining!" Parenting.com, www.parenting.com/article/Toddler/Behavior/how-to-silence-a-whiny-child.



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