

PRESCHOOL

Tell your child that you won't allow whining

Whining irritates nearly every parent. (Teachers aren't crazy about it either!!) But sometimes parents accidentally encourage whining. They respond to it, so kids figure they can gain something by trying it again. Keep this in mind as you try to curb the whining.

Here are some tips to combat the whining:

- **Model for your child** the difference between whining and an appropriate tone.
- **Be neutral** when your child whines. Sometimes, your lack of a response may be enough to stop them. If they continue, say "I am sorry, I don't understand whining. I'll be happy to listen when you speak in a nice voice."
- **Be firm** about not granting requests made in a whiny voice.
- **Respond quickly** when your child remembers an appropriate voice. Say, "What a nice tone of voice. I sure heard that loud and clear!"

Source: J. Fay & C. Fay, *Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood: Practical Parenting from Birth to Six Years*, ISBN 1-930429-00-2

Observe life's treasures with your child

Preschoolers have a way of helping adults appreciate little things in nature, such as the beauty of a spider web, a rock, or a fallen leaf.

Maximize your child's interest and enthusiasm by exploring the world together. You can even turn it into a learning game.

Here's how:

- **Bring a camera** or drawing supplies to record what you discover. Encourage your child to look for interesting items. Say, "Let's find 10 things outside that we've never noticed before!"
- **Take or draw a picture** when your child sees something new. "Daddy, there's a nest in that tree!" or "Oooh, that's a huge ant hill!" Let your child help record the memory.
- **Look at the pictures** when you get home. Review and talk about what they are. Then take turns covering most of each one. Can you guess what you're looking at? Challenge other family members to figure it out, too.

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Calendar

Nov 12 state-wide conference in Nashville

Nov 23 pancake and sausage day

FOUND— Cell phone during family learning weekend

Pancake and Sausage Day

Each year on Wednesday before Thanksgiving Day (November 23, this year) TSD hosts a Pancake and Sausage Day to raise funds for PTCA of TSD. This endeavor provides funds to cottages and Schools to enable students to participate in activities that cannot be provided through the general fund of TSD. TSD provides a breakfast of pancakes and sausage for visitors for a \$5.00 ticket. You can also bid on silent auction items, buy baked goods, crafts and PTCA items as well as a white elephant sale. For the kids there is face painting and balloon animals. If you have any crafts or baked goods you would like to donate please call Carol Robbins at 865-579-2507.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Turn your child's mistakes into learning opportunities

Mistakes, it is said, are the stepping stones to success. Now research on how the brain learns shows making mistakes is often one of the best ways to learn.

Scientists at the university of Exeter monitored the brains of people who were making predictions based on information they were given. Then they received new information and had to change their predictions. The study found that people tended to remember this new information the next time they saw it. The brain sent a "early warning" that helped them remember what they had learned.

What does this mean for parents? Sometimes, it's probably best to let your child make some mistakes. Don't keep nagging them to finish the project that's due on Friday. Instead, let them find out for themselves what happens when they wait until the very last minute. Then talk about it together. Help your child identify for themselves the mistakes that were made. Work with them to see how they might have made different choices.

Say, "So maybe leaving things until the last minute isn't the best way for you to work. Next time, it might be better to do things a little bit at a time so they get done on time."

Source: University of Exeter, *Why we learn from our mistakes*, science daily

Teach your elementary schooler how to master book reports

In elementary school, your child will probably be assigned his first book report. Since reading in itself can be challenging—without having to write about it—your child may feel intimidated. But book reports can be divided into small, manageable (even enjoyable!) parts. The trick is to start early and:

- **Choose a book your child likes.** The teacher or librarian can help with this. Finding the right book will motivate your child to read it and share what they learn.
- **Review the basics.** Talk about what the book report should cover. Common themes include main characters, plot and setting. Details are helpful, as long as there aren't too many. Telling the whole story is a common mistake to avoid. Stick with a brief description of the beginning, middle and end.
- **Ask questions.** This will help your child with the introduction and conclusion. "What was the book about?" "What did you like about it?" "What didn't you like?" "Would you recommend the book to others?" "are there other books by the same author?" "Do you relate to anything in the story?"

Source: "How to write a book report," fact monster, www.factmonster.com/homework/wsbookreportelem.html

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tackle that test anxiety with preparation, positive thoughts

It's the day of the big exam. Is your child suffering from a "mystery stomachache" or other complaint? They could have a case of test-taking anxiety. Help them do their best—and panic as little as possible—on test day by encouraging them to:

- **Avoid cramming.** Regular study sessions leading up to an exam are much more helpful than frantic cramming.
- **Dismiss negative thoughts.** Anytime a discouraging, "I can't do this" thought creeps into their heads, suggest they change it to, "I've studied hard and I can do this!" Positive self-talk often leads to positive results.
- **Keep things in perspective.** No single test has the power to make or break their future. PERIOD. That bears repeating sometimes.

Source: "Test Anxiety," teenshealth, http://kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/test_anxiety.html

Support your child's work on research projects

Research projects can be overwhelming for some middle schoolers. These projects often involve reading non-fiction texts that contain challenging vocabulary. In addition, they require a great deal of organization—which doesn't come naturally to most adolescents.

Here are some ways to help, without doing the project for your child:

- **Help your child find** related material. Try a fiction book that explores themes that are similar to those in the project. This may help your child develop interest in what they are studying. A book with a lower reading level may help too. It can increase your child's understanding of the concept. They can relate this understanding to the research material.
- **Review the texts** with your child. Some material is very important, such as items in boldface, or items featured in questions at the end of chapters. Point these out to your child.
- **Remind your child** to watch the calendar. Help them set weekly deadlines. With each deadline, they can accomplish one goal toward getting the project completed. Then they can use the final week to concentrate on details and wrap up the project.

HIGH SCHOOL

Do you know what your teen wants to do after high school?

High school won't last forever—even though sometimes it might seem like it will! Do you know what your teen wants to do after high school? Do they want to go to college? Do they want to get a job?

Discuss your teen's plans. Focus on how your education has helped you—or why you wish you had learned more. With your teen:

- **Research how to prepare** for a career that interests them. How much schooling is required? Do they need to go to college or even graduate from school? Could they take any specific classes now to help prepare them?
- **Write a resume.** Include job's they have held, community service and academic achievements. Your teen can also add any special skills or computer programs they know well.
- **See if they could visit a person** in a job that interests them. That way they will see first-hand the type of work that's involved.
- **Begin planning** for after-school jobs. It may take a little longer to find one that could prepare your teen for their chosen career path.

Share strategies to help your high schooler stay organized

Your child has a science test tomorrow. But they left their science book....well, they left it somewhere. It might be in their locker. It could be in their friend's car. It is definitely not where they can use it to study.

Helping teens get, and stay organized can actually help them do better in school. Encourage your teen to:

- **Clean out** their backpack every Friday.
- **Organize their locker** once a week. If they can't see their Algebra book, they are less likely to bring it home.
- **Keep a large calendar** where they study. Write due dates on the calendar so they know what assignment is due when.
- **Get organized at night.** Very few teens are morning people. So have them take time at night to put all the homework in the backpack and to lay out what they need for school the next day.

Source: "Time Management for Teens," Glencoe Health, www.glencoe.com/sec/health/updateshome/bul_arch/fall03_01.shtml

"The purpose of raising children is simply to help them *out* of our lives into successful lives of their own."

- John Rosemond