

# FAMILY RESOURCE

C O N N E C T I O N

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## How Do I Discipline My School-age Child?



*The novelty of summer may be wearing off for your school-aged child, and with that you hear the common lament, "I'm bored!" Even with the exciting camps, programs, and warm weather activities, school-aged children can sometimes get antsy this time of year and act out their anxieties. Read on for some helpful tips to redirect your school-aged children.*

### Listen

The first lesson is to listen. School-aged children have a lot to say, so be patient and listen. Sometimes just answering, "I see," and "What a bummer," or, "No wonder you're in a bad mood," helps their problems and lets them know you care.

### Make your rules clear

Children at any age will test your limits. Often, children will forget what they are supposed to do, so be specific about your rules and chores. If you ask for their input on the rules, your children may cooperate better. Write them down and hang them up where your children can see them.

When a rule is broken, you can take away privileges (video games, TV, bike riding, etc.). Whatever you do, you need to be ready, willing, and able to enforce the rule, or it will not be effective. Try to make the consequence fit the situation.

Children may lie to avoid being punished or criticized. They are still learning the benefits of telling the truth and of being trusted. Avoid blaming or putting down your children because it can make them sneakier. Deal with lying calmly and do not take it personally.

### Watch what you say

If you yell, threaten, and put down your children, you turn yourself into the enemy. For example, avoid saying things such as, "You never do any chores! Why should I let you do anything after supper?" Instead, try saying "When you clear the dishes, you may go outside." This approach works much better.

### Avoid arguments

When your child misbehaves, try to avoid arguments and say as little as possible. Avoid saying things such as, "How many times do I have to tell you to wipe your feet when you come in?" or, "What's wrong with you; do you think I'm the maid?" Instead, make your child take responsibility and nicely say, "You tracked in dirt. The rag is under the sink." If your child protests or refuses, handle it calmly. Do not let your children manipulate you into getting what they want. If your child says, "I hate you! You never let me do anything!" respond by saying, "I'm sorry you feel that way", and walk away. Eventually, children will find a more positive way to get your attention. Remember to give them praise and attention when they do.

(continued)

### Mission

*To open "New Horizons" of self-esteem and potential for the little people entrusted to our care, their families, and our employees by providing and continuously improving the best child development on the planet!*



**Give praise**

School-aged children need just as much praise as toddlers. Catch them being good. Give them specific feedback so they can learn what they are good at. You can say things such as, "Super fantastic! You did a great job putting away the groceries so neatly," or "I like the way you took the initiative to weed and water the garden on your own. Thank you!"

**Ask for help**

Sometimes children may need more help than you alone can handle. You need extra help if your children hit you, try to seriously hurt their siblings, drink or take drugs, fail in school, or get involved with gangs. Call your child's health provider, local school nurse or counselor, religious leaders, community mental health center, or children's service agency until you get the help you need. ♥

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**How To Get Children To Do Chores**

Young children naturally want to imitate adults and help them. The easiest way to get your children to help around the house is to start them with very simple tasks early on when they want to help.

Toddlers and preschoolers usually love being with and "working" with their parents. They will help you sort the clean laundry, straighten up, and put toys away. Make chores sound like fun and praise your children when they help you. Even if you end up doing all of the work, let your children feel as if they are helping. It will:

- teach them skills such as counting and sorting
- give them a great sense of self-worth
- teach them responsibility

Your short-term goal is to keep your home clean while you are teaching your children the value and meaning of work. Teaching them early is an investment in their cooperation in the future. The key here, again, is starting them early so that they form good chore habits for a lifetime.

**Some age-appropriate chores for children:****1-2 years old:**

- Go and get items as directed
- Help you put items in a drawer or toy box
- Pick up toys and put them away with you

**3-5 years old:**

- Dress themselves and put away clothing
- Brush teeth with some assistance
- Set table
- Clean up small messes
- Feed and water pets
- Take out small trash bags
- Help make the bed
- Stack up books

**5-7 years old:**

- Make bed
- Pick up and straighten up
- Sweep and mop small areas
- Dust furniture
- Hang up clothes
- Weed garden, help in the yard
- Help wash car
- Start to write thank you notes

**8-12 years old:**

- Sweep house and porch, run vacuum
- Rake and help outside
- Fold all clothing
- Make a simple lunch unsupervised
- Make cookies and simple desserts
- Help serve, pour drinks, and clear the table

By the time children are 12, they are capable of doing nearly anything you can do in the household. ♥

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