

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Neil Cummins Elementary School

Guiding Students for School Success

Negotiate when the time is right

Parents often live by the rule, “No means no.” It’s true that you should mean what you say. But it’s also true that at times you should negotiate. This gives your child a lifelong gift—the ability to resolve conflicts with others. Don’t negotiate on safety or health issues, but consider these tips:

- **Keep emotions in check.** Negotiating with your child can be tough. If you stay calm, it’s more likely that your discussion will go well. Take a break if tempers start to flare.
- **Ask questions agreeably.** “Would you like to clean up the DVDs or the toys first?” is better than “Can you pick up this mess?”
- **Consult your child.** You might say, “It’s almost bedtime. When do you think you should stop reading?” or “What should we do about your unfinished chores?”
- **Give explanations.** “We have to pick up Mom at the airport now” is less confrontational than “Hurry up! Let’s go!” Respond calmly if your child disagrees.
- **Relax about results.** Negotiation isn’t about winning or losing. Imagine going to a yard sale and negotiating a fair price. No one “loses”—and everyone wins.
- **Pick your battles.** Sometimes you’ll choose to negotiate with your child, and other times you won’t. You are the parent and you must decide what’s best.



Source: “The Art of Negotiating With Kids,” PBS Parents, www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/negotiate.html.

What’s the best way to keep your child’s aggression in check? Withdraw your support? Or communicate in a positive way? A study of fifth-grade girls shows that being nurturing is key. Researchers say that positive support helps kids handle negative emotions. It may also lessen the effects of harmful peer pressure.



Source: “Nurturing Parents Can Cut Risk of Aggression in Girls,” WashingtonPost.com, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/05/AR2008080502068.html.

STOP for self-control

Teach your elementary schooler to handle upsetting situations without melting down! When he’s dealing with frustration, have him:

- **Picture** a STOP sign.
- **Pause** to think.
- **Consider** how best to proceed.
- **Walk away**, if necessary, to calm down.
- **Address** the issue after he’s had a chance to cool off.



Source: “Teaching Your Child Self-Control,” KidsHealth.org, http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/self_control.html.

Let good judgment override peer pressure

Teach your child to handle peer pressure by helping her develop good judgment.



Here’s how:

- **Be compassionate.** When she tells you about something that’s happening with her peers, just listen. It’s fine to remind her of your values, but don’t judge.
- **Encourage her** to stand up for herself. You may want to role-play ways she can do so.
- **Praise her.** Let her know you’re proud when she does the right thing.

Source: Nancy Samalin, “Secrets to Help Your Kids Handle Peer Pressure,” BottomLineSecrets.com, http://bottomlinesecrets.com/blpnet/article.html?article_id=7297.

‘You’re testing my patience!’

In one study, parents said patience was what they needed most when raising children.



To stay in control:

- **Remember the benefits.** Kids respond better to parents who act in a calm manner. Your child may “tune out” yelling—and eventually other things you say.
- **Make specific plans.** What will you do when you feel yourself losing patience? You might count to 10 or take a break from the discussion. Decide what works best for you.

Source: Shalaka Bhosale, “Parenting—Key to being a Patient Parent,” Buzzle.com, www.buzzle.com/editorials/5-26-2004-54674.asp and Susan Korones Gifford, “Discipline Lessons That Last,” Parents.com, www.parents.com/preschoolers/discipline/discipline/discipline-lessons-that-last/?page=5.

Polish your child's manners

Your youngster may not be Emily Post, but she can still have excellent manners! To boost her etiquette skills:

- **Remind her.** When your child forgets her manners, give her a nudge. "What do you say when you need to interrupt someone?"
- **Demonstrate good manners.** Never miss a chance to say *please* or *thank you* in front of your child.
- **Congratulate her when she behaves properly.** "You asked for that cookie so politely. Nicely done!"



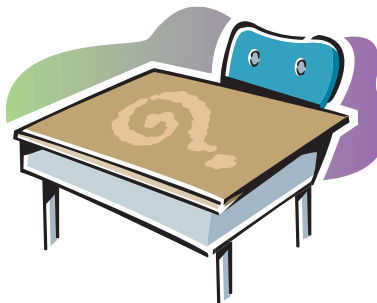
Source: Diane Sonntag, "Can You Change Your Child? Tackling Kids' Bad Habits," Kaboose.com, <http://parenting.kaboose.com/behavior/issues/can-you-change-your-child-tackling-kids-bad-habits-poor-manners.html>

Questions & Answers

Q: My fifth grader does well in school, but he always has a reason—a headache, a stomachache, etc.—for wanting to stay home. How can I make him understand that attendance matters and he can't skip class whenever he feels like it?

A: It's normal for your child to want to stay home sometimes (especially if the bus stop is cold and his blanket is toasty). But don't let him fall into the habit of thinking it's no big deal to miss school. It is a big deal! Kids can't do their best in class if they're not actually *in* class. To help your child develop good attendance habits:

- **Talk to him.** Make sure there's no particular reason—such as a bully or a tough class—why he wants to stay home. If there is a reason, you'll need to help him tackle the problem.
- **Set a good example.** Do you often call in sick to work when you're feeling fine? Your child is watching. He takes his cues about responsibility from you, so make sure you're sending the right message.
- **Get organized.** Your child shouldn't be scrambling to find his toothbrush, backpack and cereal bowl every morning. Make it easy for him to get out the door by having him organize all the things he'll need the night before. This goes for laying out school clothes, too.
- **Enforce a bedtime.** Overtired kids are especially tough to rouse in the morning. So be sure your child gets to bed at a reasonable hour every night.



Meet the ADHD challenge

Disciplining any child can be tough, but if your child has Attention



Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the task may be extra challenging. To discipline your ADHD child effectively:

- **Set clear, consistent house rules.**
- **Maintain regular routines.** Give each day a sense of order.
- **Reward his efforts.** Focus on how hard your child tries rather than on what he accomplishes.
- **Catch your child being good.**

Source: Keath Low, "Parenting Children and Teens with ADD/ADHD," About.com, <http://add.about.com/od/childrenandteens/a/parentingtips.htm>

What's your style?

Is your discipline style:

- **Authoritarian?** Do you demand obedience from your child—no matter what?
- **Permissive?** Does your child always get what she wants?
- **Authoritative?** Do you set and enforce fair rules consistently?

There's no one "right" way to approach discipline. Still, authoritative parents may have more success in the long run. To borrow from Goldilocks, *authoritarian* parenting may be too hard. *Permissive* parenting may be too soft. But *authoritative* parenting might be *just right!*

Source: "Parenting Styles," KeepKidsHealthy.com, www.keepkidshealthy.com/parenting_tips/discipline/parenting_styles.html

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

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