



# PARENTING POSTS

A newsletter for parents of second-grade students

## Supporting Your Child

Positive feedback is a very effective way to motivate children and help them feel good about who they are. When giving positive feedback, let children know why they are receiving it and mean what you say. Being sincere is important.

Avoid simply saying “good job” to the child. Instead, be specific: “You were able to add and subtract all of the problems on your worksheet and write the answers clearly.” Listen as your child provides their own positive feeling words. Being too general with positive feedback may appear phony to the child.



Effort and improvement are important.

## Goals of Misbehavior

When problems occur, ask yourself what the underlying cause of the misbehavior might be.

Child's goal	Child's faulty belief	Parent feeling and reaction	Child's response	Alternatives
Attention	I belong only when I am being noticed or served.	FEELING: Annoyed REACTION: Tendency to remind and coax.	Temporarily stops misbehavior. Later resumes same behavior or disturbs in another way.	Ignore misbehavior when possible. Give attention for positive behavior when child is not making a bid for it. Avoid undue service. Realize that reminding, punishing, rewarding, coaxing and service are undue attention.
Power	I belong only when I am in control or am proving no one can boss me!	FEELING: Angry, provoked, as if one's authority is threatened. REACTION: Tendency to fight or to give in.	Active- or passive-aggressive misbehavior is intensified, or child submits with defiant compliance.	Withdraw from conflict. Help child see how to use power constructively by appealing for child's help and enlisting cooperation. Realize that fighting or giving in only increases child's desire for power.
Revenge	I belong only by hurting others as I feel hurt. I cannot be loved.	FEELING: Deeply hurt. REACTION: Tendency to retaliate and get even.	Seeks further revenge by intensifying behavior or choosing another weapon.	Avoid feeling hurt. Avoid punishment and retaliation. Build trusting relationship; convince child that they are loved.
Display of inadequacy	I belong only by convincing others not to expect anything from me. I am unable; I am helpless.	FEELING: Despair; hopelessness. "I give up." REACTION: Tendency to agree with child that nothing can be done.	Passively responds or fails to respond to whatever is done. Shows no improvement.	Stop all criticism. Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small; focus on assets, don't be hooked into pity, and don't give up.



## Stress Less Activity

Stress is part of everyone's life. Even young children! Try this activity with your child to help reduce stress and enjoy time together.

Good communication reduces stress. Listening is a key component in good communication.

**Practice this:** remove distractions, including screens. Sit so you can see each other's faces. Each of you think of a story to tell. Set a timer for 3 minutes. One person tells their story while the other person looks at them and really listens without talking. Stop talking when the timer goes off. Reset the timer and switch roles. Try 5 minutes next time. Talk about how hard it is to really listen.

## Goals of Misbehavior

When problems occur, ask yourself what the underlying cause of the misbehavior might be. To check this, ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" and work from the Parent Feeling and Reaction portion of the chart.

## Reward Them Now

Parents easily can make the mistake of offering long-range rewards to young children. Offering a second grader a new bike in July if he or she will keep his or her room clean in November does not work. Children at this age still are developing the mental capacity or maturity to hold a long-range goal in mind day after day, so a distant reward seems impossible to reach and uninteresting for them.

## How to Encourage Your Child

**Send the right message.** Encourage effort rather than demand perfection.

If you recognize your child's efforts and improvement, the message they will get is, "You don't have to be perfect. Effort and improvement are important." The likely result is that they will learn to appreciate their own efforts and those of others and be more willing to try again.

## Keep It Positive

**Children need encouragement and approval.** One way to be positive about guidance is to tell the child what behavior you want rather than what you do not want. Instead of saying, "Don't leave your books on the couch," try saying, "Please put your books on the shelf." By phrasing your expectations in a positive way, you avoid challenging the child.

**Another way of offering positive guidance is to let the child choose between two alternative options.**

Instead of saying, "Don't go out without a coat," try asking, "Do you want to wear your coat or your sweater?" Encourage the child to step outside to test the weather and help inform the decision.

You set a limit, communicate it clearly and avoid being negative.

## Reminders

- **Recognize improvements and efforts**, not just accomplishments. For example, improvements in spelling or subtraction, efforts to get organized or a positive attitude should be recognized.
- **Don't wait; say it right away.** Children need immediate recognition. If you wait, the child may forget why you are recognizing him or her.
- **Follow through.**
- **Be sincere and specific.**
- **Avoid tacking qualifiers to your words of encouragement.** Statements such as, "You did a good job, but ..." will be discouraging. Don't give with one hand and take away with the other.



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