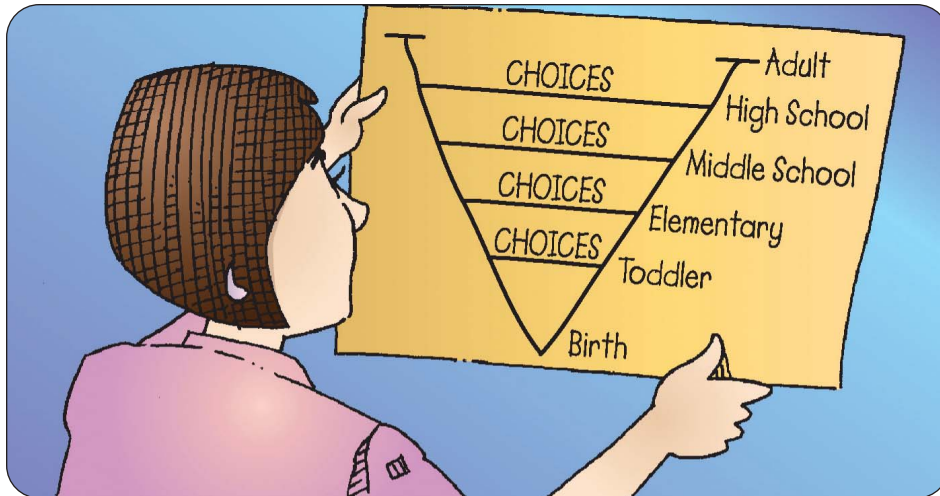


# Elementary School Parents<sup>®</sup>

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Central Alberta Regional Consortium  
c/o River Glen School, Red Deer, AB

*make the difference!*



## Use 'The V of Love' to set limits, build your child's responsibility

**P**arenting is always a balancing act between letting go and setting limits. Here's a great way to think about how to set limits. It's called "The V of Love."

Draw a large letter V on a piece of paper. The sides of the V represent the parent's firm limits. Outside those lines, the child has no choices—the parent's rule goes. But inside the lines, the child can make decisions and live with the consequences.

As your child gets older, you can give her more freedom. For example, when she was a toddler, she could choose between the red or yellow shirt. As a preschooler, she could choose to eat a banana or an apple.

Now that she's in elementary school, her choices should expand. She should decide if she joins the swim team or soccer team. And she

needs to live with the choice she makes. She can decide whether to do her math homework first or her reading (but she has to finish both).

The older your child gets, the more control she should have. Gradually, she'll be ready for adult life—ready to make responsible choices and live with the consequences.

Some parents work the other way. They give young children too many choices. They treat their kids like little adults. These parents soon have a child who's out of control. Then the parent clamps down. The child is unhappy and rebels, so the parent clamps down even more.

So, think about "The V of Love" when you're setting limits.

Source: Foster Cline and Jim Fay, *Parenting with Love and Logic*, ISBN: 0-89109-311-7 (Piñon Press, 1-800-366-7788, [www.navpress.com](http://www.navpress.com)).

## Get to school on time with the three P's



You started out the year great. Everyone got up and out the door on time—at least most days. But now things have started to slip.

The end of the year is often the time when attendance goes down. But it's also the time that important class activities and tests take place.

Remember the three P's to make sure your child still gets to school on time:

- 1. Plan.** The night before, take a few minutes to think about what your child needs for the next day. Help him pack his lunch and put it in the refrigerator. Have him set his backpack by the door.
- 2. Prioritize.** Schedule medical appointments after school. Don't plan trips until after the end of the school year.
- 3. Practice.** Practice really does make perfect. Each day you get your child up and out the door on time will make it easier the next day.

Source: "Increasing Student Attendance: Strategies from Research and Practice," *By Request*, June 2004 (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1-800-547-6339, [www.nwrel.org/request/2004june/strategies.html](http://www.nwrel.org/request/2004june/strategies.html)).

## The reward for doing well is the good feeling that comes with it



Some parents give kids money for good grades on a report card. What does that teach kids to value? Maybe money—but certainly not learning.

That can be the problem with a lot of so-called “motivation” ideas. The more you offer rewards for learning, the more you teach your child to look for the rewards and not for the learning.

The truth is that all students are motivated from the inside. Your job is to help them recognize that motivation and put it to work.

So the next time your child brings you a good school project, don't automatically offer praise. Instead,

ask, “Are you proud of that?” When your child says *yes*, ask a second question: “How does it feel to have done your best?”

Your child will probably say that it feels pretty good. And that's the information you can use again and again. Point out to her that she is capable of doing great work. She can achieve. And when she does, it feels pretty good.

Keep focusing on the good feeling that comes from doing a job well. The reward for doing well is the good feeling. That lasts a lot longer than the money for good grades!

Source: Bob Sullo, *Activating the Desire to Learn*, ISBN: 978-1-4166-0423-5 (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1-800-933-2723, www.ascd.org/books).

## How do you help a child who can hear, but just doesn't listen?



You know your child can hear. But he just doesn't seem to listen. And his teachers say this is a problem in class.

Your child may have a spoken language disability, where his brain does not take in and process language easily. Because so much of life—and of school—relies on the spoken word, a child with this type of disability can have a very hard time.

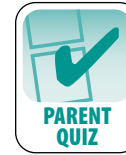
You can help your child if you:

- **Reduce distractions.** Don't tell your child something as he's rushing out the door. He'll be too distracted to listen. When you need to say something important, walk close to him. Gently hold his shoulders and ask him to look at you while you talk.
- **Ask for an “instant replay.”** When you are finished, ask your child to repeat what you just said.

- **Develop the writing habit.** If your child has to do a project with several steps, have him write them down. Provide colorful self-stick notes and a large calendar.

Source: Jane Utley Adelizzi and Diane B. Goss, *Parenting Children with Learning Disabilities*, ISBN: 0-89789-772-2 (Bergin & Garvey, part of Greenwood Publishing Group, 1-800-225-5800, www.greenwood.com).

## Are you making homework a good experience?



There aren't many children who love doing homework. But most kids don't fight and rebel.

When parents find ways to make homework a positive experience, children will usually do it without a battle. How are you doing? Answer *yes* or *no* to each question below to find out:

1. **Do you give your child choices**—such as which subject to study first? Whether to study right after school or before dinner?
  2. **Are you available and nearby** to offer support when your child is studying?
  3. **Is homework time** a quiet time for your whole family? Do you turn off the TV and ask everyone to read or study?
  4. **Do you help your child study** by calling out spelling words or holding up flash cards?
  5. **Do you praise your child** for working hard? This gives her a sense of pride in her accomplishments.
- How well are you doing?**  
If you answered mostly *yes*, you are doing your part to make homework a positive learning experience for your child. Mostly *no* answers? Try those ideas in the quiz.

Elementary School  
**Parents**  
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### Have an idea to share?

The editors of *Parents make the difference!* pay \$25 for each original idea published (in English, please), and you will receive credit in the article.

Send ideas to *Parents make the difference!*, Editorial Staff, P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474 (or [www.parent-institute.com/ideas/pmd](http://www.parent-institute.com/ideas/pmd)). Materials sent cannot be returned.

# Teach your child the importance of not interrupting adults, others



You're talking on the phone when your child walks in. "Where's my math book?" she asks, without excusing herself.

Experts say that too many of today's children feel they have a right to interrupt adult conversations any time they feel like it.

That simple act gives kids the wrong message. Yes, their needs are important and they have a right to be seen and heard—but not whenever they want.

When your child interrupts you, don't take the bait. Say, "I'm talking on the phone. I will help you when I'm finished." Then go back to your phone call. If she interrupts again, ignore her or hold up your hand.

When you're off the phone, be sure to listen to your child. Also take the opportunity to talk to her about being respectful by not interrupting.

**Source:** Bob Condor, "Living Well: Years of Boosting Kids' Self-Esteem May Have Backfired," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 12, 2005, [http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/health/251521\\_condor12.html?source=myspi](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/health/251521_condor12.html?source=myspi).

# If your elementary schooler hates to write, start brainstorming!



Some kids don't like to write because they think it's boring. Many others find it too challenging. They get frustrated trying to think of ideas.

You can't *force* a child to love writing. But you *can* turn a reluctant writer around. How? Try a little brainstorming.

Brainstorming is fun and reduces stress and anxiety, which sparks creativity. It can also help your child break through writer's block.

Brainstorming also teaches other skills that help with writing. By creating lists, for example, your child will learn to break down complex ideas into smaller components.

Your child can use brainstorming to figure out a topic for a paper or to think of ideas for a story.

The next time your child gets writer's block, have him:

- **Make a list.** Good examples are: Things I love. My favorite animals, places, toys or food. Things I know a lot about. Scary characters. Things adults say.

- **Exaggerate.** Ask questions to spark new ways to think about people, events and scenes. What would it *feel* like to be a car, a house or a dog? What would life be like if you had four hands?
- **Use visual images.** Have him look at a picture and write down ideas it brings to mind. Or take a walk and make notes about what he sees.
- **Add action to ideas,** people or things. He can think: What will happen next? How quickly?

**Source:** Douglas B. Reeves, *Reason to Write: Help Your Child in School and in Life Through Better Reasoning and Clear Communication—Elementary School Edition*, ISBN: 0-7432-3045-0 (Kaplan Publishing, 1-800-223-2336, [www.simonsays.com](http://www.simonsays.com)).

**"Every child, to be educationally successful, needs a language-rich environment, one in which adults speak well, listen attentively, and read aloud every day."**

—Ernest Boyer, former U.S. Commissioner of Education

**Q:** My second grade son has a terrible case of "I-want-it." Whenever we are in a store, he finds something he wants. Then he whines until I buy it. I am afraid I am raising a son with the wrong values. What can I do to change things?

## Questions & Answers

**A:** It's hard to blame kids who want all those things they see. The average child watches more than 40,000 television commercials each year!

But you can help counteract all those "buy now" messages by giving your son more control over what he *does* buy.

Give your son an allowance. (In the long run, it will cost you less than all those toys you're buying in the store!) Tell him he's old enough to be responsible for making choices about money.

*Give your son more control over what he buys.*

Then set some rules. One-third of the allowance is for savings. One-third is for him to give away to causes he believes in. Only one-third is for spending.

Now when he whines, you have an easy answer. "Do you want to spend your money on this?" If he does, that's his choice. But when he runs out of money—it's gone.

He'll learn that whining doesn't work. He will also learn to save up for things he really wants.

His teacher will thank you, too. Learning takes time. It's hard to teach long division or cursive writing to a child who expects every wish to be granted instantly.

—Kris Amundson,  
The Parent Institute

# It Matters: Encouraging Reading

## Develop a library habit to create a life-long reader



The first week in April is National Library Week. Public and school libraries do a lot to help make reading

fun for children—puppet shows, book fairs, book clubs and contests.

Getting your child to use the library is a simple and effective way to help him grow as a reader and do well in school. Children who visit the library regularly develop better language and study skills.

To help your child develop the library habit:

- **Take him to the library** often—at least every few weeks.
- **Introduce him to the librarian.** Ask for book recommendations. Talk about other ways the librarian might help him.
- **Get him his own library card.**
- **Take time** to let your child examine a variety of books—leafing through their pages.
- **Let your child check out books** he wants—even if the books are too difficult.
- **Help your child find books** he can read with ease that match his interests.
- **Be a role model.** Regularly check out library books yourself.
- **Sign your child up** for after school and summer reading programs at the library.
- **Make a list of books** your child reads and display it.
- **Talk about books** during meals.
- **Check out audio books** to bring on family road trips.

Source: *I Can Read and Write! How to Encourage Your School-Age Child's Literacy Development* (International Reading Association, 1-800-336-7323, [www.reading.org/association](http://www.reading.org/association)).

## Build reading comprehension by asking your child to 'wonder'

**W**hen children are small, they ask lots of questions. But often in school, they are asked to *answer* questions.

Getting your child to return to his naturally curious state—of asking questions before, during and after reading—will boost his motivation to read and enhance his understanding of what he reads.

To do this, don't tell him to ask questions. Suggest he “wonder.” Wondering has been shown to free students' thinking more.

Before reading an assignment, have your child examine the chapter. Have him look at the headings and illustrations. Then ask him to write down what he already knows about the subject. Also have him write down what he sees. “I see a map of the thirteen colonies.”



Then ask what he might wonder. He might wonder what the chapter is about, what he'll learn and what will happen.

During and after reading, he might wonder, “How come?” “Why did ... ?” He could also wonder what the teacher might put on the test!

Source: Lori Oczkus, *Super Six Comprehension Strategies: 35 Lessons and More for Reading Success*, ISBN: 1-929024-69-X (Christopher-Gordon Publisher, Inc., 1-800-934-8322, [www.Christopher-Gordon.com](http://www.Christopher-Gordon.com)).

## Listen to your child read aloud to build motivation, confidence



When kids learn to read, they get excited and want to practice.

When your child starts reading, she will probably ask you to listen to her. How you do this can affect your child's motivation to read and her progress.

Follow these guidelines:

- **Get the right books** for your early reader—books with pictures, a few sentences on each page, repetitive words/phrases and predictable stories.
- **Be a good listener.** Don't interrupt your child to correct her or use teaching techniques such as

sounding out words. Just have fun, laugh and enjoy the story.

- **Encourage your child** to use picture clues and her memory to tell the story.
- **If your child stumbles** over a word, simply tell her what it is.
- **Give lots of praise** and encouragement. Say, “Wow! Listen to you read.”
- **Avoid criticism.** If your child gets frustrated or fears she's failing, she can lose her confidence.

Source: Nancy L. Roser, *Helping Your Child Become a Reader*, ISBN: 0-87207-161-8 (ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1-800-538-3742, [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)).