

Parents Make the Difference!

Encourage respectful behavior with five simple strategies



There are days that parents feel like Aretha Franklin. All they're asking for is a little R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

But in today's society, where disrespect is common, it's even more of a challenge to raise respectful kids. Fortunately, there are still some things that work.

Here are five ways to encourage respect in your child:

1. Be a good role model. Respect, like most values, is caught, not taught. When your child sees you treating everyone with respect--from the clerk in the store to the homeless person on the street--with respect, he'll figure that's the way to behave.
2. Name it when you see it. When you see other people behaving in respectful ways, make a positive comment. No lecture is necessary. Your kids will get the message. "Did you see how that man on the bus gave up his seat so that elderly woman could sit down? What a respectful thing to do."
3. Praise it when they demonstrate it. "Zack, I felt so proud of your respectful behavior when you held the door for Mrs. Jones."
4. Correct it. When your child slips up (and he will), help him make a course correction. "Is that the way we greet guests?"
5. Report what you hear. If a neighbor or teacher tells you your child greeted her politely, let your child know how proud you are of his respectful behavior.

Do you know why your child needs to know math facts?

Teachers often ask parents to work on math facts at home. You may wonder whether it's really important to learn these facts. Can't your child just check a math problem on a calculator?

The answer is that a solid foundation of math facts is the basis for most higher math. By the time students reach third or fourth grade, they shouldn't have to concentrate hard to figure out the sum of 8 plus 2, or the product of 7 times 3.

When students stop to figure out these answers, they'll lose their ability to focus on the higher-level math. They may decide they're "no good in math" and quit trying altogether.

What should parents do? Make sure your child learns the math facts so he doesn't even have to stop to think about them. Try quizzing each other in the car: "Tell me what 9 times 6 is--fast!"

You'll boost your child's knowledge of math. You'll also give him confidence to try higher-level math problems.

Choose appropriate websites for your child ahead of time

"Can I go online?" your child asks. You want to say yes, but you're not sure which sites are appropriate.

It's a good idea to visit educational sites when your child isn't nearby. Then note the ones you've approved and visit them together. Some to consider include:

- Funbrain.com. Here you'll find games that can be sorted by grade (K-8) and subject. You can choose from math, language arts, history, science and geography. Still haven't found the right game? Use the site's "game finder" feature.
- Scholastic.com. Parents can sort activities on this site, too. Simply enter your child's grade, a subject that interests him, and what he'd like to do (such as "listen and read" or "online learning").
- Starfall.com. Phonics is fun when it involves play! Whether your child likes comics, tongue twisters, plays, fables or other reading materials, there is something on Starfall for everyone.
- PBSKIDS.com. Your child will probably recognize many characters on PBS's respected site for kids. "Between the Lions" games are especially focused on reading.