

Back to School

How to teach children to respect their parents

Parents are tasked with teaching their children many lessons. Some are more obvious, like how to live safely or how to ride a bike or tie their shoes. Other lessons are more complicated and abstract, especially as they pertain to issues like respect.

Early in life, children get attention by crying, throwing tantrums or through other means. Youngsters must be taught to be respectful of others, including their own parents. People, including children, may have their own ideas in regard to what constitutes respect, so families have to work together to find common ground.

Parenting for Brain, a parenting resource that focuses on child psychology, notes that respect can refer to the way kids admire or look up to someone, but also as an act of giving attention and showing care. It's not simply about being compliant. Establishing patterns for respect can be challenging because there are no shortages of situations in popular culture — from movies to music to social media — that complicate, if not compromise, parents' efforts to teach children respect. However, there are ways to teach kids how to respect their parents.

- Be a good role model. Children learn by examin-

ing the world around them. If parents are rude to restaurant servers, cut people off on roadways, make fun of others, or even yell at members of their own families, their children are more likely to follow suit.

- Be a parent first, not a friend. Raising children is complicated, but many parents try to be their kids' friends before they act as their parents. While it seems healthy to want to hang out and be equals with them, Psychology Today warns that this approach compromises the unique relationship parents have with their children because kids have many friends but not an infinite number of parents. Children should not have equal power with their parents as they would their peers. Plus, kids often don't respect parents who try to act like their friends. They may feel their parents are trying too hard, and some may even grow to resent their parents for trying to be friends first and parents second.

- Explore other outlets for anger. Children may act out and be disrespectful to others when faced with strong emotions that make them feel angry or overwhelmed. In addition to encouraging kids to talk out their scary feelings, parents can guide them toward outlets to relieve frustration,



such as engaging in healthy exercise or even escaping into a craft or hobby. Children who are struggling to cope with a

significant life change may need a little time to get back on track.

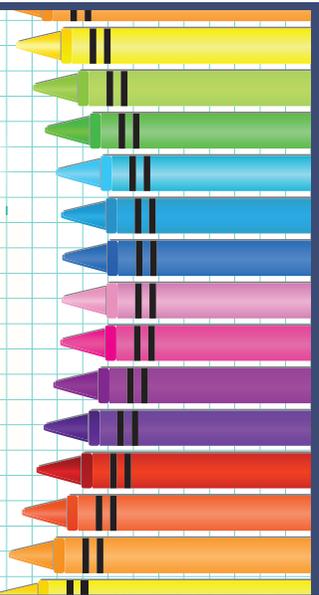
Teaching respect takes time

and is not a one-size-fits-all task. Parents must find an approach that works for them and their children.

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How to help young athletes cope with defeat

The value of athletic competition for children who like to play sports is undeniable. Though not all kids will want to play sports, those who enjoy competing in organized athletics can benefit in myriad ways.

Doctors with the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness note that interest in sports should start with the child, not the parent. Such an approach can ensure kids are playing sports because they want to, and not solely because their parents want them to. The AAP notes that when kids are play-

ing sports because they want to, they can take the lessons learned from competition and use them throughout the rest of their lives. For example, Dr. Steven Cuff, MD, FAAP, who co-authored the 2019 report "Organized Sports for Children, Preadolescents and Adolescents," notes that "the camaraderie and teamwork needed on a playing field offers lasting lessons on personal responsibility, sportsmanship, goal-setting and emotional control."

When competing, some young athletes may have a hard time handling defeat. In fact,

even professional athletes routinely acknowledge how much they struggle after a loss. But there are ways parents and coaches can help young athletes cope with defeat.

- Reward effort. The College of Education at Michigan State University recommends coaches and parents put an emphasis on effort and allow athletes to bring up the outcome of a particular competition on their own. Encourage maximum effort during competition and spend time after the game discussing with athletes how they performed and the effort they



gave. Remind them that their best effort is all anyone can ask for, which shifts focus from a loss to the effort they gave.

- Communicate privately if effort is lacking. Parents and coaches who feel their child or player did not give maximum effort can communicate those feelings privately without putting the athlete down. Emphasize that the next game is a great chance to show improvement and give maximum effort.

- Encourage a healthy perspective. The COE at MSU also urges parents and coaches to encourage young athletes to keep a healthy perspective on their participation in sports. Encourage kids not to sacrifice other aspects of their life, such as academics and their social life,

to improve their athletic performance. When young athletes focus too heavily on a sport, that can create an unhealthy situation that makes it that much harder to cope with defeat in a positive way.

- Emphasize the individual, not the athlete. Coaches can speak with their players about their lives outside of the sport. Such conversations can show athletes that there's more to life than just sports and that they're more than just athletes, which can make it easier to handle defeat.

Many successful athletes insist they learn more from defeat than they do from victory. Helping young athletes cope with defeat in a healthy way can benefit them throughout their lives.

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How students can transition to life on a college campus

Much has been made of the challenges that have faced students and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift to remote learning and shortened school days was difficult for many families, forcing students to adapt to virtual school on the fly as their parents adjusted to working from home full-time while doing their best to keep kids engaged in their studies and occupied when school let out each day. Given those challenges, it's no wonder so many families are looking forward to what figures to be a more normal school year in 2021-22. But that return will pose its own unique challenges as well.

Some students may be a little anxious as they prepare to return to campus this fall. That transition could be especially difficult for incoming college freshmen, who must overcome any pandemic-related concerns about returning to campus while also making the transition to life on a college campus. The following are some

ways to make that transition go smoothly.

- Engage in the community. The Health, Counseling and Disability Access Services at the University of Missouri-St. Louis urges students to take advantage of opportunities to engage in their new communities as early as possible. The HCDAS notes that first-year experiences are designed to help students connect with their new life on campus and make new friends. All incoming freshmen are facing the same set of unique circumstances as the 2021-22 school year begins. That includes the adjustment from remote learning with limited social contact with peers to a return to more traditional academic and social settings. Navigating that transition alongside other incoming freshmen can make it a little easier to handle.

- Plan ahead. Parents and their college-bound children can prepare for the coming school year by learning about on-campus policies over the summer. Will masks be man-

dated? Will classrooms remain socially distanced? Are vaccinations required to attend class in person? The sooner families learn these policies, the sooner they can begin planning for life on campus. Parents also can look into on-campus resources designed to help students readjust to being back among their peers. Knowing where to go for help should students need it can ensure any issues that arise are addressed promptly.

- Encourage students to share their concerns. Opening up about any concerns they may have can help students as they emerge from the pandemic. Many parents were concerned about returning to the office in person, and they can share those concerns and the ultimate outcomes of their returns with students concerned about moving onto a college campus. Parents are urged to periodically check in with col-



lege students about any anxieties they may have about being on campus.

Returning to full-time, in-person learning after the pandemic may be especially chal-

lenging for incoming college freshmen. Such students can work with their parents over the summer to conquer their fears and prepare for the coming school year.

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Volunteering can make a positive impact on students



Volunteering is often seen through the lens of how volunteers help to improve their communities. Though there's no denying the valuable role volunteers play in strengthening their communities, it's worth noting just how much volunteers can benefit from donating their time and effort to worthy causes.

A 2020 study published in the Journal of Happiness asked 70,000 participants about their volunteering habits and mental health. The study found that, when compared to those who did not volunteer, people who had volunteered in the previous 12 months were more satisfied with their lives and gave their overall health higher ratings.

Volunteering can benefit anyone, and can be especially valuable to students, benefiting their overall health and helping in myriad other ways as well.

• Volunteering can get a foot in the door. The National Association of Colleges and Employers reports that employers expect to hire 7.2 percent more new college graduates from the class of 2021 than they did from the class of 2020. That's encouraging news, but recent graduates will still face stiff competition as they look for their first job. Volunteering with an organization in their field can be a great way for current students and recent graduates to get their foot in the door. Even if a volunteering opportunity does not ultimately lead to a job offer, the experience students gain can help them stand out in a crowded pool of job applicants down the road.

• Volunteering can help students find a career path. A 2017 report from the U.S. Department of Education found that about 30 percent of undergraduates in associate's and bachelor's degree programs who had declared majors changed their majors at

least once within three years of their initial enrollment. The same report noted that roughly one in 10 changed majors more than once. Those statistics suggest that many students are uncertain about what they want to study at the onset of their college careers. Volunteering before and during college can help students explore their interests and see where their skills are applicable. They can then rely on that experience as they choose a major.

• Volunteering expands students' social horizons. Volunteers serve and work alongside people from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. That's a great way to see the world through a new perspec-

tive, and it also can positively affect students' eventual careers. Professionals who have worked with people of various backgrounds are in better position to effectively communicate with a wider ar-

ray of people, which can help them build a more diverse set of business relationships. Organizations recognize that value and often prioritize hiring candidates with the kind of strong interpersonal skills

students develop through volunteering.

Volunteering can be a great way for students to develop an array of skills that can benefit their personal and professional lives for years to come.

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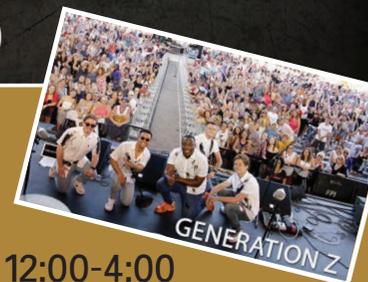
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