

Lindenwold Public Schools
Lindenwold, N.J.

How do you respond to 'That's not fair'?

For many kids, "That's not fair!" is an all-purpose complaint against their parents. Parents want to be fair, but what a parent sees as fair may not appear the same way to a child.

Here's how to respond:

- **Point out that "fair"** doesn't always mean "equal." If Mikey has outgrown his shoes and needs a new pair, that doesn't mean every member of the family gets new shoes. Or if Sara has to stay inside to complete a school project, that doesn't mean everyone else has to do the same.
- **Be understanding, but firm.** If your child wants a new toy, hear her out. If you can't afford it, tell her you understand and that it looks like a great toy, but it simply is not in your budget.



- **Ask what would be fair.** "Your sister finished all her reading, so she gets to go to her friend's house to watch a movie. What is something fun that we could do together after you finish your homework?" Your child may have some pretty good ideas.

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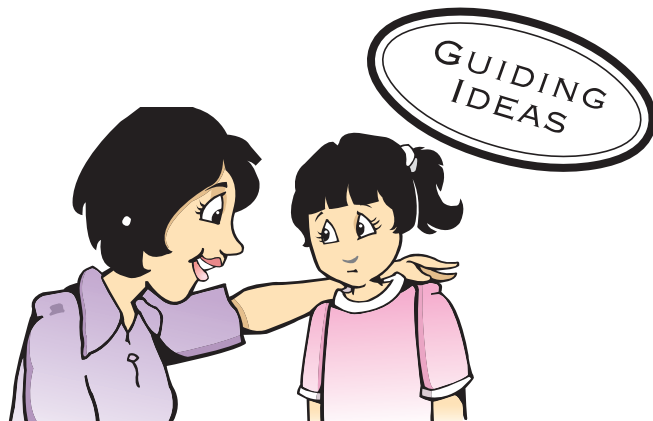
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Turn setbacks into learning experiences

There's one thing successful people have in common. They learn from their mistakes. They may have just as many setbacks as others do, but they don't see their mistakes as failures. Instead, they always try to learn something from them.

When your child makes a mistake or runs into a problem, don't let her talk about being a failure. Instead, help her learn from the problem so she can do better next time. To help your child turn a mistake into a learning opportunity:

- **Make it a fun challenge.** If your child misses a math problem, help her see it as a puzzle to figure out. "Let's go back through the problem. Show me how you got that answer."



- **Give your child "permission"** to make a mistake. Some kids need everything to be perfect. Choose small things at first. "Let's see what happens if we add some peaches to this recipe. Maybe it'll taste great. If it doesn't, we'll know what not to do next time."
- **Praise your child for a solid effort.** Help her see that, over time, hard work does lead to success.

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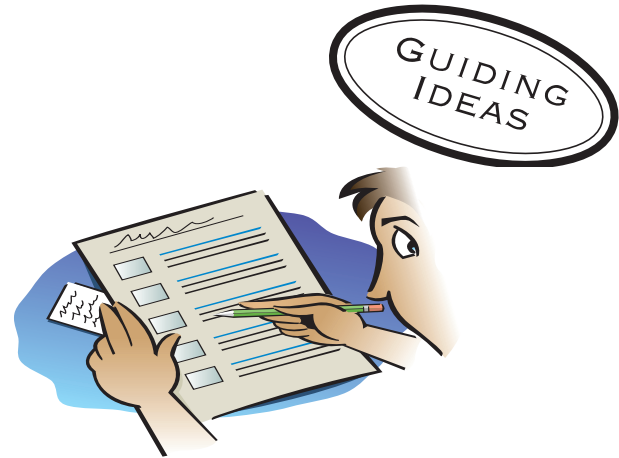
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Cheating: What is it and why do students do it?

Cheating occurs any time a student puts his name to work that is not his own. This includes copying another student's homework, giving answers to a test, plagiarizing work from the Internet—and even turning in work that was mostly completed by parents.

If you learn that your child has been cheating, what do you do? Your first instinct may be to ground him for the rest of his life! Instead, sit down and talk with him. Ask why he feels the need to cheat. Is it because he:

- *Is afraid of what you might do* if he brings home a bad grade? Make sure your child knows that you will always love him, and that you would be more concerned than angry about low grades.



- *Has unrealistically high expectations* for himself? Tell him that grades don't reflect his worth or intelligence. Help him set challenging, achievable goals.
- *Thinks cheating is no big deal?* Tell him that cheating *is* a big deal and it is wrong. Cheaters rob themselves of learning and cheating is unfair to honest students.

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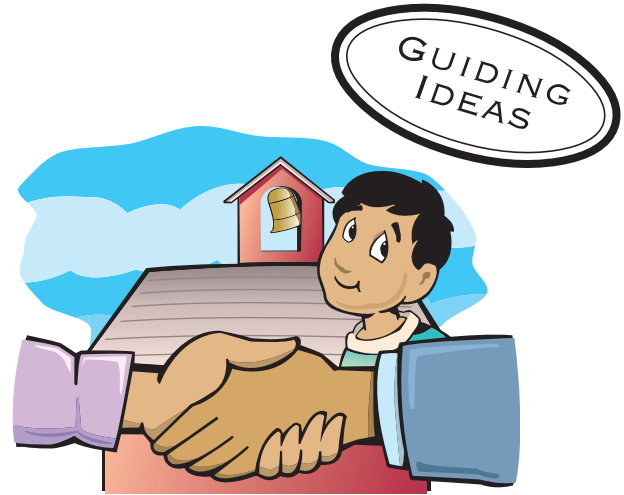
Use teamwork to curb classroom misbehavior

At one time or another, most kids act out in school. But when parents and teachers work together, the child can usually get back on track.

If the teacher says your child is acting out in class, he probably is. It doesn't mean he's a bad kid and it doesn't mean you're a bad parent. It just means there's an issue to be addressed.

Take these steps:

1. **Talk to your child.** Ask why he thinks the teacher wants to see you. Now is not the time to punish your child or lose your temper. Just listen to what he has to say.
2. **Meet with the teacher.** Do this as soon as you can. Try to get "just the facts." What does your child do? When does he do it? Has the teacher



observed any situations that may be causing your child to act out? Make a plan to work together to solve the problem.

3. **Talk with your child about the meeting.** Let him know that you and the teacher are on the same team. You both care about him and want to help him develop appropriate behavior.

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Banish homework battles with an 'I can' attitude

When children struggle with homework, many of them will say, “I can’t do this. I’m just not smart.” And when they don’t feel “smart,” kids often give up.

While intelligence may be a factor in school success, there are qualities much more important than having a high IQ. Some educators call this AQ—attitude quotient. Qualities that go into having a high AQ include persistence and a willingness to work hard.

To help your child develop an “I can” attitude, remind her of her past successes. Then encourage her to set a goal and work hard to reach it.

Start with small steps. Aiming for an A in math on her next report card when she has struggled to get a C all year may not be realistic. But working hard until she understands how to



solve a tough algebra problem will build the confidence she needs to tell herself, “I can do this!”

When she reaches a goal, celebrate each success. Be sure to say, “I’m proud of you. Your hard work paid off.”

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Don't let whining and begging wear you down

If they get that new video game, they'll have more friends. If they wear new jeans to school, they'll be popular. Some children are masters at getting what they want. They whine and beg—until they wear their parents down. But when parents give in, they are reinforcing those values of entitlement. Instead, remember that:

- *You are in charge.* Consider your child's opinions, but the final decisions are yours.
- *Your job is to provide* what is best for your child—it's not to make him happy all the time.
- *You can suggest options.* "Would you like to save your allowance for the video game you want or do you want to spend it on a ticket to see the new movie this Saturday?"



- *You should mean what you say.* Say *no* or *yes* when it's appropriate—then stick to your decision! Eventually, your child will learn to respect your decisions. Begging and whining will no longer be worth the effort!

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