

# BACK TO BASICS

## Child guidance: School-agers

By about age 6, children begin to think consciously about their choices and reason things out. They typically want to live up to others' expectations and gain approval. Fairness is important. Our goal is to help them develop a sense of competence.

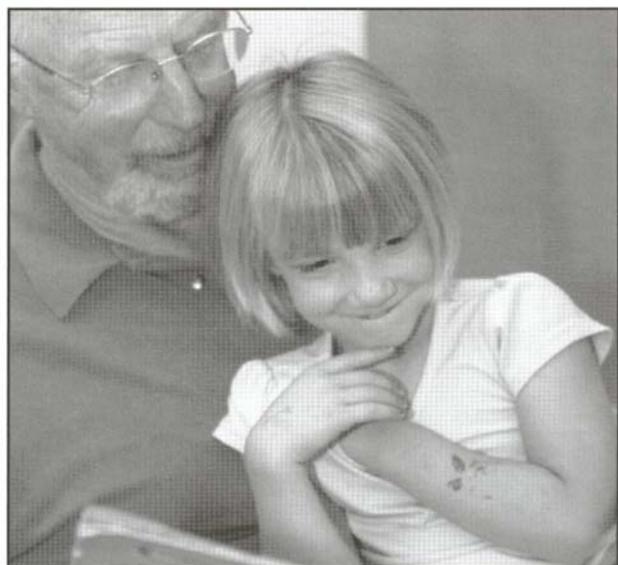
### Use positive guidance.

- Model *mutual* respect. This means having faith in each other's abilities rather than believing children must feel humiliated to improve their behavior. It means looking at things from each other's point of view. You model mutual respect, for example, by giving children a five-minute notice before changing activities so they can finish what they are doing.
- Offer *encouragement*, not praise. Ask children to evaluate their own work themselves: "What do you think?" Focus on the process, not the product: "You seem to really enjoy making puppets." Acknowledge the task, not a child's innate ability or worth. "Thanks for helping," instead of "You're a good girl."
- Talk with children about behavior issues in private. Correcting Billy in front of his friends can be humiliating or provide the negative attention he's seeking. Start the conversation by sharing your own experience in dealing with the same behavior as a child.
- In a conflict, offer a cooling-off period with water play or clay. After the child has calmed down, ask: "What happened?" "How did you feel?" "How could you handle it differently next time?"

### Use circle time for training.

- Discuss a topic like mutual respect or cooperation. Ask questions like "Why is it respectful to listen while another person is talking?"

- Involve children in making rules. Keep rules short and simple. Make sure there's a reason behind every rule. Write down rules and post them. Review them periodically and modify as situations change.
- Involve children in setting logical consequences for breaking rules. Ask "What should happen when the soccer balls are left outside?" Let children practice on hypothetical situations to avoid blame or criticism. Help children evaluate the consequence by making sure it's related to the undesired behavior, reasonable, and respectful to the child.
- Teach problem solving. Help children learn there's more than one way to solve a problem, and some solutions are better than others. Use this process:
  - Define the problem.
  - Brainstorm solutions.
  - Consider possible outcomes of each solution.
  - Choose a solution that seems best and try it.
  - After a few days, evaluate the solution. Decide whether to try another one.
- Teach children how to handle anger. Between ages 5 and 8, children may still have trouble understanding another person's point of view. Explain that conflicts are normal, even between friends. Encourage them to use words, not hitting or shoving, and to express their feelings: "I get mad when you call me stupid." Help children find ways to calm down—by jumping rope, reading a book in a quiet place, or talking to you.



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This is the fourth of several pages of development information. Look for each one, printed on cardstock for durability, in our upcoming newsletters; we encourage you to collect each one for your files.

# Child Guidance for School-Age Children

## *Planning Fun Activities That Encourage "Industry"*

The best guidance technique with school-age children is to keep them busy. Erickson tells us the developmental stage of the school-age child is "Industry". Busy school-agers who are actively engaged in projects rarely require discipline. If you are having trouble managing school-agers examine your curriculum. You can't expect them to enjoy pre-school activities. Have fun things planned just for their age and stage, then sit back and enjoy the fun. Here are some fool proof activities no school age child will be able to resist.



### **Volcano's**

Make some goop by mixing 5 lbs. of salt with 2 c. of water. Heat and stir. Meanwhile mix a 1 lb. box of cornstarch with 2 c. of water until creamy. Slowly add the cornstarch mixture to the salt mixture. Heat and stir until stiff, then dump onto table and knead until smooth. Wear heavy rubber kitchen gloves as it will be hot. When it cools let the children mold the goop into volcano's. They can be paint them with watercolors. When dry go outside on the grass to fire them off. Put a measured amount of baking soda into the cone, then add a little red food coloring to some vinegar and pour this on top. Then wait for the eruption to start.

### **Sewing**

Teach them to hand sew. Let them design a wall hanging with interesting fabric scraps and sew it together with different kinds of thread or yarn.

### **Paper Bag City**

Get paper bags of various sizes at the grocery store. Have children draw or color a building on the sack, drawing in bricks or siding, doors, windows, shutters, etc. Stuff another bag with crumpled newspaper and slip this bag inside the decorated bag. They can use colored paper to cut and glue signs, awnings, roofs and doors or add paper chimneys with cotton balls for smoke. Set the city up on the floor and add trees, cars and dolls for imaginative play.

### **Digital Photography**

If you have a computer the children use for computer games how about putting it to better use. Let them take pictures with a digital camera and then download them to make digital scrapbooks. They can work to set up pictures of the children in your day care and make picture pages for parents. (Be sure you have a signed permission from parents before allowing their children to be photographed.) There is lots of fun software to help with this.

### **Puppets**

Let them write a show, make the puppets and then put the show on for younger children. Puppets can be as simple as paper bags, paper drawings glued to tongue depressors or socks, or they can be more complex like paper-mache or felt. Turn a refrigerator box into a puppet stage or use an expandable curtain rod with a towel over it, in the doorway of a room.



### **Set up an Art Studio**

Have something interesting for them to draw each day as they come. A still life of fruit in a basket, a kitchen appliance, a montage of toys, interesting shapes, nutcrackers, etc. Have drawing tablets and media to draw with ready for them to start right in, like charcoal, chalk, water colors, colored pencils, markers, acrylics. Every 3 months or so have an art show. Invite their families and people in your neighborhood. Have a silent auction and let people bid on the art. Before you start this suggest that the money they raise go toward purchasing some new toys for your daycare.....of course they get to pick the toys, or better yet buy more art supplies. Remember that they should choose which art will go in the show, they will have some art that they want to keep themselves.

For more ideas on guidance techniques check out our website, <http://www.childcarehelp.org/children.htm> or for more resources, log onto our lending library online at <http://www.childcarehelp.org/library/schoolage.htm>.