

## Parenting Education and Family Engagement

*Working together to help students be successful in school.*

## Take Home Tips

### Tips for Teaching Self Control

Self-control skills develop over years, with the biggest changes occurring between the ages of 3 and 7. The lack of skills can impact academics, behavior, and relationships with others. Lack of self-control is also linked to obesity, anxiety, and drug use. Just as you teach your child to wash their face or tie their shoes, you must teach your child self-control skills and give them opportunities to practice and correct their skills.

- **Create an environment that limits temptations and chances to misbehave.**
- **Give your child opportunities to wait.** Waiting is hard! Recognize and reward patience.
- **Give reminders.** When going to an event or place, remind your child of your family rules.
- **Play games.** Board games give opportunities to share and take turns. Red light, green light or doing the freeze dance teaches stop and start skills.
- **Plan breaks and downtime.** It's okay to let your child be bored!
- **Give opportunities for pretend play.** Pretending gives your child's brain new rules to understand when they're role playing.
- **Limit screen time!** Try to increase your child's attention span by reading books, focusing on imaginative play, or getting outside.
- **Coach your child through emotions.** Name or ask your child how they're feeling, remind them it's okay to have all feelings and help them develop coping strategies like taking a break, positive self-talk, and taking deep breaths.
- **Practice planning with your child.** Play the "what if" game and coach your child through different situations that may happen throughout their day.
- **Check yourself.** Children will follow your lead. If you let them get away with behaviors, those behaviors will continue. If you give in, your child will push you further next time until they get their way. If you punish, your child may try to sneak behind your back.
- **Be consistent.** When your child knows what to expect, how you will respond, and are coached through emotions, they will be more willing to cooperate with you. Keep their routines similar each day, make sure they're fed and get plenty of sleep and outside time each day to regulate their bodies as well.

Source: Dewar, Gwen, Ph.D. (2023) [Teaching Self-Control: Evidence-based tips](https://parentingscience.com/teaching-self-control/). Parenting Science.  
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