



Resource 7

Promoting Responsibility

Use this guide to help teach children to think about their actions and make decisions for themselves.

Handling typical situations with “think starters” like the suggestions noted in the chart below will encourage children to be responsible for their own behavior.

Situation	Think Stoppers	Think Starters
Parent is on the phone or busy with another child; other child is noisy.	“Be quiet. You’re making too much noise.”	“Your noise is making it hard for us to hear. What can you do to help?”
It’s clean up time.	“Put the dishes in the sink, pick up the toys in the living room, and wipe off the tables.”	“It’s time to clean up. What do you need to do to clean up?”
One child is distracting another.	“Paul, move away from Ron.”	“Paul, find something else to do so that Ron can concentrate.”
One child is making noise while another is trying to speak.	“Be quiet.”	“It’s Pat’s time to talk. What do you need to do?”
A child is whining.	“Stop whining.”	“I can understand you better if you talk in your regular voice.”
Siblings are fighting.	“Stop it! Each of you sit on opposite sides of the room.”	“We can’t have fighting. Take time to cool off and then let’s talk about what you can do to let someone know that you are angry with him.”
A child forgot to put her name on her work.	“Remember to write your name on your work.”	“How will we know this belongs to you?”
A child is scared of the dark.	“There is nothing to be afraid of.”	“I know you are scared when your room is dark. What would make you feel more comfortable?”
A child is upset about a grade on a test.	“You should have studied harder.”	“What are you going to do to improve your grade?”
A child can’t figure out how to do something and says, “I can’t do this.”	“Here’s how to do it: First you…”	“Which part is giving you trouble?”