

# Help Kids Take Responsibility by Predicting & Preventing

*From the desk of Ms. La Capra, School Counselor*

The behaviors that often drive parents crazy are also the things they can see coming. Your child walks in from school and switches on the TV before he starts homework. Or your child goes to bed without packing his backpack and leaves something behind in the morning. In both these cases, you probably knew what was coming. One of the best ways to help your child take responsibility is by predicting and then preventing.

First, make sure your child understands the rule. “We are not going to turn on the TV before your homework is complete and I have looked it over.” Second, agree on a consequence. “If you turn the TV on before your homework is done, I will turn it off and we will keep it off after dinner that day.”

The next day, meet your child as he comes in the door. “Remember our rule about TV. We are not going to turn it on until after homework. Should you switch it on, we will have to keep it turned off after dinner.” He may test your limits. In that case, stay calm, but enforce the consequence you have agreed on.

When your child follows the rules, you both win. He does what you expect him to. If he does not follow the rules and you keep the TV turned off after dinner, you have still both won. He has learned that you mean what you say. The next time you lay out a rule, he will be much more likely to pay attention.

**Source:** L.R. Griffin, *Negotiation Generation: Take Back Your Parental Authority Without Punishment*, Penguin Books.

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