

# Stop Making Excuses for Your Child's Bad Behavior

Many parents make excuses for their child's bad behavior.

Common excuses include:

- “She did not get enough sleep.”
- “He is bored.”
- “She is gifted. She needs to be challenged more.”
- “Boys will be boys.”
- “I do not know why he does that.”
- “Your child is bothering my child”
- “He has ADD.”

*These excuses only enable a child to repeat bad behavior without consequences.*

A child usually exhibits a bad behavior at an early age. Parents, too tired to correct the bad behavior, allow it to continue. Permissive parents “give in”. They express the belief that the consequences for bad behavior are too strict - not loving. Without correction, the child continues the bad behavior.

Most parents are embarrassed when their child misbehaves. Looks from other parents suggest that they are to blame. Some parents do blame themselves. They know they have allowed their child to continue to use bad behavior. Excuses make them feel better.

Parents who make excuses for their child's bad behavior teach their child to use those same excuses. As a result, the child continues this bad behavior, and parents accept it. However, teachers, friends, employers and peers do not accept it. Sooner or later, *the child suffers* hurt, regret and loneliness.


If you are a parent who makes excuses every time your child misbehaves – **stop it**. For the sake of your child, *take action to change the bad behavior*. Give your child positive skills to handle problems and emotions.

- **Expect her to behave in a positive manner.**
- **State what you expect.** *“You can stand in line without pushing or shoving.”*
- **Tell him what will happen if he misbehaves.** Ask him to repeat what you have said so you know he understands.
- **Focus on one problem behavior at a time.** Teach and practice skills to make positive change. Use consistent words



and actions as you help her use her new *skills*.

- **Choose a new problem behavior to work on** after he masters each *skill*.
- **Praise her** when she shows good behavior.
- **Tell his teachers** that you are working on positive behavior changes.
- **Model good behavior.** Do not tell her to do or say something while you do the opposite.

 For other tips on teaching positive behavior skills, log onto [www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org) and read the *SkillTime* and *SchoolTime* booklets.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



**Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.**

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

*Revised 2017*

