

Special Character-Wise Report

20 Feb, 2012

Help! I have a forgetful child!



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Executive Summary

Why is forgetfulness such a pressing issue with parents? Aren't kids expected to forget and that they will eventually grow out of it and become responsible citizens?

Yet from the numerous feedback during our *Character-Wise Parenting* workshops (<http://www.goodmonday.com/parenting.html>), forgetfulness is a key point of frustration for many parents. In this special *Character-Wise* report, you will discover that there is really no such thing as the “forgetful child”. What you observe at home is really a case of a child who is *selective* as to what he wants to remember.

Forgetfulness is an issue of selective memory.

SELECT YOUR BATTLES

Let's face it – your child is not perfect.

There will be moments that he will slip and forget. Depending on age and temperament, there will be the usual “margin of error” as a child is growing up. Expectations of memory capability rises as the child enters school and is expected to remember things like homework, instructions from teachers, chores, etc.

As you work with your child to improve her memory, realize that there are two “battlefields”:

1. The battlefield of *temperament*.
2. The battlefield of *responsibility*.

We are imperfect parents trying to raise perfect kids. When it comes to applying standards of excellence at home (dealing with forgetfulness is a quality issue!), you ought to be wise to change what you can and have the serenity to accept that which you cannot. There will be some kids who need a little bit more reminding than others. Your child might not be as detailed as you. It is not a failure on your part. They are just different – that's all.

Yet, there are other areas which are part of their *character development*. This is one battlefield which requires the parent's focus and artillery. These are areas of *personal responsibility* which if not properly trained, will cause your child to grow up to become a self-entitled, selfish, and non-contributing citizen.

Battle #1: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RESPECT

The child expects the world to revolve around him. Our duty as a parent is to ground him in the reality that there is a bigger world than just “I, Me & Myself”.

The first battlefield is the area of *respect*. The child ought to be trained to recognize the presence of other adults and give the proper greetings and salutations. Claiming forgetfulness in this area is not acceptable.

When the child is taught to *remember* and acknowledge others, it develops the character of attentiveness and humility which is the precursor to relationship success later on.

Here's the tip: Do plenty of role-plays at home. Before the next visit to the grandparents or to a friend's home, go through the names of adults they will be meeting, explain the social situation and have fun practicing and play-act! Do not lecture your kids in the presence of other adults – do all the lecturing at home *before* the encounter with others.

Battle #2: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHORES

A child will appreciate only what he contributes.

As a contributing member of my family in my early years, it was my weekly duty to clean the house toilet. The result – I took special care whenever I use it (for obvious reasons!). Why are children today ungrateful, demanding and not appreciative of the “facilities” and privileges at home?

The child of today no longer learns how to serve.

As a parent, you are duty-bound to train your child in remembering to serve others. There is no better to place to start than to serve your own family members by shouldering your fair share of the routine chores at home. Even a three year old can be taught how to wipe the table or arrange the meal utensils.

Here’s the tip: Turn the creation of a chores timetable into an “art-attack” i.e. design the timetable together with plenty of color papers, ribbons, clips, etc. Then hang it up on a prominent area for all to see! This then becomes the responsibility reminder focus for members of the family.

Additional tip: Do not offer to pay for chores. Chores are expected responsibilities that should be performed free-of-charge as a contributing member of the family. Think about it – as an adult, do you get paid for coming to work on time?

Battle #3: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMITMENT

For the child, commitment is understood in terms of deadlines.

As a parent, it is your responsibility to train your child on the importance of keeping to time especially when their commitment to deliver will affect others. Here are a few examples:

- Submitting homework/projects on time.
- Arriving for meetings/appointments on time.
- Revising for exams/tests following a timely schedule.
- Sleeping and waking up on time.

When it comes to meeting commitments, parents must be willing for the child to suffer the consequences of *not* meeting the commitment. If the homework is late (the child claims forgetfulness!), do not stay up late and help him to finish it! Let him experience the consequences from the teacher. If she forgets to bring a certain book to school, don’t drive and deliver! Let her experience the discomfort of forgetfulness.

You will be surprised how memorable consequences are able to cure forgetfulness.

Here’s the tip : At the end of each day (1 hour or so before bed time), review through with the child what are the commitment expectations of tomorrow – time to wake up, what she ought to pack for school (and then let her do it herself), what to wear, etc. A lot of the incidents of forgetfulness can be resolved if we help the child to plan ahead.

Note :

Employees are more productive at work if their parenting frustration is resolved. Interested to invest in the work-life balance of your employees? Check it out at :

<http://www.goodmonday.com/parenting.html>