



4-H School-Age Child Care
University of California Cooperative Extension

PARENT STYLES

Tips for Busy Parents

LEARNING THE HARD WAY

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Seven year old Travis picked up the hose to connect it to the spigot. "Be sure to shut the water off before you connect the hose," shouted his mother. Travis reached up and tried to connect the hose to the spigot - without shutting off the water - thoroughly drenching himself in the spray.

Why do school-age children insist on doing things the hard way?

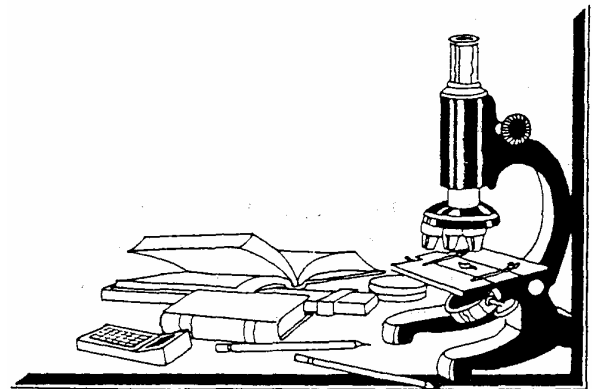
Researchers find that school-agers often have an apparent trial-and-many-error approach to life's situations. Learning by ones own mistakes, rather than someone else's experience may be the hard way to do it, but it fills the need for independent functioning. If you figure things out for yourself, even though you make mistakes doing it, you are less dependent on others. Plus, learning through actual doing fits with the school-agers intellectual level of concrete operations rather than the higher abstract reasoning of adolescents and adults.

What can parents do?

As parents we have experience and wisdom we can share with school-agers which would make life easier. How do we share this wisdom so that school-agers can benefit?

- ☆ Allow your child to learn from his mistakes in situations which will not be harmful to himself or others.
- ☆ Set up *experiments* where your child can try out actions and reactions in a controlled situation.
- ☆ Role play or ask "What If's" about potentially dangerous situations - situations which can not be *experiments* because of the danger.

Remember, this is the age of trial-and-many-errors. It is through these mistakes that school-agers move toward adolescence, where they can problem-solve and test possible solutions in their heads, instead of the concrete world.



Resource: Schoolage Notes, December 1984

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Kitchen Wizards

School-age children love to experiment, it's consistent with their need to "learn by doing." Following is an experiment you can do with your child. Remember to ask your child lots of questions. Help him to predict what might happen.

What You'll Need:

- ★ Vinegar
- ★ Egg
- ★ Glass or Jar

What To Do:

- ☆ Put an uncooked egg in a jar or glass
- ☆ Pour vinegar into glass, covering the egg
- ☆ Observe changes

What Will Happen:

Calcium dissolves in acid.

Egg shells have a high concentration of calcium. After a day or two in the vinegar (acid), the shell will dissolve.

How Does This Apply to Other Things:

It is calcium that makes tooth enamel hard. Acid is produced when we eat foods, particularly foods high in vinegar. If we don't brush our teeth well, this acid can cause our tooth enamel to weaken, thereby leading to tooth decay.

