

How do I choose to set high expectations?

I've Got A Choice has a great set of activities for children of all ages (even parents). Let's walk through one of those activities together using the ***Stop and Think Checklist*** to set expectations for our school age children.

Step one is to write about the decision we need to make. Let's use one expectation for our children that deals with building strong character.

My son/daughter will attend school in a classroom of peers with one teacher.

The next step is to identify three choices that we could make. There is no right or wrong answer here. We have an infinite number of things we could choose. Let's see how they might look.

- a. I expect my son/daughter to be prepared for school on time each morning.
- b. I expect my son/daughter to be prepared for school before going to bed the day before school.
- c. I expect my son/daughter to share with me completed homework before going to bed the day before school.

The third step is to begin to evaluate the choices we might make. While there is still no right or wrong answer, we will begin to see how our choices help determine the character of our children. In this step, simply try to predict what may or may not happen according to the choices we make. Let's look at some different scenarios to see how this works.

- a. My son/daughter is generally ready for school **OR** My son/daughter sometimes doesn't finish homework **OR** My son/daughter often receives lower grades for not completing homework fully or accurately
- b. My son/daughter is generally ready for school **OR** My son/daughter sometimes needs to finish homework past bedtime or early in the morning **OR** My son/daughter sometimes forgets to do all the homework.
- c. My son/daughter is generally ready for school **AND** I know my son/daughter is ready for school **AND** I know what my son/daughter is learning and how well he/she understands the material.

The final step is to make a choice. "The best decision I can make is." There are a lot of other things that will affect our decisions—our emotions, our time, other children, and so much more. By keeping it simple, and looking at what might happen, the best decision will often become clear. It is then up to each one of us to choose wisely, for that, too, is a part of building strong character.