



Fourth graders are not only able to handle responsibilities to contribute to the home, but also need to have a sense of belonging. Assigning specific chores for your nine year old meets that need to be [indispensable](#). You are sending the message that they are not only capable of [contributing to the family](#) (something bigger than themselves) but that they are an integral part of the family. This will crossover into practicing classroom and school community attitudes of cooperation, independence and integrity.

In addition to being a part of something bigger, your [nine year old](#) is developing their individuality. This introspection can create good conversations with you about the world and about justice and fairness. In addition, you may find your child becoming self critical to the point where anxieties can pop up about school work, friendships and relationships in general. Sometimes the anxiety can crop up because of competitiveness of peers. Giving your child as many opportunities to participate in group activities like sports teams, theater, or music exploration can help build that sense of self and who they are in a community. By connecting themselves to their family, school, or local community, students develop respect, tolerance, and appreciation for others, while building a positive foundation for self-management skills.

As a member of our school with the gift of 1:1 technology, it is even more important for us as parents to help our children to learn to balance technology with their physical and emotional health. Try creating [tech free zones](#) in your home and in the community where children are expected to initiate social interactions, to have solitude to sit and think, or to play with the thousands of legos they have in their room. One example could be to prohibit tech at the dinner table, make a docking station in family spaces to plug in and charge tech with the rule that it has to be there by 8pm until 7am. You could also set time limits on checking out with ipod or phone games in the car. Technology can be invasive. [Try role modeling](#) limiting your own use of technology to teach them healthier choices with tech.

For more on developmental stages and parenting information, contact your Thrive Parent Liaison, Lori Swenson at [lsvenson@bssd72.org](mailto:lsvenson@bssd72.org) or 995-4281.