

Basic Parenting

- Let your heart be your guide. Trust your instincts. You are a teacher and a trainer. Talk to your children, not at them. **No** ridiculing, shaming, or name-calling.
- Don't assume your children know what you are talking about. If your children haven't experienced or been taught something, they don't know it. Children learn a lot by touching, feeling, hearing, smelling, and doing things. If your children are active, they need a lot of exercise.
- Give your children praise. Hold and play together often. Non-verbal praise works well, too (gentle touches on head or shoulder, smiles, hugs, kisses). Read to them often. This is one way to give them attention.
- Be a role model. Say, "Please," "Thank You," and "You're Welcome" to children. Demonstrate working out problems with negotiations instead of conflicts.
- Explain why rules are necessary. Set simple family rules and consequences for breaking rules. Repeat rules often. Be consistent with rules, consequences and rewards for a stable environment. Use logical or natural consequences. You can **relax rules** and boundaries if the children are cooperating. If cooperation stops, go back to original rules and try again later.
- Taking action is better than yelling. Parents sometimes have to be the **meanie** to protect from danger and to deter future trouble. Don't hit out of frustration and anger. Try to identify the problem causing the behavior and eliminate it.
- Use a calm, firm voice and only give them 1 or 2 small instructions or directions at a time repeating instructions as necessary. Remember children have a short attention span. Try whispering to get a child's attention. Communicate at eye level.
- A **Reward** is something desirable earned for good behavior. A **Bribe** is something desirable given in order to stop bad behavior.
- Set up routines (meal-time, home-work time, free-time, bath-time, bed-time)
- Bedtime is a great time to read to children. It helps them wind down for the day. Even older children enjoy being read to or reading themselves before falling off to sleep.
- Teach responsibility, gratitude, and self-discipline by giving children age-appropriate chores. Increase them as age increases. Set up **charts** for chores and homework to help children accomplish work and to be able to see achievements completed. Plan simple rewards for work done.
- To help your children follow through with tasks, write a plan. Ask your children where they want to start, what step will be next, the time to report work finished, to whom the children will report when done. Acknowledgement of accomplishments and feelings of success can be the reward for a job well done. Give children the chance to make a choice in how they will do a task if there are choices available.
- A game can be made out of work to help get the task done (who can pick up the fastest, how many items can be picked up in one minute, how many swirls can be made to the toy box, the superhero takes out the trash, etc.).

<http://people.smu.edu/egibson/guidelines.html>

Creative Discipline Handout, Specialty Psychological Services.

About Disciplining Your Child Pamphlet, 1997, Channing Bete Co., Inc.

Firm, Fair, and Consistent, The Parent Institute, a division of NIS, Inc., 2003, Sample Edition.

Talking with (not at) Children. The Well-Centered Child Newsletter, November 2002, Willow Tree Publications.

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