

General Parenting Tips

“Catch ‘em being good”

Look for chances to catch your children being good. Recognize their good behavior with a kind word or a pat on the shoulder. Most children enjoy attention from their parents. Try to catch your children being good often, and only spend five to 10 seconds of time acknowledging them. The key is to recognize the good behavior, but not be disruptive.

Let them help you

Let your children help you with daily activities, such as making a meal or getting items at the grocery store. Show interest in how they help and reward them for following directions and behaving well. Remember that you are a strong role model. This is a great chance to model good behavior, talk with your children, and give them helpful feedback.

Establish home routines

Establish clear, regular routines. Do your best to set regular times for meals, homework, chores, and bedtime. Eat dinner as a family, and encourage talking openly.

Monitor your children

It is hard to reward your children for good behavior or redirect bad behavior if you do not know what they are doing. Therefore, you should sometimes

observe their behavior. If they are doing well, reward them with praise or a quick, kind touch. If not, gently redirect them, and look for new chances to reinforce good behavior.

Discipline your children in a consistent and matter-of-fact manner

Parents should discuss their discipline strategy with each other and then be consistent in applying it. It is important to be calm when you discipline. Getting angry shows your children that you are not in control of your emotions or the situation. Being angry as you discipline also increases the risk of abuse.

Save long talks and lectures for good behavior

Do not lecture your children. Threats and nagging often lead to worse behavior. Long talks provide attention to your child, which should be reserved for good behavior. Children often tune out when being lectured for bad behavior. Remember to talk with your children, not at them.

Show sympathy when you discipline

Show sympathy toward your children when you discipline them, but do not give in. For example, “I am sorry that you did not earn the privilege to spend the night at your friend’s house, but maybe next week you will.”

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General Parenting Tips *(continued)*

Be a good role model

Children learn a lot from what they see and hear. Parents are powerful role models. Show your children how you would like them to behave and reinforce that behavior when it occurs.

Be a parent, not a martyr

Make sure that you take some time away from your children once in a while. Find a trusted family member or babysitter to watch them. This lets you focus on your partner and recharge yourself to care for your children.

As a parent, understand that you are also a teacher

Children learn from your actions and words. Paying attention to behavior, either good or bad, will increase it. Look for chances to teach, model, and reinforce positive behaviors.

Monitor your children's use of electronic media

Keep in mind that how parents use electronic media strongly predicts how children will use it. Parents should encourage children to be active and social.

Turn off electronics during mealtimes and at least one hour before bedtime. Other recommendations include:

- Avoid media use (except video chatting) in children younger than 18 months. For children 18 to 24 months of age, choose only high-quality shows.
- Limit screen time for young children to one hour per day of high-quality shows. Make sure to watch with your children so you can help them understand what they are watching.
- Avoid fast-paced, distracting, or violent content.
- Turn off the television and other electronic devices when they are not being used.
- Don't use media as the only way to calm a child.
- Monitor your child's media use.
- Keep mealtimes, bedrooms, and parent-child playtimes screen free.
- Avoid screen time for one hour before bedtime, and remove electronic devices from the bedroom before sleep.

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