



Tips on Improving Parenting Skills

Walk the walk

Don't just tell your child what you want them to do. Show them. We are programmed to copy other's actions to understand them and to incorporate them into our own. Children in particular watch everything their parents do very carefully. So, be the person you want your child to be — respect your child, show them positive behavior and attitude, have empathy towards your child's emotion — and your child will follow suit.

Show your love

There is no such thing as loving your child too much. Loving them cannot spoil them. Only what you choose to do (or give) in the name of love can — things like material indulgence, leniency, low expectation and over-protection. When these things are given in place of real love, that's when you'll have problem.

Loving your child can be as simple as giving them hugs, spending time with them and listening to their issues seriously. Showing these acts of love can trigger the release of feel-good hormones such as oxytocin, opioids and prolactin. These neurochemicals can bring us a deep sense of calm, emotional warmth and contentment, from these the child will develop resilience and not to mention a closer relationship with you.

Communicating and Integrating

Most of us already know the importance of communication. Talk to your child and also listen to them carefully. By keeping an open line of communication, you'll have a better relationship with your child and your child will come to you when there's a problem.

But there's another reason for communication — you help your child integrate different parts of his/her brain. Integration is similar to our body in which different organs need to coordinate and work together to maintain a healthy body.

When different parts of the brain are integrated, they can function harmoniously as a whole, which means less tantrums, more cooperative behavior and more empathy.

To do that, talk through troubling experiences. Ask your child to describe what happened and how he/she felt. You don't have to provide solutions. Just listening to them talk and asking clarifying questions will help them make sense of their experiences and integrate memories.



Pay attention to your own well-being

Often times, things such as your own health or the health of your marriage are kept on the back burner when a child is born. If you don't pay attention to them, they will become bigger problems down the road.

Take good care of yourself physically and mentally. Take time to strengthen the relationship with your spouse. If these two areas fails, your child will suffer, too.

No Spanking

No doubt, to some parents, spanking can bring about short-term compliance which sometimes is a much needed relief for the parents.

However, this method doesn't teach the child right from wrong. It only teaches the child to fear external consequences. The child is then motivated to avoid getting caught instead.

Spanking your child is modeling to your child that he/she can resolve issues by violence.

Children who are spanked, smacked or hit are more prone to fighting with other children. They are more likely to become bullies and to use verbal/physical aggression to solve disputes. Later in life, they are also more likely to result in delinquency, antisocial and criminal behavior, worse parent-child relationship, mental health issues and domestic violence victims or abusers. There are a variety of better alternatives to discipline that have been proven to be more effective, such as Positive Discipline

Set Smart Limits

Take charge. Children crave limits, which help them understand and manage an often confusing world. Show your love by setting boundaries so your kids can explore and discover their passions safely.

Don't clip your child's wings.

Your toddler's mission in life is to gain independence. So when she's developmentally capable of putting her toys away, clearing her plate from the table, and dressing herself, let her. Giving a child responsibility is good for her self-esteem (and your sanity!).



Don't try to fix everything.

Give young kids a chance to find their own solutions. When you lovingly acknowledge a child's minor frustrations without immediately rushing in to save her, you teach her self-reliance and resilience.

Remember that discipline is not punishment.

Enforcing limits is really about teaching kids how to behave in the world and helping them to become competent, caring, and in control.

Pick your battles. Kids can't absorb too many rules without turning off completely. Forget arguing about little stuff like fashion choices and occasional potty language. Focus on the things that really matter -- that means no hitting, rude talk, or lying.

Know the Best Ways to Praise

Give appropriate praise. Instead of simply saying, "You're great," try to be specific about what your child did to deserve the positive feedback. You might say, "Waiting until I was off the phone to ask for cookies was hard, and I really liked your patience."

Cheer the good stuff.

When you notice your child doing something helpful or nice, let him know how you feel. It's a great way to reinforce good behavior so he's more likely to keep doing it.



Gossip about your kids.

Fact: What we overhear is far more potent than what we are told directly. Make praise more effective by letting your child "catch" you whispering a compliment about him to Grandma, Dad, or even his teddy.

Don't Forget to Teach Social Skills

Ask your children three "you" questions every day. The art of conversation is an important social skill, but parents often neglect to teach it. Get a kid going with questions like, "Did you have fun at school?"; "What did you do at the party you went to?"; or "Where do you want to go tomorrow afternoon?"

Teach kids this bravery trick.

Tell them to always notice the color of a person's eyes. Making eye contact will help a hesitant child appear more confident and will help any kid to be more assertive and less likely to be picked on.

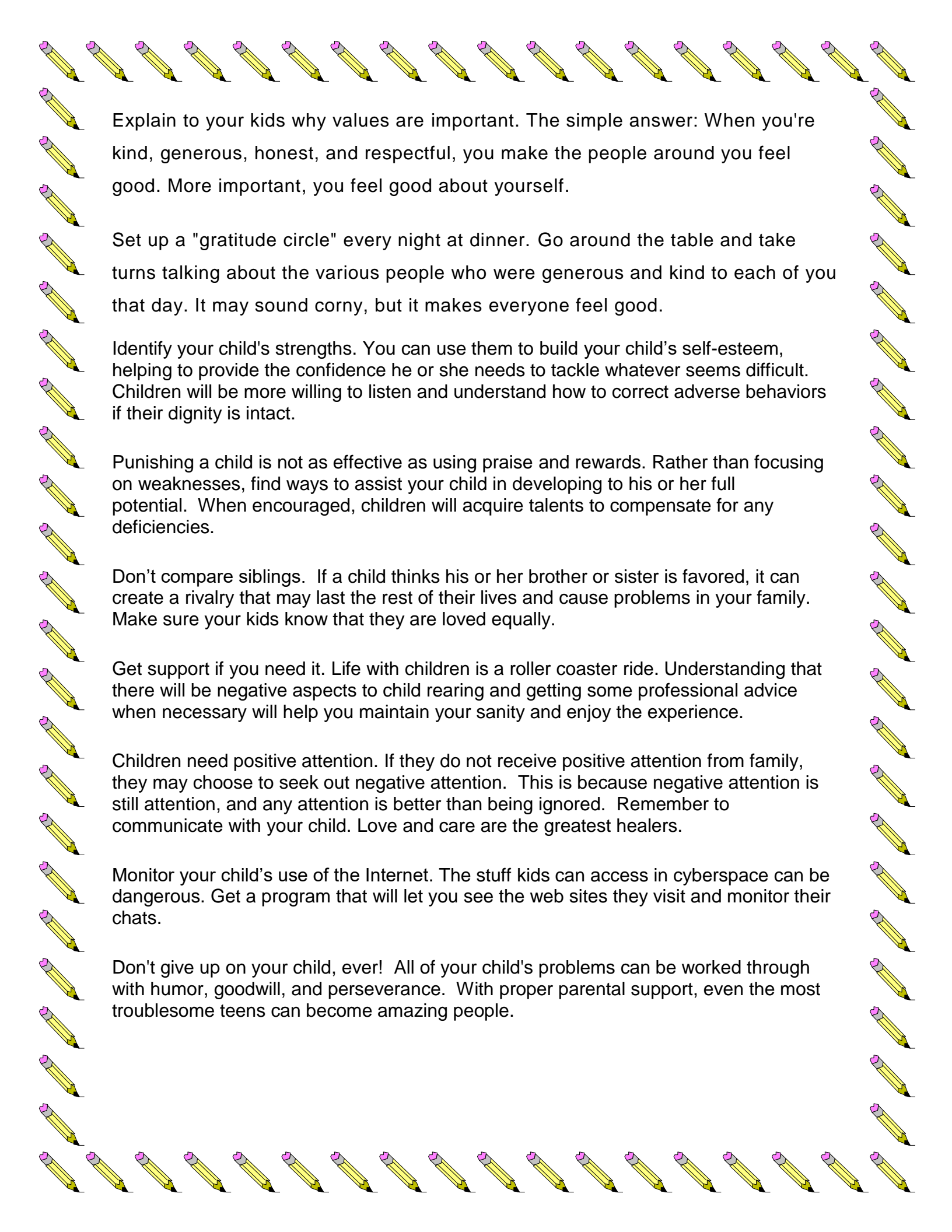
Acknowledge your kid's strong emotions.

When your child's meltdown is over, ask him, "How did that feel?" and "What do you think would make it better?" Then listen to him. He'll recover from a tantrum more easily if you let him talk it out.

Raise Grateful Kids

Show your child how to become a responsible citizen. Find ways to help others all year. Kids gain a sense of self-worth by volunteering in the community.

Don't raise a spoiled kid. Keep this thought in mind: Every child is a treasure, but no child is the center of the universe. Teach him accordingly.



Explain to your kids why values are important. The simple answer: When you're kind, generous, honest, and respectful, you make the people around you feel good. More important, you feel good about yourself.

Set up a "gratitude circle" every night at dinner. Go around the table and take turns talking about the various people who were generous and kind to each of you that day. It may sound corny, but it makes everyone feel good.

Identify your child's strengths. You can use them to build your child's self-esteem, helping to provide the confidence he or she needs to tackle whatever seems difficult. Children will be more willing to listen and understand how to correct adverse behaviors if their dignity is intact.

Punishing a child is not as effective as using praise and rewards. Rather than focusing on weaknesses, find ways to assist your child in developing to his or her full potential. When encouraged, children will acquire talents to compensate for any deficiencies.

Don't compare siblings. If a child thinks his or her brother or sister is favored, it can create a rivalry that may last the rest of their lives and cause problems in your family. Make sure your kids know that they are loved equally.

Get support if you need it. Life with children is a roller coaster ride. Understanding that there will be negative aspects to child rearing and getting some professional advice when necessary will help you maintain your sanity and enjoy the experience.

Children need positive attention. If they do not receive positive attention from family, they may choose to seek out negative attention. This is because negative attention is still attention, and any attention is better than being ignored. Remember to communicate with your child. Love and care are the greatest healers.

Monitor your child's use of the Internet. The stuff kids can access in cyberspace can be dangerous. Get a program that will let you see the web sites they visit and monitor their chats.

Don't give up on your child, ever! All of your child's problems can be worked through with humor, goodwill, and perseverance. With proper parental support, even the most troublesome teens can become amazing people.