

- Give your child a limited number of simple choices (for example, deciding what to wear, when to play, and what to eat for snack).

Middle Childhood (6-8 years of age)

- Show affection for your child. Recognize her accomplishments.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—ask him to help with household tasks, such as setting the table.
- Talk with your child about school, friends, and things she looks forward to in the future.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage him to help people in need.
- Help your child set her own achievable goals—she'll learn to take pride in herself and rely less on approval or reward from others.
- Help your child learn patience by letting others go first or by finishing a task before going out to play. Encourage him to think about possible consequences before acting.
- Make clear rules and stick to them, such as how long your child can watch TV or when she has to go to bed. Be clear about what behavior is okay and what is not okay.
- Do fun things together as a family, such as playing games, reading, and going to events in your community.
- Get involved with your child's school. Meet the teachers and staff and get to understand their learning goals and how you and the school can work together to help your child do well.
- Continue reading to your child. As your child learns to read, take turns reading to each other.
- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, rather than punishment to make him feel bad about himself. Follow up any discussion about what not to do with a discussion of what to do instead.
- Praise your child for good behavior. It's best to focus praise more on what your child does ("you worked hard to figure this out") than on traits she can't change ("you are smart").
- Support your child in taking on new challenges. Encourage her to solve problems, such as a disagreement with another child, on her own.
- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as a team sports, or to take advantage of volunteer opportunities.

Middle Childhood (9-11 years of age)

- Spend time with your child. Talk with her about her friends, her accomplishments, and what challenges she will face.
- Be involved with your child's school. Go to school events; meet your child's teachers.
- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as a sports team, or to be a volunteer for a charity.
- Help your child develop his own sense of right and wrong. Talk with him about risky things friends might pressure him to do, like smoking or dangerous physical dares.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—involve your child in household tasks like cleaning and cooking. Talk with your child about saving and spending money wisely.
- Meet the families of your child's friends.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage her to help people in need. Talk with her about what to do when others are not kind or are disrespectful.
- Help your child set his own goals. Encourage him to think about skills and abilities he would like to have and about how to develop them.
- Make clear rules and stick to them. Talk with your child about what you expect from her (behavior) when no adults are present. If you provide reasons for rules, it will help her to know what to do in most situations.

- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, instead of punishment to make him feel badly about himself.
- When using praise, help your child think about her own accomplishments. Saying "you must be proud of yourself" rather than simply "I'm proud of you" can encourage your child to make good choices when nobody is around to praise her.
- Talk with your child about the normal physical and emotional changes of puberty.
- Encourage your child to read every day. Talk with him about his homework.
- Be affectionate and honest with your child, and do things together as a family.

Young Teens (12-14 years of age)

- Be honest and direct with your teen when talking about sensitive subjects such as drugs, drinking, smoking, and sex.
- Meet and get to know your teen's friends.
- Show an interest in your teen's school life.
- Help your teen make healthy choices while encouraging him to make his own decisions.
- Respect your teen's opinions and take into account her thoughts and feelings. It is important that she knows you are listening to her.
- When there is a conflict, be clear about goals and expectations (like getting good grades, keeping things clean, and showing respect), but allow your teen input on how to reach those goals (like when and how to study or clean).

Young Teens (15-17 years of age)

- Talk with your teen about her concerns and pay attention to any changes in her behavior. Ask her if she has had suicidal thoughts, particularly if she seems sad or depressed. Asking about suicidal thoughts will not cause her to have these thoughts, but it will let her know that you care about how she feels. Seek professional help if necessary.
- Show interest in your teen's school and extracurricular interests and activities and encourage him to become involved in activities such as sports, music, theater, and art.
- Encourage your teen to volunteer and become involved in civic activities in her community.
- Compliment your teen and celebrate his efforts and accomplishments.
- Show affection for your teen. Spend time together doing things you enjoy.
- Respect your teen's opinion. Listen to her without playing down her concerns.
- Encourage your teen to develop solutions to problems or conflicts. Help your teenager learn to make good decisions. Create opportunities for him to use his own judgment, and be available for advice and support.
- If your teen engages in interactive internet media such as games, chat rooms, and instant messaging, encourage her to make good decisions about what she posts and the amount of time she spends on these activities.
- If your teen works, use the opportunity to talk about expectations, responsibilities, and other ways of behaving respectfully in a public setting.
- Talk with your teen and help him plan ahead for difficult or uncomfortable situations. Discuss what he can do if he is in a group and someone is using drugs or under pressure to have sex, or is offered a ride by someone who has been drinking.
- Respect your teen's need for privacy.
- Encourage your teen to get enough sleep and exercise, and to eat healthy, balanced meals.

SAFE PARENTING



Parenting is a process that prepares your child for independence. As your child grows and develops, there are many things you can do to help your child.

As a parent you give your children a good start in life—you nurture, protect and guide them.

Parenting is hard work. But it can also be fun and rewarding. There are many things you can do to help build a safe, stable, and nurturing relationship with your child.

Essentials for Parenting:

Key strategies help in building positive, healthy relationships between parents & children such as—positive communication, clear directions, and creating structure and rules, using discipline and consequences & using time out.

1. Communicating with your child:

Good communication between you and your child is important for developing a positive relationship. Two skills that are helpful for good communication with toddlers and preschoolers are praise and active listening.

Keys to Communicating with Your Child

1. Praise your child when she does something right. The more you praise a behavior, the more likely it is your child will behave the same way again.
2. Pay attention to your child when he is talking to you or trying to communicate with you. Giving him your full attention will help you understand what he is telling you. It will also make him feel like you care about what he has to say.
3. Set aside time each day to talk and play with your child. Creating a special time lets your child know she is important. It also strengthens the bond between the two of you.

2. Giving Directions:

Do you sometimes feel like your child doesn't listen? Do you get into power struggles when you want your child to do something? A positive relationship is your most important tool for getting your child to listen and follow directions. It is also important to give clear directions that fit your child's age. Good directions can help reduce the chance that your child will forget or misunderstand what you've said. Good directions can help you have positive daily interactions with your child.

Keys to Giving Good Directions

1. Make sure you have your child's attention when you give a direction.
2. Be clear about what you want your child to do and when she needs to do it.
3. Ask your child to repeat the direction back to you to make sure he understands.
4. Avoid asking questions when you want your child to do something. Asking a question gives your child the chance to say, "No!"
5. Give one direction at a time.
6. Model good listening skills during special playtime and give your child positive attention for good listening.

3. Creating structure and rules

Does your child have meltdowns when you change from one activity to another? Do you have trouble getting your child to follow a regular schedule? Consistent routines and rules help create order and structure your day. Things go more smoothly when you and your child know what to expect.

Keys to Creating Structure:

1. Consistency, predictability, and follow-through are important for creating structure in the home.
2. Respond to your child's behavior the same way every time. When you are consistent, the behaviors you like will happen more often and problem behaviors are less likely to happen.

3. Routines and daily schedules help you and your child. You both know what to expect each day. Routines can also improve your child's behavior and your relationship with your child.
4. A family rule is a clear statement about behaviors that are never okay, such as hitting and running in the house. You can change your child's behavior when there are clear consequences for breaking the rule.
5. Keep things positive! Reward and praise your child for following routines and rules. This makes it more likely that your child will follow the routines and rules in the future.

4. Using discipline and consequences

Did you know that what you do right after any of your child's behavior makes a difference? This may be why your child has good behavior some days and not others. Learning how to use discipline and consequences can help you have more good days with your child. It can also help you get behaviors you like to happen more.

Keys to Using Discipline and Consequences

1. Use social rewards (like hugs and kisses) more than material rewards (like toys or candy). Social rewards can be given often and are more powerful!
2. Sticker charts or similar reward programs can help change your child's behavior.
3. Ignoring misbehavior means taking away your attention. It helps stop misbehaviors like tantrums, whining, and interrupting.
4. Want to reduce misbehavior?
5. Distracting your child can help stop misbehaviors. It works by getting your child to think and do something else so he doesn't continue to misbehave.
6. Toddlers and preschoolers have short attention spans. Give consequences right after a misbehavior so they can remember what they did that you do not like.
7. Use consequences that match your child's age and stage of development.

5. Using time-out

Time-out is when your child is removed from where the misbehavior happened. Your child is away from all things that are fun. She does not get any attention in time-out. She cannot interact with her parents or anyone else. Time-out is boring. Time-out works to change problem behaviors because children don't usually like to be bored.

Keys to Using Time-Out:

1. Explain time-out to your child before using it. Tell your child which behaviors will lead to time-out, where time-outs will happen, and how time-out will be used. You can also practice time-out with your child so she knows how it will work.
2. Limit time-outs with toddlers and preschoolers. Use time-out if your child does something dangerous or harmful like hurting others, fails to follow a direction, or breaks a family rule. Use other types of consequences for other problem behaviors.
3. Follow the 5 steps for time-out each time you use it. The 5 steps are the same no matter where you are.
4. Select a time-out location where your child cannot get attention from anyone. The location should be away from TV, games, toys, or other things your child likes.
5. Time-out can be used anywhere. You can even use it away from home. You can use a time-out blanket as a time-out location when you're in public.
6. Time-outs last between 2 and 5 minutes for toddlers and preschoolers.

PARENTING TIPS:

Infants (0-1 yr of age)

- Talk to your baby. She will find your voice calming.
- Answer when your baby makes sounds by repeating the sounds and adding

words. This will help him learn to use language.

- Read to your baby. This will help her develop and understand language and sounds.
- Sing to your baby and play music. This will help your baby develop a love for music and will help his brain development.
- Praise your baby and give her lots of loving attention.
- Spend time cuddling and holding your baby. This will help him feel cared for and secure.
- Play with your baby when she's alert and relaxed. Watch your baby closely for signs of being tired or fussy so that she can take a break from playing.
- Distract your baby with toys and move him to safe areas when he starts moving and touching things that he shouldn't touch.
- Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. Parenting can be hard work! It is easier to enjoy your new baby and be a positive, loving parent when you are feeling good yourself.

Toddlers (1-2 years of age)

- Read to your toddler daily.
- Ask her to find objects for you or name body parts and objects.
- Play matching games with your toddler, like shape sorting and simple puzzles.
- Encourage him to explore and try new things.
- Help to develop your toddler's language by talking with her and adding to words she starts. For example, if your toddler says "baba", you can respond, "Yes, you are right—that is a bottle."
- Encourage your child's growing independence by letting him help with dressing himself and feeding himself.
- Respond to wanted behaviors more than you punish unwanted behaviors (use only very brief time outs). Always tell or show your child what she should do instead.
- Encourage your toddler's curiosity and ability to recognize common objects by taking field trips together to the park or going on a bus ride.

Toddlers (2-3 years of age)

- Set up a special time to read books with your toddler.
- Encourage your child to take part in pretend play.
- Play parade or follow the leader with your toddler.
- Help your child to explore things around her by taking her on a walk or wagon ride.
- Encourage your child to tell you his name and age.
- Teach your child simple songs like Itsy Bitsy Spider, or other cultural childhood rhymes.
- Give your child attention and praise when she follows instructions and shows positive behavior and limit attention for defiant behavior like tantrums. Teach your child acceptable ways to show that she's upset.

Preschoolers (3-5 years of age)

- Continue to read to your child. Nurture her love for books by taking her to the library or bookstore.
- Let your child help with simple chores.
- Encourage your child to play with other children. This helps him to learn the value of sharing and friendship.
- Be clear and consistent when disciplining your child. Explain and show the behavior that you expect from her. Whenever you tell her no, follow up with what he should be doing instead.
- Help your child develop good language skills by speaking to him in complete sentences and using "grown up" words. Help him to use the correct words and phrases.
- Help your child through the steps to solve problems when she is upset.