

Positive Parenting

Children's mental health matters!

Being a good parent is a challenge

But it's worth it!

Having a child come into your life and your home can be very exciting, but when you realise that this new little person depends on you for everything, and does not pay attention to your schedule, it can be overwhelming.

Balancing self-care and the care of your child

Taking care of a child can make it seem as though you have no time for yourself, but as they say, you cannot pour from an empty cup. If you are too tired, too hungry or too dehydrated, you will not be able to care for your child, so finding a balance is important. Making use of available help is key, whether it comes from a partner, relative or trusted friend. Setting an example of good self-care is also important for your child.



Love is a doing word...

Saying “I love you” to your child is important, but it is equally important to demonstrate it with action. Being involved in your child’s daily life, knowing how their day was, what happened at school, what things made them happy, sad or angry, ensuring that they have enough to eat and drink, helping them with their hygiene needs if they are young enough to need that, showing affection, being involved in their play activities, knowing their friends, and being available to talk to them are all ways that parents can show love. Provide clear expectations: your child needs to know what you want them to do, as well as what is not allowed. Even so, sometimes they will make mistakes...

Consequences that make sense....

Children are not perfect, but neither are parents. The role of a parent is to guide their child through words and example, help them learn from their mistakes, and when necessary have consistent consequences: deter unwanted behaviours by letting your child know that they have done something that is wrong, and removing privileges. Consequences should fit the child’s action. Be consistent. If a behaviour is wrong, then it is always wrong. As a parent, be ready always to respond, not react. Sometimes your child’s behaviour can make you angry, but reacting can cause significant damage to your child.

Consequences should never take the form of personal attacks or insults, calling them unkind names, telling them that they are unwanted, bad, or stupid. Words can hurt, and can damage self-esteem.



Comparison is the thief of joy.....

Your child is an individual, and should be treated like one. He or she has different strengths and weaknesses, and should not be compared to siblings, relatives, or even you when you were little. When your child does something good, reward them with praise or a treat if that is appropriate. Do not only note their behaviour if it is wrong. If they make an error, never ask why they can't be more like a brother or sister or someone else.

Be aware of what is age-appropriate

It takes the frontal lobe, the part of the brain that controls how we process information, prioritise things and organise our lives, about 25 years to develop fully. In that time, parents play that role in their children's lives as well as their own. Rules, rewards, punishments and all information that your child receives should be appropriate for their age and stage of life, and parents have to help their children process that information and make sound decisions. Parenting can therefore be quite tiring, but it is such an important job! Done well, it can also be one of the most rewarding.

Instill gratitude

Teaching thankfulness helps children to have strong social bonds, boosts their self-esteem, and can help them to be resilient when faced with stressful situations.



Provide encouragement

Children who are encouraged by their parents have greater self-worth and self-confidence. Your opinion of them matters.

Keep your word

It is important to do what you say that you will. Breaking promises can prevent children from trusting you, and can also give them the impression that it's OK to do the same.

Teach responsible behaviours

Doing age-appropriate chores, completing homework, and learning how to use resources wisely helps children to become responsible adults.



Have a routine for your child

Children do better when they have a routine. Routines help children to feel safe, develop healthy habits, and learn life skills. Routines also help to reduce children's anxiety and keep them calm, as they know what to expect and when to expect it. A routine can also help you as a busy parent to remember things that are important for your child. Life can be stressful for families, and routines can help to create a sense of stability in times of stress and change. Having a routine is not the same thing as being rigid, and it is important to demonstrate to your child the importance of being able to be flexible and adapt to change.

Set Boundaries

The earlier, the better. When behaviours are repeated, they become habits, and habits can be hard to break. Sometimes parents allow children to behave in certain ways that seem cute or funny when they are young, even though these behaviours are wrong. Let your child know even when they are quite small what kinds of things are allowed, and what things are not.

Lead by example

"Do as I say, not as I do". By now, we should all know that this doesn't work. Children learn a lot from their parents, and parents' behaviour sets the standard. It is important to be a good role model for your child, and behave in the way that you want them to behave.

