

Effective Parenting

Raising children is one of the toughest and most fulfilling jobs in the world. Here are some ways to tackle your child-rearing responsibilities that will help you feel more fulfilled as a parent, and enjoy your children more, too.

- 1. Nurture your child's self-esteem.** Praising your child for his accomplishments, however small, will make him feel proud; letting him do things for himself will make him feel capable and independent. Let your child know that you still love him, even when you don't love his behavior.
- 2. Catch your child being good.** Make a point of finding something to praise every day. Be generous with rewards - your love, hugs and compliments can work wonders and are often reward enough.
- 3. Set limits and be consistent with your discipline.** Discipline is necessary in every household. A common mistake parents make is failure to follow through with consequences when rules are broken. Being consistent teaches your child what to expect.
- 4. Make time for your children.** Children who are not getting the attention they want from their parents often act out or misbehave as a way of seeking attention.
- 5. Be a good role model.** Be constantly aware that your children are observing you. Model the traits you wish to cultivate in your child: respect, friendliness, honesty, and kindness.
- 6. Make communication a priority.** Make your expectations clear. Express your feelings about problems that arise and invite your child to work on a solution with you. Be open to your child's suggestions as well. Children who participate in decisions are more motivated to carry them out.
- 7. Be flexible and willing to adjust your parenting style.** As your child changes, you will gradually have to change your parenting style. If you frequently feel "let down" by your child's behavior, it may be because you have unrealistic expectations for him.
- 8. Show that your love is unconditional.** When you have to confront your child, avoid blaming, criticizing or fault finding, which undermine self-esteem and lead to resentment. Let him know that you want and expect him to do better next time, you love him no matter what.
- 9. Be aware of your own needs and limitations as a parent.** You have strengths and weaknesses as a family leader. Recognize your abilities and vow to work on your weaknesses. Try to have realistic expectations of yourself, your spouse and your children. Admit it when you are burned out. Take time out from parenting to do things that will make you happy as a person (or as a couple).

