

Work yourself out of a job

A major challenge for parents is to find ways of safely moving children from being reliant on adults to a position of independence. This can be tough because your natural instinct is to nurture them.

Training for independence starts from a young age and continues into adolescence. Developmentally, children are ready around the age of two to learn the skills of independence so it makes sense to begin these habits early.

Encouraging independence is one of the best ways to promote self-confidence. When you teach children to do jobs for themselves you send a powerful message that you believe that they are capable. Your actions speak louder than your words.

Children are capable of doing complex tasks if you show them how. It is useful to break complex jobs into simple tasks. For instance, a young child can begin making a bed by arranging teddies and pillows, progressing to smoothing out a doona and so on.

Children will often make mistakes when they assume greater responsibility so it is helpful to adjust your standards to accept their genuine efforts and also be supportive when they make mistakes.

It is difficult sometimes to know when to allow children to assume more responsibility for their own well-being. It is useful to continuously assess your children's capabilities and consider letting go when they appear ready.

The most effective way to promote responsibility in children is to give them more responsibility you are making yourself redundant, which is the main aim of parenting!



Quick Parenting Quiz

- Tantrums affect approximately what percentage of two to four year olds?*
 - 20%
 - 40%
 - 60%
 - 80%
- According to children the greatest contributing factor to a good father-child relationship is:*
 - The ability to talk to each other
 - The time spent together
 - The number of activities they share
 - The amount of pocket-money a father provides

Answer: 1 d) 2 a)

Vitamins for parents

Four responsibilities to give children that promote independence:

- Preparing and choosing snacks and meals
- Choosing clothing appropriate to the occasion
- Getting up in the morning
- Looking after a pet

Bright idea



Don't focus on children's mistakes

Welcome children's honest efforts even though they make mistakes. Focus on what they do well, rather than on their errors. A realistic attitude to mistakes will promote confidence, which is a key to successful development and learning.

Wise & Witty Words

"Never do regularly for a child the things a child can do for him or herself."

Maurice Balson

"Raising kids is not unlike harness racing. All you can do is put those constraints in place, not too tightly, not too loosely, and hold your breath."

Peter Black

Sibling rivalry is driving me insane!

Rivalry or competition between brothers and sisters is common but it can make family life intolerable for parents. Sibling rivalry is shown through constant fighting, criticising and telling tales.

Children who are close in age or adjacent in birth order are often rivals who compete for parental recognition.

Competitive siblings generally display different personalities and excel in different areas. If one child is responsible then a rival may be irresponsible. If one child is academically strong then a rival may choose to excel in another area, such as sport or music.

Rivalry is often more intense between children in small families as there is less chance for a break from each other. Also some children are more prone to rivalry due to their competitive temperaments.

Excessive rivalry is often a sign of discouragement - children spend a great deal of time and energy showing that they can be better, or get more attention, than a sibling. As competitive children will often avoid an

area where a sibling is successful, rivalry places limits on their potential.

Your acceptance of your children's differences will determine the degree of competitiveness. When you recognise and value your children's differences in personality, interests and achievement you will reduce the need for them to compete.

It is also useful to emphasise children's effort, improvement and enjoyment in activities rather than praise them for good results as excessive praise promotes rivalry. Sibling comparison, which is extremely divisive, is another practice to avoid if you want to reduce competition between family members.



Quick Parenting Quiz

- Boys are generally better at fine motor activities than girls when they begin school.
- What percentage of women over the age of 35 give birth?
 - 6 per cent
 - 11 per cent
 - 16 per cent
 - 21 per cent

True or false

Answers: 1. false 2c)

Vitamins for parents

Three ways to reduce rivalry in your family:

- Focus on solutions when children have conflict – "Why don't you two try to...?"
- Put them in the same boat when they misbehave – "You will all be able to use the playroom again when it is clean."
- Engage in a family-oriented activity at least once a week.

Bright idea



Let's all celebrate

When one child does something well or worthwhile then the whole family celebrates. When everyone shares in the recognition of individual achievements children begin to think 'we' rather than 'me'.

Wise & Witty Words

"Lucy is a (tantrum) veteran. Not yet three, she has already held more street protests than the S11 movement."

Anonymous father

"The child that you want to raise as an upright and honourable person requires a lot more of your time than your money."

George Varky

Can you children give me a hand?

Until recently, children's help around the house was essential – families were bigger and there was little technology to lighten the load.

Even though we live in a more automated age than our grandparents our lives are just as busy. The need for children to pitch in and help is just as pertinent today.

The expectation that children should help at home sends a powerful message that their contribution is valued. Children learn to be contributors rather than mere takers within their social groups.

Helping at home is an opportunity for children to make a contribution to the family, rather than their moneybox so the following ideas may help you develop the helping habit in children.

- 1. Start early.** When you consistently expect children to help from a young age their contribution not only becomes a habit, but valued by the whole family.
- 2. Make the help real, not phony.** Give them real tasks such emptying dishwashers, collecting mail and cooking meals rather than time-fillers. (Visit WWW.Parentingideas.com.)

au for a list of jobs suitable for each age group.)

- 3. Don't do the jobs ('help') for them.** Sometimes it is easier for parents to do the jobs themselves, but this encourages children to leave it up to their parents.
- 4. Use 'grandma's principle' to keep kids on task.** My grandma used to put things in the right order so I wasn't allowed to watch television until the table was cleared after a meal, or play outside until homework was finished.
- 5. Use the term 'help', not 'chores'.** Image is everything. The terms 'job' and 'chore' sound like hard work and can be extremely off-putting.

The notion of helping fits the philosophy that a central task of parenting is to promote a sense of generosity and community-mindedness in children. As most research indicates, these core values are primarily learned at home.



Quick Parenting Quiz

- According to a recent US study the main wish by children for their working mothers is that they:*
 - a) Earn more money
 - b) Be less stressed by work
 - c) Be less tired due to work
 - d) Spend more time with them
- According to a variety of studies both in the US and Australia men spend more time interacting with their children than twenty years ago?*

True or false

Answers: 1a) 2 true

Vitamins for parents

At different ages parents can focus on:

- 1. Helping together with pre school children**
- 2. Teaching primary aged children the right way to help and**
- 3. Delegating helping tasks to teenagers. Real delegation means allowing them to work out how a job should be done.**

Bright idea



Place important help on a roster.

Allocate help, with children's assistance, then place their names on a roster next to the tasks. You can use symbols rather than words for pre readers. When children complete a task they can place a sticker on the matching symbol on the roster. This serves as a record of their contribution. It is a good idea to change the roster frequently so the less appealing tasks are shared.

Wise & Witty Words

"You don't need a parent, you need a guard."

Exasperated parent to a child

"Each interaction with our children provides an educational opportunity to help weave a strong and resilient personal fabric."

Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein

Raising strong-willed kids

Many parents have at least one child who they describe as 'strong-willed', 'stubborn' or 'determined to have his or her own way'. They may celebrate their determination in some settings ('I love the way she never gives up in a game') but abhor it in others ('She is determined to go to bed when she wants').

Strong-willed children often set the agenda for parents as they become locked into a dispute where winning and losing becomes the main concern rather than gaining sensible outcomes.

Following are some approaches to use with strong-willed children:

Channel rather than change your child's behaviour. Recognise strong-mindedness is desirable in many situations but children need to learn that there are times when they must give way.

Avoid being drawn into petty disputes of your child's making. Step back a little and allow your child some minor victories.

Focus on what you will do, rather than tell your child what to do. For instance, rather than arguing with your child to go to bed tell him or her that you will begin reading a bed-time story in five

minutes. Then just do it – begin the story whether your child is there or not.

(This example will not work for every child but the principle is important – focus on your behaviour and tell children what you will do rather than tell them what they should do.)

Use choices, which gives strong-willed children the illusion of control. For instance, "Jessica, if you want to play inside you must be quiet. If you want to make a noise then outside is the place to be." Strong-willed children like to think they are in control.

It is interesting to note that often strong-willed children remind parents of themselves, which is enough reason sometimes for the sparks to fly!



Quick Parenting Quiz

- According to a recent study children challenge the boundaries that parents set in place approximately:
 - One in two times
 - One in three times
 - Two in three times
- What percentage of Australian families has an only child?
 - 11%
 - 16%
 - 21%
 - 26%

Answers: 1b) 2b)

Vitamins for parents

If you are tired of saying No to every request your child makes here are two alternatives to try:

No.1. "Yes, you can _____ when _____"

Example: "Yes, you can watch television when you have finished your homework."

No.2. It is great that you want _____

When you _____ I will _____

Example: "It is great that you want to walk to Nan's place but she lives a long way away. When you are able to walk to the shops on your own then I will consider allowing you to walk to Nan's."

Bright idea



Use the language of cooperation

Be aware that your choice of words and tone of voice can invite cooperation or invite a fight from children. Using words such as 'must', 'should' and 'got to' can illicit an uncooperative response from a strong-willed child. Such children are more receptive to the language of cooperation – 'please', 'could you?', 'I would appreciate it if you could.' I am not suggesting that you get down on bended knee each time you want cooperation from a child, but a little respect usually goes a long way.

Wise & Witty Words

"In work, do what you enjoy. In family life, be completely present."

From the Tao Te Ching by S. Mitchell

"A man finds out what is meant by spitting image when he tries to feed cereal to his infant."

Imogen Fey

Square pegs in round holes

Being a parent is easy,.....when you have easy children.

If you have children who are fast learners, talented at any activity they put their minds to and able to make friends easily then you can thank your lucky stars that fate dealt you a kind hand. Life tends to contrive against such good fortune so most parents are blessed with a mixed bag.

The parents who have the most difficulty are those with children who just don't seem to fit in at pre school or school. Despite adult efforts to coax and urge them to do their best some children just don't fit into regular childcare or educational settings.

If you have a child who seems to be like the proverbial square peg in a round hole then understanding, persistence and patience are your best parenting tools.

Understand your child and the difficulty that he or she may be facing fitting into his social and learning environments. See the world from his or her point of view and continue to give support, encouragement and love.

Persist in helping your child find his or her strength, area of interest or favored learning style. Often such children act in ways that make their parents throw their hands up in despair and give up. Don't give in.

Be patient. All children excel when they are placed in their right environment – it can just take time for some children to find the environment that suits them.

It is remarkable how many current public achievers and entrepreneurs did not fit into traditional educational environments when they were young. No doubt, there are many parents who are relieved that the children who once gave them so much worry have become some of this country's leaders in business, the arts and sporting life.



Quick Parenting Quiz

- Which of the following practices promote independence and autonomy in children?
 - Let children make choices
 - Choose children's clothes for them each day
 - Don't rush to solve children's problems
 - Encourage children to look for help outside home
- According to a recent poll more expectant parents in Western countries prefer to give birth to a boy than a girl. True or false.

Answers: 1 a), c) and d) 2 true)

Vitamins for parents

Four ways to encourage your children every day:

- Tell them that you love them
- Point out at least one thing they do well or have shown improvement in
- Ask for your child's opinion about matters big and small
- Stick a positive message for your child to find – in his bag, lunch box, under his pillow....

Bright idea



Be your child's best coach, not his greatest critic

Smart coaches realise that mistakes are part of learning. They point out strengths, before weaknesses, when they give feedback.

The rule of thumb when working with children is to point out three positives for every one negative whether you are helping them learn a skill, improve their behaviour or just getting them to clean up their rooms.

Encouragement combined with practice will ensure your child will improve in any area of life.

Wise & Witty Words

"In practice, to love people equally you have to treat them very, very differently. Any wise parent knows this."

Tim Costello

"This would be a better world for children if parents had to eat the spinach."

Groucho Marx

The importance of consistency to children

Consistency is both the key to effective discipline and an essential element in our relationship with our children.

One of the simplest ways to improve a child's behaviour is to be more consistent.

Children love their parents to be consistent as they are able to predict how they will act. A consistent approach to discipline helps put children in control of their behaviour.

Consistency means following-through and doing as you say you will. Consistency means not giving children second and third chances. It means not allowing children to get away with misbehaviour two or three times, then coming down hard the fourth time they misbehave.

Consistency also means that both parents in a dual parent family get their act together and respond in similar ways when children are less than perfect. If you are a sole parent then you need to be consistent with how you react when children misbehave.

Difficult children like consistency. Limits and boundaries provide them with a structure and teach them how they should behave. Children also like to push parental boundaries so parents need to resist pressure that they can exert.

Consistency is a challenge as it is tempting to let children's misbehaviour go. We become tired and sometimes we doubt our own judgement. It is easy to think, "Maybe I am being a bit tough..."

Consistency prevents misbehaviour from escalating. We help children develop self-discipline, which is our aim, when we are consistent and do as we say we will – every time.



Quick Parenting Quiz

- Recent research shows that bullying is the cause of what percentage of school absenteeism:
 - 5 per cent?
 - 10 per cent?
 - 15 per cent?
 - 20 per cent?
- Which of these techniques help children deal with their feelings?
 - Listen quietly when they have a problem
 - Give their feelings a name
 - Tell them to get over their problem
 - Remind them things will be better in the morning

Answers 1c) 2a) b)

Vitamins for parents

Four alternatives to punishment

- Tell a child how to be helpful
- Express your disapproval of the behaviour (not the child)
- Show your child how to make up for the misbehaviour
- Give a choice between two behaviours

Bright idea



Catch your children being good

One of the most overlooked ways of shaping children's behaviour is to catch them doing the right thing. When your children behave well let them know that you appreciate their cooperation. Comments such as, 'thanks, I really appreciate your cooperation' can have a positive impact on the behaviour and attitude of children.

Wise & Witty Words

"Children need love, especially when they do not deserve it."

Harold S. Hulbert

"The word No carries a lot more meaning when spoken by a parent who also knows how to say Yes wisely."

Joyce Maynard

Helping children be organised

Many children, particularly boys, need extra assistance getting organised. They may have great intentions but they just can't seem to see the fine details of what they should be doing.

If this sounds familiar then consider using lists to give your child the organisational map that he or she needs.

If you have children who always forget what to do in the morning, list five things they must do before they put a foot out of the door each day. Be specific and stick to the important stuff. A list may read: *Make breakfast, clean teeth, pack bag, etc.*

Place the list in a prominent place and make it attractive or, at least, easy to read. If you have pre readers then use symbols or simple pictures as well as words

This may not be groundbreaking stuff but it

works. Ask your children to tick off each activity or just make a mental note when each is done. This type of reward works well with boys, who respond favourably to short-term goals.

If you want children to have a tidy bedroom then place a list of the five jobs that they must do to keep it tidy behind their door. Let's face it, children have their own version of tidiness so you may have to make it clear what tidiness means.

The use of lists helps children to be organised and takes the onus off you to always tell them what to do.



Quick Parenting Quiz

- Which of the following responses indicate a parent's belief in a child's abilities?
 - Give me the jar. I'll unscrew the lid.
 - You are nearly there. Well done.
 - I've laid out your clothes for school.
 - Which clothes will you choose?
- Which of the following responses to tales places responsibility on to the child?
 - That's a shame your sister pushed you. I hope you are okay.
 - Your sister is naughty. Could you get her for me?
 - That's a rough game that you were both playing.
 - Go and tell your mother/father.

Answers: 1 b) and d) 2 a) and c)

Vitamins for parents

Do your children push your hot buttons to get a reaction?

If so, work out what behaviours make you feel:

- Angry
- Guilty

Then respond differently or change your way of thinking about the behaviours.

Bright idea



Listen to understand

When your child has a problem resist giving advice in the first instance. Show you understand how he or she feels and look for ways he or she may resolve the difficulty themselves. Sometimes there is nothing better than being understood.

Wise & Witty Words

"Children are a small percentage of the population but one hundred per cent of our future."

Unknown

"There must be many fathers around the country who have experienced the cruelest, most crushing rejection of all: their children have ended up supporting the wrong team."

Nick Hornby

Do your children use the magic words?

There are three 'magic' words that children can learn that will get them a long way in life. These words represent basic social conventions and are considered good manners.

The three 'magic' words that all children should know are:

1. **The use of first names:** Teach children to address others by name when they speak to them. People love hearing their own names. It is like music to their soul.
2. **"Please":** When children show common courtesy they are showing respect and their chances of influencing others increases dramatically.
3. **"Thanks":** We all crave appreciation so when children thank someone for their help or kindness they make the other person feel good and ensure they will get some repeat help.

The use of good manners is the most important social skill that adults can teach children. Manners help children navigate

effectively through their social world and also help them to influence others in positive ways.

Good manners include more than the three 'magic' words. They cover an array of social conventions, including: how to eat in public, how to win and lose gracefully and how to answer a telephone.

The best way to help children develop good manners is through teaching and modeling. Gradually explain to children what they should say and do in social situations and model the behaviours you want children to learn. Children need to see adults use common courtesy when they interact with each other and with them.



Quick Parenting Quiz

1. *You can promote a child's self-esteem by:*
 - a) The regular use of encouragement
 - b) Comparing a child to a brother or sister
 - c) Teaching the skills of independence
 - d) Encouraging him or her to participate in different activities
2. *Children believe parents favour one child over another when:*
 - a) Giving birthday presents
 - b) Disciplining
 - c) Using praise
 - d) Giving pocket-money

Answers: 1a), c) and d) 2b)

Vitamins for parents

Four social skills to teach children:

1. How to play fairly
2. How to be a good winner and loser
3. How to join in a game or conversation
4. How to ask for help

Bright idea



One at a time...

Sometimes it is hard to teach children everything at once, so it is helpful to focus on one skill or term at a time. Concentrate on one aspect of good manners each day to model and teach children. Exaggerate the use of 'thanks' or 'please' to reinforce these basic social conventions for your children.

Wise & Witty Words

"A man knows he is growing old because he begins to look like his father."

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

"Consistency is the most important element in a parent's relationship with their children."

Sal Severe

Help your child beat bullying

Bullying is common despite heightened public awareness. Recent research shows that 67 per cent of children experience bullying at some stage.

Bullying transgresses a child's fundamental right to feel safe and secure. It is the selective, uninvited, intentional, often repeated oppression of one person by another person or group. It can happen at school, within the neighbourhood and, in some cases, within a family.

Children can be bullied in a number of ways – physically, verbally or through exclusion. Both boys and girls can bully although girls are more likely to use verbal means and exclusion, while boys are more likely to use physical means.

When a child is bullied he or she generally feels powerless and lacks the ability to fend for himself or herself. A child who is bullied over a long period of time can experience significant long term affects, including: learning, peer group relations and self-esteem.

Children who are bullied generally need help. They need someone to believe their story. If you suspect your child is being bullied take him or her seriously.

Sometimes the only thing a child wants is the knowledge they have their parents' support.

Gain a clear picture of what happens and help your child identify any behaviour, such as playing alone or annoying others, that may contribute to the bullying.

If appropriate, provide your child with some ideas based on the information you have gathered that will reduce the likelihood of being bullied. Resist the emotive reaction to confront the bullies yourself as this often causes an escalation and invites retaliation.

Bullying is best handled in partnership between parents and the school or other institution. Present your concerns to the relevant teacher or professional so that you can find a joint solution to the problem.



Quick Parenting Quiz

1. *Effective ways to teach your child how to handle a bully are:*
2. *Bullying peaks at age seven and decreases as children get older.*

- a) Teach him to get even or fight back.
- b) Discuss specific situations where a child is bullied
- c) Discuss ways to avoid conflict
- d) Teach some assertive phrases which a child may use if being bullied

True or false

- Answers: 1b) c) d)
2. False. Bullying others is problematic around the age of nine or ten and peaks at thirteen and fourteen years of age. It declines towards the later years.

Vitamins for parents

Do you know the warning signs of bullying? They include:

- Complaints about stolen items
- Unusual behaviour at home, such as aggression or timidity.
- Physical injuries, such as bruising or repeated accidents
- Reluctance to go to school or lack of interest in school
- Pretend illness or injury
- Sudden or unusual clinginess

Bright idea



Teach your child to take the sail away from the wind of a bully

Children need to react in positive rather than fearful or whining ways when they are teased. It is useful for children to have a comeback line that they can use that negates teasing or bullying tactics. For instance, a child who is teased about her appearance may reply, "Thanks for your opinion, but I happen to think otherwise." Your child should practise their comeback line at home using strong body language, good eye contact and a firm voice.

Wise & Witty Words

"Today we have somehow lost touch with the wisdom...that mothers can and do have a profound impact on the emotional lives of boys, an impact that lasts a lifetime."

William Pollack

"All feelings are acceptable. Certain actions must be limited."

Faber and Mazlish

Helping children develop a social conscience

Those children who freely share their time, space and possessions are generally happier and have more friends than those children who are mean-spirited. The following five principles will help you develop a sense of generosity in your children.

Principle 1: Model generosity

If you asked your children about the charitable behaviours they observed in you, how would they reply? It is sometimes difficult to see yourself through the eyes of your children, but this is the true test of character and individual self worth.

Principle 2: Provide opportunities for children to feel they are helping others

Helping others strengthens children's self esteem and instills in them the belief that they can contribute to the well-being of others. Brooks and Goldstein* advocate that children should be given one activity at the age of three that becomes their responsibility. This is the beginning of a child's contribution to the well-being of others.

Principle 3: Develop traditions to become a charitable family.

A charitable family develops a tradition of involving the entire family in helping and bettering the lives of others. Such activities indicate to children that they can do something

to alleviate the difficulties of others and promote a sense of connectedness to a community that is larger than their family.

Principle 4: Distribute jobs at home evenly.

The opportunity for children to help at home teaches them that contribution is a natural part of living within a group or community. Most of the significant lessons about living are learned in the family home.

Principle 5: Recognise that each child contributes in their own way

If you think that your child doesn't help, or that one child in your family is exceedingly generous with his or her contribution while another always seems to drag the chain, step back a little and observe from a distance. You may find it a revelation that the child who appears less helpful actually does a great deal more than you realised.

** Ideas in this piece were based on the book Raising Resilient Children by Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein*



Quick Parenting Quiz

1. Which statements show the listener is helping a child develop a vocabulary for his or her emotions?

- a) Cheer up. It's not that bad.
- b) Get over it.
- c) I'd be mad if that happened to me.
- d) You seem really angry about being left off the team.

2. Physically, childhood is getting shorter.

True or false

- Answers: 1 c) and d)
2 true. Children in Western countries are increasingly reaching puberty at an earlier age.

Vitamins for parents

Three ideas to help your family be more charitable:

1. Give used toys that are in good condition to someone else
2. Either individually or join with other families to sponsor a child from a developing country
3. Invite guests to celebrate special occasions such as Christmas, Easter and birthdays.

Bright idea



Community help

Help an individual or a group in your community that needs assistance. Whether it is attending a working bee, walking a neighbour's dog or taking the rubbish bins out for someone, there are opportunities everywhere for you and your children to help.

Wise & Witty Words

"It is in the shelter of each other that people live."

Irish proverb

"One of the reasons why adults should look as if they are having fun, is to give kids a reason to want to grow up."

Patch Adams

Make mealtime more than a pitstop

Mealtime is like a pit stop in many households, where children pull up to a table or bench for a quick bite before resuming their activities.

Eating can be a fantastic social experience that benefits the whole family rather than a refueling exercise. Sharing a meal provides an opportunity for parents and children to talk, exchange views, swap news and maybe have a laugh or two.

Meals have the advantage of anchoring children to one spot long enough to hold a conversation.

If you have very young children the notion of sharing a long leisurely meal maybe a little far-fetched. But it is worth persevering as family mealtimes can be the glue that binds children and parents together.

School-aged children, who have a great deal to share, are more than capable of making mealtime a great social event. Adolescents, in particular, often appreciate a forum where they can air their views.

If your family is pressed for time schedule in at least one night a week where you can enjoy a meal

together and guard this time jealously.

Sometimes the meal table can turn into a battlefield as parents nag children to take one more bite or eat all the vegetables. Avoid fighting with children who refuse to eat. However, they shouldn't be permitted to eat a snack following their meal.

Mealtime is an opportunity for parents to listen rather than do all the talking. If your children are conversational clams ask questions that spark some conversation.

In an era when, it seems everyone is busy, a shared mealtime with the television off maybe the best regular investment you can make to your family well-being.



Quick Parenting Quiz

1. *A parent who wants to promote responsibility when a child leaves his lunch at home would:*
 - a) Take the lunch to school
 - b) Call the school and ask if their child could be given some lunch
 - c) Do nothing
 - d) Call a cab to take the lunch to school
2. *A recent study found that fathers thought the most important task was being a good provider.*

True or false

Answers:
1 c) 2 False (Over the 50% of fathers believe the most important part of being a dad was 'being there' for kids.)

Vitamins for parents

Some conversation starters to use at the dinner table:

1. Ask open-ended questions. For instance, "What was the best thing that happened at school today?"
2. Take the lead and talk about your day. What were the highs and lows? Did you encounter any problems?
3. Talk about an area of interest for each child.

Bright idea



A night out at home

Do something different to impress on your family that meals are an occasion to be enjoyed rather than something to be consumed between activities. Be creative and turn a meal into a special event. Dust off the best knives and forks and set the table in style complete with serviettes and candles. Try serving from the table or even waiting 'restaurant-style' on your family.

Wise & Witty Words

"To the world you might be one person, but to one person you just might be the world."

Unknown

"What a father says to his children is not heard by the world: but it will be heard by posterity."

Jean Paul Richter

Boosting self-confidence when children really struggle

The hardest aspect of parenting is watching your children struggle, whether they are dealing with personal, friendship or learning problems. Our natural reaction is to protect children or fix things when they have difficulty. Sometimes no matter what we say, or do, our children experience crises of confidence.

Disappointments and difficulties are part of life and children grow stronger when they overcome their difficulties. The challenge for parents is to build and maintain children's confidence enough to help them get through the rough times.

It helps to talk through a problem or incident recognising and accepting their feelings. Talk about various scenarios around the problem at hand, discussing the possible outcomes. The age of the child will determine the amount of detail you will be able to go into. Avoid burdening a younger child with concepts he or she is too young to understand. Keep things simple.

Build a sense of responsibility by giving your child some important jobs or treating him as if he is more capable than you think. Sometimes we give responsibility to the child who already is responsible rather than the child who needs his or her confidence boosted.

Encourage your child rather than criticise. Each child has different talents and abilities so it is pointless comparing him or her to others. Let your child know that if they do the best they can, that is all that matters. Play down any deficiencies and emphasise the good things about each child. It is much easier to remember negative things than positive ones, and if children repeatedly hear that they are inadequate, they will come to believe it.

Most importantly, tell your kids you love them every day. Children must feel that they are loveable if they are to feel worthwhile.

Boosting self-confidence is not a one act play. It is a continuous process where the results may take years to show. But hang in there because your child is worth it!



Quick Parenting Quiz

- Which consequences appear reasonable, respectful and related to a child's behaviour?
 - You are grounded for the next six months for being late.
 - I'm sorry but you can't go out tomorrow because you are home later than agreed.
 - You must return the item to the store and apologise to the owner.
 - You must return the item to the store and then do extra chores for me for a month.
- Parents rather than carers or teachers have the most influence on the development of a child's self esteem.

True or false.

Answers: 1. b) and c) 2 true)

Vitamins for parents

Three ways to encourage children without evaluating them.

- Tell them what you see. "I see you have put all your toys on the shelf and smoothed out your bed."
- Tell them how you feel. "I love coming into your room when it is clean."
- Sum up your child's behaviour. "You have cleaned up your room really well. That's what I call capable."

Bright idea



Treat children as you want them to be

If you want children to be responsible you need to treat them as if they are responsible. If you want to have an independent child then you need to treat him as if he was independent. This takes great faith on the part of parents (teachers and care-givers) because kids will sometimes not measure up immediately. It also takes courage to treat children as you want them to be!

Wise & Witty Words

"Don't hold your parents up for contempt. After all, you are their son or daughter, and it is just possible that you may take after them."

Unknown

"Don't drive your kids – inspire them."

Ian Grant