

1. Nurture your child's self-esteem

Children start developing their sense of self as babies when they see themselves through your eyes. Your tone of voice, your body language and your every expression are all absorbed by your child. Your words and actions as parents affect your child's developing self image more than anything else in his world. Consequently, praising your child, however small, will make him feel proud; letting him do things for himself will make him feel capable and independent. By contrast, belittling your child or comparing him unfavourably to another child will make him feel worthless.

Do not bruise the inside of a child as much as blows would do to the outside. Choose your words carefully and be compassionate. Let your child know that everyone makes mistakes and that you still love him even if you don't love the behaviour.

2. Catch your child being good

Have you ever stopped to think how many times you react negatively to your child in any given day? You may find that you are criticizing far more than you are complimenting. How would you feel if your boss at work does the same to you even if it is well-intentioned?

The more effective approach is to catch your child doing something right and compliment him for doing the right thing. Such statements would do more to encourage good behaviour over the long run, rather than repeated scoldings. Make a point of finding something to praise everyday. Be generous with rewards- your hugs, love 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. The goal of discipline is to help children choose acceptable behaviours and learn self-control. Children may often test the limits you set for them but they need those limits to grow into responsible adults. Establishing house rules will help children to understand your expectations and develop self-control. Consistency in discipline is very important. Do not have double standards. You can't discipline a child one day for doing something wrong and then ignore the same behaviour the next day. Being consistent teaches your child what to expect.

4. Take time out for your children

With so many demands on your time, it is often difficult for parents and children to get together for a family meal, let alone some quality time together. But there is nothing

your child would like more or there is probably nothing more important than spending such time together.

Get up ten minutes earlier in the morning so that you can have breakfast together. At night, leave the dishes in the sink and sit and talk with your child. Then do the dishes. Children who are not getting the attention that they want from their parents often act out or misbehave because they are assured of being noticed this way. It is a means of attracting attention. Many parents find it mutually rewarding to have prescheduled time with their child on a regular basis. Sometimes it is a good gesture to slip a note in the lunchbox. Children of primary school age need this attention.

Adolescents seem to need less undivided attention from their parents than younger children but parents should do their best to make themselves available when their child expresses a desire to talk or participate in family activities.

Do not feel guilty if you are a working parent. It is the little things that you do with your child that he'll remember.

5. Be a good role model

Young children learn a great deal how to act by watching you. The younger they are, the more cues they take from you. Be constantly aware that you are being observed by your children and sometimes what you see in them is merely a reflection of yourself. Model the traits that you want to cultivate in your child: respect, friendliness; honesty; kindness, tolerance. Treat your children the way you expect other people to treat you.

6. Make communication a priority.

You can't expect children to do everything you tell them to simply because you "say so." Children want and deserve explanations just as adults do. Parents who reason with their children allow them to understand and learn in a non-judgmental way. Make your expectations clear. Express your feelings and invite your children to work on a solution with you. Make suggestions and offer choices. 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.

If you frequently feel 'let down' by your child's behaviour, it is probably because you have unrealistic expectations of him. In some behaviours, especially in young children, a parent may need to read up on behavioural patterns in young children to fully understand the behaviour of your own child. Sometimes, some of the traits that are displayed cannot be child is stubborn- some of these traits are natural and normal to young children. In addition some of the behavioural traits that parents expect children to demonstrate come with maturity.

As your child changes, you will have to gradually change your parenting style- chances are what works with your child now may not work in a year or two.

8. Show that your love is unconditional

As a parent, you are responsible for correcting and guiding your child. But the manner in which you express your corrective guidance makes all the difference in how your child receives it. When you have to confront your child, avoid blaming, criticizing, or fault-finding. This only undermines self-esteem and this can lead to resentment. Instead, strive to nurture and encourage even when you are disciplining your child. Make sure that he knows that although he want him and expect him to do better next time, you still love him., no matter what.

9. Be aware of your own needs and limitations as a parent.

Face-it – You are not a perfect parent. You have strengths and weaknesses as a family leader. Recognize your abilities. Vow to work on your weaknesses. Try to have realistic expectations for yourself, your spouse and of your children. You don't have to have all the answers – be forgiving of yourself.