

Top Ten Parenting Tips

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#10 Make Comments Constructive

- Keep criticism from being destructive
 - Use it sparingly
 - Accent the positive first, then make it instructive
 - Keep comments meaningful without berating

Example:

“I see that you helped out by mowing the lawn. Thank you for doing that. Next time, let me know and I’ll show you how to keep the lines straight.”

#9 Actions Are Louder than Words

- Don't underestimate the power of your actions. Children watch and learn from what you do.
- Set the example for them by:
 - Calmly, but forcefully reacting to stressful situations
 - Celebrating even little successes
 - Reinforcing family values in how you are at home
 - Paying attention to the little things.—attending school functions, sporting events, being involved

#8 Be Open and Authentic in Communication

- Always be open about what you are thinking and feeling.
 - Be specific with words:

I love how...I'm worried about...I'm angry because...I'm thrilled that...I'm disappointed... I'm so happy that...
 - Steer clear of communication blockers:

How could you be so stupid...We will never speak of this again...

#7 Remain Unified as a Parental Front

- Strategic Planning:
 - Make rules consistent between parents
 - Establish those rules prior to enforcing them in front of the children
 - Recognize that children may play you off on one another

#6 Set Reasonable Limits

- Set limits based on:
 - Child developmental stage
 - Past behavior
 - Child's needs
- Make the limits clear and concise:
(and communicate them)
 - Example: Curfew is at 11:00pm—no exceptions

#5 Use Consequences Effectively

- Make the penalty fit the crime:
 - Example: You're late for curfew; you can't go out next weekend.
- Be consistent in enforcing the consequence
 - Example: Every time you miss curfew, the consequences will be the same.
- Be clear with the consequences to bad decisions
 - Example: If you earn a D in that class, you will be attending summer school

#4 Follow Through

- Always do what you say you are going to do
 - Example:
- Only say things you know you can enforce
 - Reasonable: “You are grounded from the cell phone for the next week.”
 - Unreasonable: “You will never be allowed on the phone again.”

#3 Know Friends and Families

- The people they spend their time with, are the people who influence them.
- Meet their friends and have them to your house
- Talk to the parents of their friends
 - Let those interacting with your child know what your expectations are.

#2 Always Listen

- Talk less and listen more
 - Listen to:
 - A recounting of their day
 - The things they are interested in
 - Their music
 - The things they don't say: in their behavior, dress, attitude, grades
 - Ask about their hopes and dreams
 - Their worries and concerns

#1 Love Unconditionally

- Communicate your love in all ways: by saying it, writing it in notes, attending events
- Make sure it is known even when you are disappointed with their choices
- Ask for help from professionals when you need it
- Our pride is never worth as much as loving our children