

# *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