

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

How parenting styles affect childhood development

Positive and consistent parenting helps your kids to be well-adjusted, happy and to succeed in life. With so much to be gained, let's take a look at some of the strategies we can adopt to encourage this vital positive interaction with our children.

Here are some of the top parenting tips for children of different ages:

- Follow the golden rule: "do unto others as you would have done to you".
- Reward good behavior with attention.
- Try to frame what you say to a child in a positive way "Please put your dish away when you finish," rather than "Don't leave your dish on the table".
- Consider creating a parent-child contract to ensure that everyone's expectations are clear.

Children under five

- Explain what you would like your child to do and why.
- Smile, hug, laugh and play with your child. You can't give a baby too much love.
- Read books, play physical games, listen or play music, do arts and crafts, build things together as often as possible.

Children between the ages of 6-11

- Help your children develop a routine for school.
- Be a helper to your child when he or she is doing homework.
- Communicate with your child's teacher. If there is a problem with school, deal with it quickly.
- Help your child think through problems.

Teens

- Keep the channels of communication open.
- Learn to be a good listener.
- Ask teens for their opinions on topics.
- Keep an open mind.
- Share difficult situations and feelings.
- Praise their achievements.

The focused attention we give our children is more important than the time we are able to spend with them. Try to live "in the moment" and give your children the benefit of some unhurried time with you, rather than filling your lives with too many activities. Though no one can be a super-parent, by following some of the basics outlined above, you help to give your child every advantage.
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