

## Parenting Strategies

Kids can be the source of the most rewarding joy... and frustrating distress. While our child(ren) did not come with instruction manuals, there are parenting strategies known to be effective. The following approaches, along with your optimism and endurance, can help your family experience more consistent happiness!

Choose strategies below that relate to your family and situation, work on them consistently knowing things will sometimes get more difficult before getting better, and know you can achieve your parenting goals.

- ❖ **Take care of yourself:** Exercise or relax every day, spend QUALITY time with your child(ren), get enough sleep, eat healthily, make priorities and find balance in meeting them, pick your battles.
  - Role modeling self-care, healthy coping, and taking responsibility is essential.
  - Ex: "You deserve respect, and if I keep talking about this right now I might be disrespectful. I'm going to take some time to chill out and 'reset'." (See Time Out / Reset)
  
- ❖ **Find balance between the Hard and Soft sides of parenting:**
  - Hard: Making rules, giving/carrying out consequences, giving directions, providing a safe environment.
  - Soft: Soothing, reassuring, showing love and affection, providing good things/times, listening.
  
- ❖ **Give at least 8 to 1 ratio of positive to constructive feedback.**
  
- ❖ **Establish family expectations together:**
  - Meet as a family to determine reasonable child responsibilities and expectations. Allow child(ren) to give input regarding positive and constructive consequences. Remember you are the parent and have ultimate say, and including the child's input will do wonders.
  - Make sure expectations are realistic and not causing more damage than good.
  
- ❖ **Focus on 1-3 problem behaviors at a time and break down goals:** Parenting is not as overwhelming when taking it one step at a time. Pick 1-3 behaviors to work on, plan and practice your strategy, and implement it. Focus on what works at least some of the time.
  
- ❖ **Behavioral Plans:** These Plans encourage follow through with expectations and tasks. Many families use sticker charts, tokens, or a bean jar. The child gets a sticker/token/bean for completing expectations or positive behavior, and loses them when not. Rewards/positive consequences result once reaching a designated number. These systems are best set up with daily, weekly, and longer term goals and rewards in mind.
  
- ❖ **Time out / Reset:** Choose a neutral place for time out, place child when identifying problem behavior, don't lecture, set timer 1 minute for every year of their age, do not give attention while on time out, and discuss why time out was used calmly afterwards.
  - It takes time to calm down and "reset" to a composed emotional state after disturbances such as anger, fear, guilt, or frustration. A time out or "reset" can support this process for kids and parents.
  
- ❖ **Time in:** Take charge of our emotions, sit down in a neutral spot together, speak calmly, help child bring words to their thoughts/feelings/needs, talk about your thoughts/feelings/needs, stay with child to support with calming, keep it (our talking) short and sweet (KISS), help child take responsibility, take accountability for our part (no blaming), and talk about new ways to handle the problem in the future.
  
- ❖ **Use "if / then" scenarios,:**
  - Ex: "If you \_\_\_\_\_ then \_\_\_\_\_". "If you finish your homework you can play video games".

❖ **Love and Logic Parenting 5 steps (Guiding Children to Solve Their Own Problems):**

- 1) Empathetic Statement: “What a tough situation”, “That stinks”, “Are you kidding me???”, “Geez you have your hands full”.
  - Provides heartfelt validation and promotes bonding.
- 2) Ask: “What do you think you will do about it”?
  - Gives ownership of the problem to the real owner.
  - Instills confidence they can work through it and they have the capability to solve their own problems.
- 3) Ask: “Would you like some ideas of how others have handled this”?
  - Puts parent in the position of a consultant in a non-threatening way.
- 4) Provide options of how others have handled the situation **only if the child is open to ideas** and ask “how that will work?”
  - Work to give a more undesirable option first.
  - Options can be thought of prior to conversation and focused in one area of need to avoid being overwhelmed with multiple situations.
- 5) Say, “Good Luck!”
  - Re-enforces confidence in the child and whose problem it is.

❖ **Provide Natural Consequences by letting kids know what they CAN do or what you will do:**

- Ex: “You can have treats when you brush your teeth”
- Ex: “I’ll drive you to soccer when your room is clean”.
- Ex: “I’ll know you are responsible enough to drive the car when you finish tasks without argument”.
- Make sure you FOLLOW THROUGH and consequences are within your control!

❖ **Give choices:** Choices are essential to our need for healthy control. Give 2 choices you can live with, and do not make threats. Make the decision for them if it takes longer than appropriate.

- Ex: “Do you want the lights on or off?”, “Do you want to clean your room today or tomorrow?”, “Do you want to fill the car with gas after you drive it or pay me to fill it?”

❖ **Do not try to control things that cannot be controlled:** We can work to do our very best while recognizing and accepting what we can’t control.

❖ **Put boundaries on screen time/media/information:** Content of such and screen time cause stress symptoms. Screen time encourages constant comparison of self to others, cyber bullying and social inappropriateness, sensory overload, disruption of sleep, and physically triggers the body’s stress response.

❖ **Use Encouragement:** Cheer yourself on. Repeat to yourself over and over; “I can do this,” “It won’t last forever,” “I’m doing my best,” “I got this.”

## Support and Resources:

**Love and Logic:**

<https://www.loveandlogic.com/>

**The Natural Child Project; Articles on Attachment Parenting:**

[http://www.naturalchild.org/articles/attachment\\_parenting.html](http://www.naturalchild.org/articles/attachment_parenting.html)

**1-2-3 Magic Parenting:**

<http://www.123magic.com/>

**SOS Programs and Parents Press:**

<http://www.sosprograms.com/index>

**Other:**

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