

Positive Parenting Tips

There is no doubt about it-being a good parent is hard work, but it can be tremendously rewarding and fun as well. And, like any job, you can also learn to do it better. In conjunction with April being Child Abuse Prevention Month and as part of its ongoing effort to improve the lives of children and families in Wisconsin, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW) has compiled a brochure with tips on how to be a more positive parent. The following are some positive parenting tips CSSW offers:

Learn about normal child development - Learning more about your kids will help you have realistic expectations. Kids are able to do different things at different ages, and sometimes parents expect too much or too little. Knowing the different developmental stages can help you know that what you are asking kids to do is realistic.

Positive Reinforcement - Give praise for the little things as well as the big things kids do. Make it genuine-that's the best kind! Kids of all ages feel better about themselves when they know they have done the right thing. "Try this," sounds a lot better than "Don't do that."

Consistency - In the long run, everyone in a family is happier with some basic rules. When kids know what you expect, they don't have to guess what the rules are. Make the rules simple, few, reasonable and consistent. Be sure to follow through, even when they fuss.

Teach right from wrong - Gently, but firmly, guide kids in learning about decision-making. Teach them the values you would like to see them have as adults-things like honesty, respect and courage are learned. Kids need parents to set the example.

Listen to your kids - Take time to listen. Discover who your kids really are and what they think about the world around them.

Love and affection - You can make kids feel good about your family and your lives together. Give lots of hugs and kisses, pats on the back and notes in their lunch boxes. Play with them. Have fun. Kids who feel loved pass love on.

Positive Parenting, Add one

Respect - Respect kids for who they are. "Please" and "Thank you" are just as nice to give as they are to receive. Nobody likes to be shouted at. If you are polite and respectful, you teach kids to be considerate in return.

Keep your hands to yourself - Hitting a child is never an acceptable solution. Provide consequences so that they can learn how to behave. Time outs help kids quiet down and get ready to rejoin what's happening around them. It also gives you an opportunity to stop and think.

Be patient - Kids learn by doing and learning takes time. They need permission to practice and make mistakes, because we all learn by experience.

Keep cool - Recognize the difference between a minor mistake and a major one. It's OK to ignore the little ones-nobody is perfect. Pick your battles and be consistent.

Keep a sense of humor - Laugh at yourself. Life can often be more funny than serious. A little humor can smooth the day-to-day growing up process for kids.

Nurture other relationships - Take time to enjoy your friends and each other. Don't forget to do things for yourself! Kids will see you having a good time and at the same time will learn about positive relationships.

Share what you know - Share your positive parenting tips with others-anyone who is part of your life, like teachers at daycare or school, friends and family. Keep learning!

"How to be a More Positive Parent" brochures are available. CSSW is also participating in a blue ribbon campaign as part of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Please join CSSW in our efforts to stop child abuse and contact us at (800) 653- 2779 to request Positive Parenting brochures and/or blue ribbons for yourself, your friends, coworkers and others. Together, we can make a difference.