

Ten positive parenting hints

Notice more of the good things children do, rather than the things you don't like. Make a point of commenting on the good things and make children aware that you notice and appreciate those things. This way they are less likely to misbehave to get attention.

Ignore the unacceptable or undesirable behaviours unless there are issues of safety to themselves or others, or issues of not showing respect to people or property. If there are issues of safety or respect, discuss with your children the issue and the impact of their behaviour. This helps children develop empathy for others.

Listen to what your children and young people say, and listen without interrupting until they have finished. You may not agree with what they are saying after the first sentence, but listen respectfully, acknowledge what they have said, and then offer your response. Children and young people do have their own opinions, and they may not be the same as yours and that's generally okay.

Negotiate rules and boundaries with older children using respect and safety as guidelines. Children and young people are more likely to adhere to rules if they have been a part of the discussion and understand the reason for the rules.

Give children lots of opportunities to practise new skills and encourage them rather than criticise them when they make mistakes. This is how we all learn and develop.

Always remember you are role modelling the behaviour you want your children to learn. If something is making you very angry, remove yourself from the situation until you have calmed down. Not only are you keeping everyone safe, but you are also teaching your children a good strategy that they can copy when their anger gets out of control.

Ensure that children know what the consequences of unacceptable behaviour are, before they do it. That way they have a choice. Make the consequences reasonable and related where possible. Never use humiliation as this creates resentment and lowers self esteem.

Show children and young people that you love them in lots of different ways. Spend time doing things with them, talking and listening with them, praising them, cuddling them, offering support when they need it, and treating them with the respect you want back from them. If they have your positive attention often enough they are more likely to behave well.

In areas of conflict, try to offer a calm low key response rather than out argue. Think about what you are going to say and why you have decided that. Getting louder and shouting back only inflames the situation.

Read about normal behaviour developmental stages for your child's age. Often we have unrealistic expectations for our children and teenagers and don't realise that they aren't always capable of what we think they should be doing. Sometimes we describe behaviour as 'naughty' or 'defiant' when it is a normal developmental stage.