



# Sikh Awareness Society

“Supporting the Youth & Strengthening Families”

## Parenting Tips

Raising kids today is arguably harder than ever before. But, there are some ways to help ease the stress and strain of raising your little ones and prevent behavior problems through good parenting.

1. Establish “together time” Establish a regular weekly routine for doing something special with your child -- even if it's just going out for ice cream
2. Don't be afraid to ask where your kids are going and who they'll be with. Get to know your kid's friends -- and their parents -- so you're familiar with their activities.
3. Try to be there after school when your child gets home.
4. Eat together often. Meals are a great time to talk about the day and bond.
5. Be a better listener. Ask and encourage questions. Ask your kid's input about family decisions. Showing your willingness to listen will make your child feel more comfortable about opening up to you.
6. Don't react in a way that will cut off further discussion. If your child says things that challenge or shock you, turn them into a calm discussion.
7. Be a living, day to day, example of your value system. Show the compassion, honesty, generosity and openness you want your child to have.
8. Know that there is no such thing as “do as I say, not as I do” when it comes to your kids.
9. Examine your own behaviour.
10. Reward good behaviour consistently and immediately. Expressions of love, appreciation, and thanks go a long way – even for kids who think themselves too old for hugs.
11. Accentuate the positive. Emphasize what your kid does right. Restrain the urge to be critical. Affection and respect will reinforce good (and change bad) behaviour. Embarrassment or uneasiness won't.
12. Create rules. Discuss in advance the consequences of breaking them. Don't make empty threats or let the rule-breaker off easy. Don't impose harsh or unexpected new punishments.
13. Set a curfew. Enforce it strictly, but be ready to negotiate on special occasions.
14. Have kids check in at regular times. Give them a phone card, change or even a pager, with clear rules for using it.
15. Call parents whose home is to be used for a party. On a party night, don't be afraid to stop in to say hello (and make sure that adult supervision is in place).
16. Listen to your instincts. Don't be afraid to intervene if your gut reaction tells you something's wrong.
17. Let your children know how much you care in every situation you can, and especially when they are having problems.
18. Keep a positive attitude about your ability to be a parent. Trust your instincts.
19. Take care of yourself. Meet your needs for support with other adults so you can establish healthy parent-child boundaries.
20. Take time to teach your children values while they are young. Live your own values every day.
21. Make your home a safe, secure, and positive environment. Provide appropriate privacy for each family member.
22. Get involved in your child's school, your neighbourhood, and your community. You, not the teachers and other authority figures in your child's life, are responsible for parenting your child.
23. Set clear rules and limits for your children. Be flexible and adjust the rules and limits as they grow and are able to set them for themselves.
24. Follow through with consequences for your children's misbehaviour. Be certain the consequences are immediate and relate to the misbehaviour, not your anger.
25. Let your children take responsibility for their own actions. They will learn quickly if misbehaviour results in unpleasant natural consequences.
26. Be a guide for your children. Offer to help with homework, in social situations, and with concerns about the future.



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Be there to help them direct and redirect their energy and to understand and express their feelings.

27. You are separate from your child. Let go of the responsibility for all of your children’s feelings or outcome of their decisions. Your children’s successes or failures are theirs, not yours.
28. Provide an environment for your children where a foundation of mutual appreciation, support, and respect is the basis of your relationship into their adult years.

## Here is a quick overview of the Ten Basic Principles:

### **What you do matters.**

“Tell yourself that every day. How you treat and respond to your child should come from a knowledgeable, deliberate sense of what you want to accomplish. Always ask yourself: What effect will my decision have on my child?”

### **You cannot be too loving.**

“When it comes to genuine expressions of warmth and affection, you cannot love your child too much. It is simply not possible to spoil a child with love. What we often think of as the product of spoiling a child is never the result of showing a child too much love. It is usually the consequence of giving a child things in place of love—things like leniency, lowered expectations or material possessions.”

### **Be involved in your child’s life.**

“Being an involved parent takes time and is hard work, and it often means rethinking and rearranging your priorities. It frequently means sacrificing what you want to do for what your child needs you to do. Be there mentally as well as physically.”

### **Adapt your parenting to fit your child.**

“Make sure your parenting keeps pace with your child’s development. You may wish you could slow down or freeze-frame your child’s life, but this is the last thing he wants. You may be fighting getting older, but all he wants is to grow up. The same drive for independence that is making your three-year-old say ‘no’ all the time is what’s motivating him to be toilet trained. The same intellectual growth spurt that is making your 13-year-old curious and inquisitive in the classroom also is making her argumentative at the dinner table.”

### **Establish and set rules.**

“If you don’t manage your child’s behaviour when he is young, he will have a hard time learning how to manage himself when he is older and you aren’t around. Any time of the day or night, you should always be able to answer these three questions: Where is my child? Who is with my child? What is my child doing? The rules your child has learned from you are going to shape the rules he applies to himself.”

### **Foster your child’s independence.**

“Setting limits helps your child develop a sense of self-control. Encouraging independence helps her develop a sense of self-direction. To be successful in life, she’s going to need both. Accepting that it is normal for children to push for autonomy is absolutely key to effective parenting. Many parents mistakenly equate their child’s independence with rebelliousness or disobedience. Children push for independence because it is part of human nature to want to feel in control rather than to feel controlled by someone else.”

### **Be consistent.**

“If your rules vary from day to day in an unpredictable fashion, or if you enforce them only intermittently, your child’s misbehaviour is your fault, not his. Your most important disciplinary tool is consistency. Identify your non-negotiables. The more your authority is based on wisdom and not on power, the less your child will challenge it.”



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## **Avoid harsh discipline.**

“Of all the forms of punishment that parents use, the one with the worst side effects is physical punishment. Children who are spanked, hit or slapped are more prone to fighting with other children. They are more likely to be bullies and more likely to use aggression to solve disputes with others.”

## **Explain your rules and decisions.**

“Good parents have expectations they want their child to live up to. Generally, parents over explain to young children and under explain to adolescents. What is obvious to you may not be evident to a 12-year-old. He doesn't have the priorities, judgment or experience that you have.”

## **Treat your child with respect.**

“The best way to get respectful treatment from your child is to treat him respectfully. You should give your child the same courtesies you would give to anyone else. Speak to him politely. Respect his opinion. Pay attention when he is speaking to you. Treat him kindly. Try to please him when you can. Children treat others the way their parents treat them. Your relationship with your child is the foundation for her relationships with others.”

There is no guarantee that following these guidelines will result in perfect parents... remember, there is no such thing!

“Raising children is not something we think of as especially scientific,” says Steinberg. “But parenting is one of the most well-researched areas in the entire field of social science. It has been studied for 75 years, and the findings have remained remarkably consistent over time.”

“The advice in the article is based on what scientists who study parenting have learned from decades of systematic research involving hundreds of thousands of families. What I've done is to synthesize and communicate what the experts have learned in a language that non-experts can understand.”

Good parenting, says Steinberg, is “parenting that fosters psychological adjustment—elements like honesty, empathy, self-reliance, kindness, cooperation, self-control and cheerfulness.

“Good parenting is parenting that helps children succeed in school,” he continues. “It promotes the development of intellectual curiosity, motivation to learn and desire to achieve. It deters children from anti-social behaviour, delinquency, and drug and alcohol use. And good parenting is parenting that helps protect children against the development of anxiety, depression, eating disorders and other types of psychological distress.”

“There is no more important job in any society than raising children, and there is no more important influence on how children develop than their parents.