



EMPOWERING
CHILDREN
FOUNDATION

10ten
Steps
TO
Become
A better
Parent

1 Love is the most important need of all children

The more you show love to your child, by giving them hugs and kisses, by saying “I love you”, the more they will want to prove they deserve it. Love builds a child’s confidence and self-esteem.

2 Listen carefully to what your child tells you

Take an interest in what they do and feel. Reassure them that strong feelings are fine – if they are expressed in the right way.

3 Limits have to be set, even in the most loving relationships

in which people are able to listen to each other. Part of being a parent is creating boundaries. Remember that it is natural and normal for children to test these boundaries. This is not being naughty; it is part of the learning process. Children feel more secure if you stick to the limits you have set, provided they are reasonable, even if children complain.

4 Laughter can help defuse the tension

Sometimes parents get so serious that they are not able to enjoy parenting. See the funny side of being a parent and allow yourself to laugh whenever possible.

5 Seeing the world from a child’s perspective

and imagining how your child feels is the key to understanding behaviour. Remember how it felt when you were a child and how confusing the adult world seemed when you felt unfairly treated.

Praise and encourage your Child

Expect them to behave well and encourage them to make efforts. Praise the good behaviour and try to ignore the bad. The more you nag, the less your child will listen.

Respect your Child the same way you would respect an adult

Involve them in decision making process, especially if a decision affects them. Listen carefully to their point of view. If you are tempted to say something hurtful, think how it would sound if you said it to an adult. Apologise if you have done a wrong thing / have acted inappropriately.

Set the order of the day

Small children feel more secure and conflicts can be avoided if they have a clear plan of the day. They feel happier with regular mealtimes, bed times, or times for noisy playing.

Every family needs certain rules

but try to be flexible with very small children. Once you decide on your family rules, be consistent. It can be very confusing for children if you introduce a rule one day, then the next day you cancel it. Sometimes you need different rules outside home which must be explained to children.

Do not forget about your own needs

If it all feels too much like hard work, and your patience is not up to it, take some time out just for yourself. Do something that makes you feel good. If you ever feel you are losing control or at the point of shouting, putting your child down or hitting, walk away, calm down and count to ten.

How can you help your child to behave well

Most parents worry whether they do the right thing. Of course there is no such thing as 'a perfect parent'. Every once in a while parents run into difficulties and are concerned whether they have positive influence over their children. They ask themselves the question, what to do to make children behave well. For many parents this problem can prove to be very difficult. It seems that everyone has an opinion about how to raise children. We know that children need boundaries so that they can feel safe, but defining those boundaries is not an easy task.

This leaflet shows positive ways to encourage children to behave well. A positive approach relies on praising your child and encouraging it to desirable behaviour and making sure that we pay attention to the child when it behaves well. A positive approach does not include the beating of a child. Some parents fear that if they will not exercise physical punishment they will lose control over their children, but reality is quite different. The more we show love and respect to our children, and the more children understand why we want them to behave in a certain way, the more they will want to meet our expectations. Adopting this approach will allow parents to treat any punishment is a last resort.

Positive choices made by parents

Give the children an example of good behaviour. Children learn by imitating the behaviour of others. Certainly they will imitate your behaviour. Change the environment, not the child. It's better to keep valuable, dangerous or fragile items out of a child's reach, than to punish them for their natural curiosity.

Express your wishes positively and tell your child what you expect from them, not just what you don't want them to do.

Set realistic demands. Remember to ask yourself a question whether your demands match the child's age and situation. You have to show more patience if your child is still very small, or when ill or tired. Do not rely too much on rewards and punishments. As children grow up, punishments and rewards become less effective. Explain the reasons behind your decisions. Negotiate with older children, use distraction tactics in the case of small children.

Choose upbringing without beating and shouting. At the beginning smacking may seem effective, but it may happen that over time parents have to hit harder and harder to achieve the same effect. Yelling at children or constantly criticizing them is sometimes equally harmful and it can lead to long-term emotional problems. Such punishment does not help the child to develop self-control in themselves and respect for others.

This gives food for thought!

The facts that may surprise you

Sometimes naughtiness and disobedience are signs of good health! Children are enthusiastic and curious by nature. Sometimes it makes them behave in a way that parents call being naughty, but it would be very strange if the child never tried new things nor made mistakes. It does not mean that children should be allowed to do anything they want! They need to know the rules to be respected in your family and learn to interact with others. Helping children in developing their self-control takes time and patience.

Children often do not understand why they are punished. Research shows that the principles set by adults often seem unclear to children. Children do not always understand what they have done wrong. It happens especially when a child is smacked, as the child is too angry and upset to think clearly.

By giving children the choice, we help them to behave better. Do not argue with your children about things that do not matter. Let them make their own choices – let them decide what to wear or eat, so they won't be hurt by the fact that you constantly control them. Such attitude helps prevent attacks of anger and problematic behaviour.

Afterthought of a parent

«It all depends on my mood. I try to explain to my children why a certain behaviour is wrong, or ignore this behaviour – both methods are effective. But when I'm in a bad mood or I lose control of myself – then I shout or smack my child».

Parents are only humans, and bringing up children seems to be a hard work sometimes, especially when you have many other problems to cope with. Perhaps you happen to release stress at the expense of your child, however, you feel guilty afterwards.

One can understand why parents beat their children. However, as the research shows, often they do not want to do it – they beat because they are helpless, stressed and feel bad about the fact that were unable to control themselves. Beating children is not an effective method to persuade them to behave well, it teaches aggression, provokes rebellion and weakens the bond between the parent and the child.

Copyright © 2021 Empowering Children Foundation

Empowering Children Foundation

03-926 Warsaw, ul. Walecznych 59

tel. 22 616 02 68;

biuro@fdds.pl,

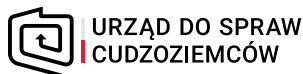
www.fdds.pl



Graphic design: Kasia Dippel

Typesetting: Norbert Grzelka

ISBN 83-919864-5-4



The typesetting and printing of the publication are co-financed by the project «Protecting children, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, from violence», funded by the Programme «Home Affairs» implemented under the Norwegian Funds 2014–2021. The programme is at the disposal of the Minister of Interior and Administration.

The development of the booklet was inspired by the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) publication, A guide to better parenting. London 2002.