

Tips for Parents on Effective Family Management Techniques

Hill M. Walker, 1992

Research on parenting has identified five key practices that are very important in the upbringing of well-adjusted children. Each of these practices is briefly discussed below. Adherence to these simple, yet important practices in your parenting efforts will have a very powerful, positive impact on your child and your relationship with him or her. Further, they will contribute to a much more positive set of family dynamics.

1. **Discipline.** Parental discipline needs to be fair, consistent and predictable. It should never be harsh or punitive. There should be a logical relationship between child behavior and the consequences that are applied to it.



2. **Monitoring.** Careful parental monitoring of a child's activities, whereabouts and friendships/peer associations is one of the single most important things that parents can do to ensure that their children grow up healthy, well-adjusted and safe.



3. **Parent Involvement.** This practice involves simply spending time with your child in either structured or unstructured activities. The parent-child contact is the important thing and the activity chosen is usually incidental to the time spent together and the positive interactions that occur.



4. **Positive Parenting Techniques.** Positive parenting means being supportive and encouraging to your child. It is important to establish a warm, caring relationship between you that involves mutual respect and affection. In this way, you will be better able to influence your child in the right directions using techniques like social praise and approval, persuasion, and logical thinking, without resorting to punishment and other negative methods of behavioral control.



5. **Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution/Crisis Intervention.** During their upbringing children experience many minor crises that, nevertheless, loom very large in their lives. When they bring problems to their parents for assistance, it is **very** important that they respond immediately and completely. Alternatives should be developed for them to consider in solving the problem and they should be encouraged to choose one that is acceptable and works for them. Children should **always** have the confidence that such problems will receive a fair hearing and that they will have access to your assistance as needed.



The following rules are offered for your consideration in parenting your child. They can be very helpful in the prevention of adjustment problems later in your child's life.



Set up a daily debriefing time in which you review the child's day and what it was like. "Tell me what you did today.", "What did you do that was fun or interesting?", "Who did you play or talk with?", "Did anything happen that was a problem or that you didn't like?" are excellent ways to conduct such a debriefing. Why should you debrief? First, it tells the child that you care for them and are concerned about what happens in their life. It is also an excellent method for screening to detect problems in the child's life that you might not discover otherwise. Once a child starts schooling, it is extremely important to conduct a daily briefing of this type.

Monitor your child's activities, behavior, schedules, whereabouts, friendships and associations very carefully. It is important to provide such monitoring in a positive, caring manner but to do so in a way that is not smothering or unpleasant. Careful monitoring of this type can be a very powerful protective factor in the child's life. As your child grows and matures, such monitoring may have to change form and become more subtle and less direct. However, it is extremely important that it occur, especially as s/he enters adolescence, when risks of problems are so much greater.



Children should be **taught positive attitudes toward school**, and schooling should be perceived as a highly-valued activity. A pattern of cooperative, prosocial behavior will do a great deal to foster a good start in school that will ensure both academic and social development over the long term.

The most important skill you can teach your child prior to entering school is listening as your **read to him or her**. Your child should see the material you are reading and associate the sound of words with their symbols on the page. This activity is an important precondition for developing a child who is a good reader and who is interested in reading. It is one of the very best things that can be done to prevent later school failure and to help ensure academic success.

