

## 1- Identifying Your Long-Term Goals

A key to healthy relationships and effective teaching is to see short-term challenges as *opportunities* to work toward our long-term goals.

When you feel your muscles begin to tense, your heart rate begin to speed up, and your voice begin to rise, this is a signal that you have an opportunity to teach your child something important. You have an opportunity to teach your child how to:

- manage stress
- communicate respectfully even when frustrated
- handle conflict without hitting
- consider other people's feelings
- achieve your goal without harming others physically or emotionally

Stress and frustration give you opportunities to be a role model for your children. When you cope well, you show them how to cope with their own frustration.

## 2 -Providing warmth

When children feel afraid, they lose their motivation to try. They can become resentful, anxious, or depressed. Children learn best when they feel respected, understood, trusted, safe, secure and loved.

This is warmth. Warmth is physical and emotional security. In an atmosphere of warmth, children feel safe, even if they make mistakes. They trust their parents, which builds their confidence and their motivation to try.

They also learn the importance of empathy and respect for others' feelings. A warm home climate provides the foundation for meeting your long-term goals.

How do parents provide warmth to their children? They do this by:

- showing them they are loved, even when they do something wrong
- comforting them when they are hurt or afraid
- listening to them
- looking at the situation from their point of view
- playing with them
- laughing with them
- supporting them when they are facing challenges
- encouraging them when they have to do something difficult
- telling them they believe in them
- recognizing their efforts and successes
- showing them that they trust them
- having fun with them
- hugging them
- reading to them
- saying, "I love you."

Warmth is absolutely necessary to building a strong, healthy parent-child relationship. It must be present at all times. But it is not sufficient. Warmth must always be accompanied by structure.

### **3- Providing structure**

If we set rules for children that we do not follow ourselves, or expect them to figure things out and punish them when they make mistakes, they will feel confused and anxious. If we try to force them to behave in certain ways, they will resist. If we hurt them when they make mistakes, they will become afraid to try. Just like us, children learn best when they have information, when they are helped to find constructive ways of meeting their goals, and when they understand the reasons for rules and guidelines. This is structure. Structure is information and clear, respectful communication. Structure is not coercion, control or punishment. Structure gives children the tools they need to succeed when you're not there.

How do parents provide structure? They do this by:

- acting as positive role models and guides
- explaining the reasons for rules
- involving their children in setting the rules
- explaining their point of view and listening to their children's point of view
- helping their children find ways to fix their mistakes in a way that helps them to learn
- teaching them about the effects of their actions on other people
- talking with them often
- being fair and flexible
- controlling anger and avoiding threats
- preparing them for difficult situations by telling them what to expect and how they can cope
- giving them the information they need to make good decisions
- avoiding threats of hitting, monsters or other things that children fear, or taking away love

### **4 - Understanding How Children Think And Feel**

A child's development is an ongoing, never-ending process. It is because children change that we are able to teach them new information and new skills. All learning builds on prior learning - and forms a foundation for future learning. When we see the world through the eyes of a 1-year-old, a 5-year-old or a 13-year-old, we can begin to understand their behaviour. It always reflects the way they see the world at a particular stage of development.

To guide our children effectively, we need to:

- have realistic expectations of our children's abilities at different ages
- understand that they might not have the experiences or information they need in order to succeed
- reflect on what we could do differently to help them learn
- recognize that their perspectives could be different from ours

### **5. Let Your Children Help You**

Parents sometimes inadvertently miss out on opportunities to forge closer relationships by not allowing their child to help them with various tasks and chores. Unloading groceries after going to the store is a good example of something that children of most ages can and should assist with. Choosing which shoes look better with your dress lets a child know you value her opinion. Of course, if you ask, be prepared to accept and live with the choice made!

## **6. Play With Your Children**

The key is to really play with your children. Play with dolls, ball, make believe, checkers, sing songs, or whatever is fun and interesting. It doesn't matter what you play, just enjoy each other! Let kids see your silly side. Older kids enjoy cards, chess, computer games, while younger ones will have fun playing about anything...as long as it involves you!

## **7. Eat Meals As A Family**

You've heard this before, and it really is important! Eating together sets the stage for conversation and sharing. Turn the TV off, and don't rush through a meal. When schedules permit, really talk and enjoy one another. It can become a quality time most remembered by young and old alike.

## **8. Seek Out One-On-One Opportunities Often**

Some parents have special nights or "standing dates" with their children to create that one-on-one opportunity. Whether it is a walk around the neighborhood, a special trip to a playground, or just a movie night with just the two of you, it is important to celebrate each child individually. Although it is more of a challenge the more children in a family, it is really achievable! Think creatively and the opportunities created will be ones that you remember in the future.

## **9 -Monitor your child's attitude.**

Parents should monitor their children's attitude, but that doesn't mean you should poke your nose in their affairs. Remember, ask them question about certain things you need to know always with a mild voice. As a parent, you have every right to know your child's affair and monitor your child's life but that does not imply poke nosing. When a parent pokes nose on its child affair, it will make the latter to be secretive and when your child starts being secretive, he will no longer trust telling you things and will go on trusting their friends, these who will handle him/her wrong advice that will lead to troubles in the future.

## **10. Make Them A Priority In Your Life**

Your children need to know that you believe they are a priority in your life. Children can observe excessive stress and notice when they feel you are not paying them attention. Sometimes, part of being a parent is not worrying about the small stuff and enjoying your children. They grow up so fast, and every day is special.

Spend plenty of time with your child. Parents should spend plenty of time with their children because this will later ensure that they know they are being cared for and loved. This will also lead to a nice atmosphere in the house.

Tell your child you love him every day -- no matter his age. Even on trying days or after a parent-child disagreement, when you don't exactly "like your child" at that moment, it is more important

than ever to express your love. A simple "I love you" goes a long way toward developing and then strengthening a relationship.

**Internet Sources:**

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