

## Nine steps to more effective parenting

Raising children is one of the toughest and most fulfilling jobs in the world. Here are some ways to tackle your child-rearing responsibilities.

### NURTURE YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM.

Children start developing their sense of self as babies when they see themselves through your eyes. Your tone of voice, your body language, and your every expression are absorbed by your child. Your words and actions as parents affect your child's developing self-image more than anything else in his world.

CATCH YOUR CHILD BEING GOOD. **Have you ever stopped to think about how many times you react negatively to your child in a given day?** You may find that you are criticizing far more than you are complimenting. **How would you feel about a boss who treated you with that much negative guidance, even if well-intentioned?**

The more effective approach is to catch your child doing something right. **Positive statements will do more to encourage good behavior over the long run than repeated scolding.**

### SET LIMITS AND BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR DISCIPLINE.

Discipline is necessary in every household. The goal of discipline is to help children choose acceptable behaviors and learn self-control. Children may test the limits you establish for them, but they need those limits to grow into responsible adults. Establishing house rules will help children understand your expectations and develop self-control. Some house rules might include: no TV until homework is done, and no hitting, name-calling, or hurtful teasing is allowed.

### MAKE TIME FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

With so many demands on your time, it's often difficult for parents and children to get together for a family meal, let alone spend some quality time together. But there is probably nothing your child would like more. Get up 10 minutes earlier in the morning so you can eat breakfast with your child, or leave the dishes in the sink and take a walk after dinner. **Children who are not getting the attention they want from their parents often act out or misbehave because they are assured of being noticed that way.**

### BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL.

Young children learn a great deal about how to act by watching you. The younger they are, the more cues they take from you. Model the traits you wish to cultivate in your child: respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness, tolerance. Exhibit unselfish behavior. Do things for other people without expecting a reward. Express thanks and offer compliments. Above all, treat your children the way you expect other people to treat you. Source: Kids Health