

Family Focus

Top Ten Tips for Parenting Young Children...

Encourage play. Kids use games and stories to express themselves. By participating in play you can pick up useful information about your kids' friends, school activities and other interests.

Remember that kids don't communicate the way adults do. Use brief and to-the-point messages without excessive detail, and make the correlation between what you're saying, and how it affects their perspective of the world around them.

Be a patient listener. Learning how to communicate verbally is important for children, so be patient, and recognize that children need more time than adults to 'put into words' what it is they are trying to say.

Be clear and consistent in what you allow your child to do. Consistency reduces anxiety and uncertainty, and sets clear boundaries about what is appropriate behaviour and what is not.

Ease the transition from one daily activity to another by giving a few minutes notice to help your child prepare for the change.

Involve your children in day-to-day decisions (on an age appropriate basis) to demonstrate how others value their thoughts and feelings.

Teach your child it's okay to make mistakes. Children learn from experience and sometimes mistakes and their outcomes teach them valuable lessons.

Build your child's self-esteem and be descriptive, generous, and detailed when you applaud your child's actions or deeds.

Be a role model. Children are not born knowing what is acceptable or unacceptable. By watching your behaviour and actions they learn their own.

Say these words out loud and often: "You're important." "I love you." "I'm proud of you." "I'm so glad you're here." These are the things that your children need to hear.

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