



Effective Parenting

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Hidden Messages

What Our Words and Actions Are Really Telling Our Children

Even the best-informed parents will be shocked to discover that they have unintentionally been sending their kids the wrong messages. Parents should think about how children translate their parents' words and actions into terms they can understand. Parents should know that — despite their best intentions — they may be making mistakes in their everyday interactions with their children.

Children do not always react outwardly to what they hear or see. However, if you could see into their hearts, you would find a record of every careless word, every thoughtless action, every adult laugh, that here, in the most tender and vulnerable of places, was not found so funny.

Children struggle through the growing-up process, and along the way they question who they are and what their meaning is to this world and to their parents. A parent's potent words, and the multitude of other comments, gestures and actions, help a child paint a picture of who he really is, and how important he is in this world. How tragic for that child if, despite how we *really* feel, that painting is not the masterpiece we envision!

Changes You Can Make

Given the extreme importance of your words, it simply makes good sense to choose them carefully. From now on, if your child is within hearing distance assume that he may be listening—and don't say anything about him that you wouldn't say to him.

Children learn from the example that parents provide: If you read, they'll read; If you eat healthy food, they'll eat healthy food; and if you exercise regularly, so will they.



Combined Strategy for Internet Safety

The Internet is a valuable educational and social resource for children. However, it can also expose our children to danger through their discovery of inappropriate materials and experiences. Though the public debate over Internet safety has been cast in terms of whether or not filters are desirable or effective, the most important way to keep kids safe on the Internet is to teach them to make wise choices about what they view and what they participate in, such as chat rooms.

What the Internet provides

With a few clicks of the mouse, a child could access the complete literary works of Shakespeare and a detailed mapping of the social structure of an ant colony. Through search engines such as Google, a child trying to find images of dolls can type "doll pictures" and obtain a number of legitimate sites. However, if the child used Internet slang and typed "doll pics," the sites that would come up would be very different indeed—and highly disturbing to many.

For kids, the Internet and associated technologies are a rich environment that includes not only Web browsers and e-mail but also instant messaging, chat rooms, peer-to-peer connections, Usenet groups, MP3 (digital audio) players, ... etc.

Educating a child for safety

No one single solution exists to protect kids on the Internet. Rather, protection has to rest on social and educational strategies to teach responsible and safe use coupled with technology, public policy, and law enforcement to shape the environment in which choice is exercised.

A foundational component of Internet safety education is parent involvement and supervision. Parents should become aware of the types of good and bad material and experiences that are available online; their son's or daughter's experience online may be vastly different from their own. For that matter, a child's experience away from school could also differ dramatically with that in the classroom.

10 Ways to Motivate Your Child to Learn



- Fill your child's world with reading. Take turns reading with your older child, or establish a family reading time when everyone reads his own book.
- Encourage him to express his opinion, talk about his feelings, and make choices. He can pick out a side dish to go with dinner and select his own extracurricular activities.
- Show enthusiasm for your child's interests and encourage him to explore subjects that fascinate him.
- Provide him with play opportunities that support different kinds of learning styles -- from listening and visual learning to sorting and sequencing.
- Point out the new things *you* learn with enthusiasm. Discuss the different ways you find new information, whether you're looking for a new recipe on the Internet or trying a new computer program.
- Ask about what he's learning in school, not about his grades or test scores. "Even if he doesn't do well grade-wise compared to the other students, he might still be learning and improving, and you don't want to discourage that."
- Help your child organize his school papers and assignments so he feels in control of her work.
- Celebrate achievements, no matter how small. finishing a book allows your child an hour of video games. You'll offer positive reinforcement that will inspire him to keep learning and challenging himself. "
- Focus on strengths, encouraging developing talents. Even if he didn't ace his math test, he may have written a good poem in English class. In addition to a workbook for math practice, give him a writing journal.
- Turn everyday events into learning opportunities.



Your Child: Too Sick for School?

When should you keep your child home from school?

A little snuffle. A slight cough. "I don't feel good," says your child, but how do you really know: Should this kid stay home, or go to school?

With cold symptoms, fever (or lack of it) helps determine the answer. "If there's no fever, it's generally OK to send the child to school." If your child feels pretty good, then it's fine to send the child to school."

But when in doubt, you should always call your pediatric provider for advice.

Also, if your child frequently claims to be "sick" but is fine on weekends, that's a sign of other issues. "There may be trouble at school," he notes.



Our Purpose

Understanding how stressful life is and living in a demanding community, we offer busy parents some effective tips to help your children succeed in school and life. On your behalf, we search for and provide you with the most practical ideas to promote academic success, effective parenting, a solid home-and-school partnership, healthy habits, and positive character traits.