
Don't

Avoid giving your child solutions for his problems.

Avoid doing for your child what she can do herself.

Don't lecture. Children will hear you for only the first 10-15 seconds.

Avoid shaming or embarrassing your child for making poor decisions or failing to follow through with her responsibilities.

Avoid "I told you so's" or "rubbing it in".

Avoid giving many reminders to your child, as this robs him of the opportunity to learn there are consequences for mistakes.

Avoid rescuing your child from negative consequences of his behavior.

Don't let your child turn the focus away from her own behavior on to someone else's.

Don't make excuses for your child.

Don't blame your child's misbehavior on someone else or circumstances beyond his control, for example, "He was just born stubborn and there's not a thing he or I can do about it", or "If it weren't for that teacher, he wouldn't get into so much trouble", or, "It seems like he only gets in trouble when he is with a certain friend".

Don't refuse to take responsibility for your own actions.

Resources

Parenting Teenagers by Don Dinkmeyer and Gary D. McKay.

Parenting with Love and Logic by Jim Fay and Foster Kline

P.E.T. Parent Effectiveness Training by Thomas Gordon.

Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World by Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen.

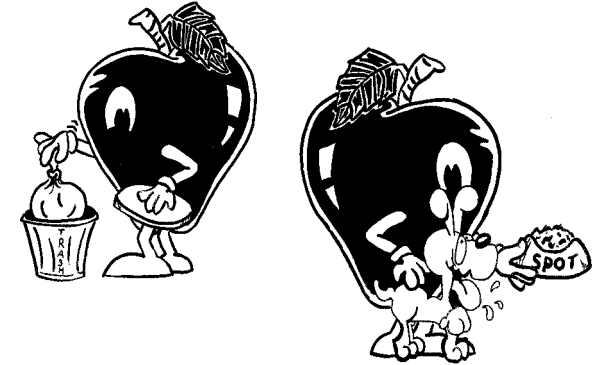
Systematic Training For Effective Parenting (STEP): Parents Handbook by Don Dinkmeyer and Gary D. McKay.

A resource provided by LPS School Social Workers...because families matter.

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RAISING RESPONSIBLE KIDS



What is Responsibility?

Being responsible means meeting our obligations and accepting the consequences of our actions. For children these include things such as school attendance, homework, coming home on time and doing chores. Children are not born "responsible". They rely on parents and others in their world to help them learn this behavior.

Children will be more likely to want to be responsible and meet your expectations when their relationship with you is one of mutual respect. The parent-child relationship must include more than the parents expectations of the child. Children also have needs and expectations of their parents. Time spent together in activities enjoyable to both parent and child, positive communication and a genuine interest in each other, are the building blocks of a relationship in which each person cares about working together.

Without a strong positive relationship, children are likely to choose not to cooperate and to resist your directions and requests. Helping your child develop a sense of responsibility requires skill, patience and modeling responsible behavior yourself.

Regular family meetings are helpful to build the effective communication and mutual respect that in turn builds cooperation and responsibility. Family meeting time can be used to involve children in decision making and problem solving, as well to express and listen to feelings.

Do

Allow your child to experience and accept the natural consequences of his actions unless health and safety are at risk. Allowing your child to make mistakes provides an opportunity to learn. It gives him the message that he is responsible for his behavior.

Provide logical consequences for problem behaviors when natural consequences don't exist, or may not be adequate. Logical consequences are related to the problem behavior. For example, if a child breaks a rule about riding his bike, the logical consequence would involve some restriction of the use of his bike.

Include your child in deciding on what the consequence will be for good and bad choices. For example, your child suggests she be able to spend time with friends on Saturdays after she cleans her room, or that she has to stay home if she doesn't clean her room.

Planning consequences ahead of time can ensure that they will be fair and logical, not just an angry reaction. It is important that consequences are set which parents can enforce consistently.

Discuss problem situations when they arise with your child. Allow her to come up with possible solutions. Give children time to think, analyze and problem solve.

Recognize and acknowledge your child's efforts to make good choices, but also let your child know she is loved and cared about, even when she makes bad decisions.

Help your child to see how his mistakes are a problem to herself or others.

Model responsible behavior. For example, leave a note saying where you are and when you'll be home, come home when you say you will, keep your word, etc.

Involve your child in household chores. Remember that effort is more important than perfection.

Be aware of what your child can realistically be responsible for, given her age and level of development.

Consider your child's interests and need for variety when setting responsibilities/chores.

Involve your child in planning his chores and other responsibilities and in setting time lines for their completion, for example "before dinner", "before I go to soccer".

Be open to your child's way of accomplishing things, even when it differs with your ideas and knowledge of how to "do it better".

Be clear in stating your expectations.

Allow your child to check her own work and decide how she's doing.

Be aware of your attitude about doing chores. Your child will likely mirror your attitude.

Pitch in, on occasion, to help your child complete her tasks. This helps her experience your cooperation and interest and can be a good time together.

Let your child know that his contributions and good behaviors are valued by the family.

Encourage your child to be helpful whether at home, school or play.

Children need a balance of play time and responsibility. Both are important.
