

Children Need Guidance

Being a parent is a very important job. The future well-being of our society depends on it.

Parents need to be healthy, mature, and able to handle the new situations that come with children. An especially important thing when there are two parents in the home is that they love and respect each other. Whether there are two parents or only one parent, love among family members helps make a happier home and positive relationships.

Parenting is a tough job that demands

- Interest
- Knowledge
- Energy
- Enthusiasm
- Devotion
- Skill
- Time
- Dependability
- Patience
- Self-sacrifice
- Money
- Wisdom

Parenting is influenced by the kind of person the parent is, the family and home environment, and the individuality of the child.

Each parent is different. Each has a different background and upbringing. Each parent has a different self-concept and set of values. Each has different health patterns, energy levels, and levels of emotional control.

Each family and home is different. Differences include the number of children, family finances and job security, the house or apartment, and the neighborhood.

Each child is different. Each child has a different personality and temperament. Each develops at a different rate, has different health patterns, and different relationships with other family members.

Parenting is a demanding job. It can be a tough one, but it can also be very rewarding.

What Children Need

- Your love. Your child needs to be loved “as is.” Children need love whether they are right or wrong, happy or sad, pretty or plain.
- Your acceptance. Never reject a child because of poor behavior. Behavior may not always be acceptable; the child must always be accepted.
- Your respect. Treat your child as a valued human being. Let your child make choices. Explain your decisions. Have confidence in your child’s abilities.
- Your honesty. Children need to know and trust people. Lies, half-truths, and deceptions confuse a child.
- Your fairness. Your child needs to know the rules for good behavior and that you will enforce the rules fairly.
- Your understanding. A child has the right to be understood. Listen to your child. If you don’t listen and learn, you can never understand.
- Your patience. Parents can easily expect too much. Children need to be taught and told and shown again and again. When they are hurried and pressured, they often do less than they are able to do.
- Your consistency. Adult behavior should be consistent—the same today and tomorrow. Changing rules too often confuses children and makes them feel insecure.
- Your time. Your child needs your attention and companionship. Take time to listen, learn, teach, play, read, and watch. If you don’t, who will?
- Your empathy. Try to feel what the child feels, see things as the child sees them, and understand things as the child understands them.
- Your Flexibility. As your child grows and changes, the way you guide your child should change, too. Grow with your child; adjust attitudes, rules, and discipline.



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Guidance at Various Ages

Age makes a difference in how a child needs to be guided and disciplined. Guidance should be matched with the child's age and ability to understand. Understanding how children grow and develop helps parents guide their child.

Children grow in four ways:

- Physically: Muscles and bones grow larger and stronger; coordination improves.
- Mentally: The ability to think and reason improves. Children are able to make better decisions. They can perform more complex tasks, and they can be more responsible.
- Socially: Skill in playing and working with others develops. Children become interested in groups and boy-girl relationships.
- Emotionally: Control of emotions and feelings grows. Children become able to understand the feelings of others.

Guiding and disciplining children in the right way and at the right time shows children their parents—

- love them.
- want them to be happy, responsible, and caring.
- want them to learn.

Children learn by watching others and by what makes them feel good, what gets them attention, and through the love they get from others.

When children are poorly disciplined or punished, they feel unloved, bad, stupid, or incapable; they may give up trying to learn.

Children's Growth Patterns

- One-year-olds learn fast. They are curious and explore and get into dangerous situations. They make messes.
- Two-year-olds learn how to get what they want. They don't want to share their things, they want to do things the same way over and over, and they say "no."
- Three-year-olds try to please. They mind fairly well and can accept suggestions and follow orders.
- Four-year-olds tend to be bossy and to think they are important. They brag and stretch the truth. They can follow rules.
- Five-year-olds are dependable. They like praise, want to please, and can cooperate with adults and other children.
- Six-year-olds are capable and independent. They like to help out with routines. They have lots of energy and like physical things. They need praise and encouragement.
- Seven-year-olds are less stubborn, play easily with others and are active and boisterous. They sift and sort information to make sense out of it and begin to reason. They are becoming more aware of themselves and others.
- Eight-year-olds are outgoing, curious, and self-confident. They talk a lot and gossip. They are more self-aware and self-judging. They recognize ways they differ from others and are less apt to withdraw. They can work independently but need direction. Friends of the same sex are important. They like action and play.
- Nine-year-olds have a new level of maturity, self-confidence, and independence. Behavior is more refined. They have more self-control; emotional outbursts are fewer. There is an increased awareness of sex and boy-girl behavior. Friendships are more solid. They like to please and to be chosen. They like organized games and activities, but can spend more time alone.
- Ten-year-olds tend to fit in at home, at school, and at play. They feel good about who they are and what they can do. They love praise. Friends are important and may change quickly. They like organized games and belonging to clubs and groups. Girls are slightly more advanced physically and sexually than are boys. Moodiness is short-lived and infrequent.
- Eleven-year-olds may grow rapidly. Activity, appetite, and energy levels increase. They can be loud, rude, boorish. They like to take chances and defy rules. They like to argue with adults, yet they can be cooperative and friendly. Friends are very important, and opposite-sex interests emerge. They tend to avoid complicated tasks.
- Twelve-year-olds start to mature sexually, with changes in growth, activities, and behavior. Those not entering puberty remain much as they are. Rapid growth may cause tiredness, moodiness, bickering, and overanxiousness. Friends and groups are more important; while personal habits and manners take on less importance.



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