1. Top Parenting Tips for Success

1. **Make rules clear-** Your child is looking for you to set the rules and boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable. State the rule in a clear and concise way. You can even make a list that is hung up for everyone to see. Let them know why we act or do not act in that manor. For example: instead of saying “don’t jump on the couch” say “we do not jump on the couch because you can fall and get hurt. Also, you can ruin the couch.”
2. **Spend time together-** It is important to spend time with your child regularly. It can be hard to manage, but fitting in at least 10 minutes a day to talk to your child is important. Some common family time may be at the dinner table or before bed. Sometimes negative behavior is due to attention seeking as a result of feeling ignored.
3. **Have a routine-** Routines are very important to children. It is necessary to establish a set time when things will happen. Children should have a set time to wake up, go to school, do homework, eat dinner, and go to bed. Let your child know if it’s changing or if something unusual is going to happen. Homework should always be a part of the routine. It reinforces school and learning as a priority, and shows the parents values education.
4. **Positive reinforcement-** Use positive reinforcement whenever a child successfully behaves in the way you have asked or behaves in an appropriate manor. Give verbal praise (ie. “great job”, “I’m so proud of you”, “nice work”) and physical attention (ie. Pat on the back, hugs or kisses). Try to avoid many material praises or extravagant gifts.
5. **Use transition statements-** Some children have difficulty with transitions. It’s helpful to give them a warning before a change will take place. For example, "In 5 minutes, play time will be over," or “In 3 minutes, we’re going to get ready for bed.”
6. **Use the countdown method-** When a child is not listening, it is helpful to count out loud up to three. For example, “I’m going to count to three and by then you need to\_\_\_\_\_\_. one. two. three.” You are giving them a warning of what is expected of them and by counting you are giving them time to comply. If by the time you reach three, and the child is not doing what was asked, they should receive a consequence. You can even tell them what the consequence will be if you reach three beforehand.
7. **Parental accord-** If two parents are involved, they must be in unity with the house rules, the consequences, and the procedures for carrying out the consequences. Be sure you both are in complete agreement with the rules before trying to enforce them; otherwise it creates confusion and manipulation.
8. **Providing consequences-** For rules that are not being followed, the parent **should** establish consequences. The severity of the punishment should be related to the violation. Children need to learn there are consequences for not listening or following the rules. Even as adults we face natural consequences for our actions such as traffic fines, being terminated from a job, or even jail.
9. **Reward System-** If behavior or following the rules is a battle, you may consider a reward system which will incentivize them for good behavior and tasks completed. Have a clear system for incentives (like a stickers or gold stars) where they can earn rewards for appropriate behavior. Always follow through with rewards. Rewards can be choosing a restaurant or earning time to watch TV or play electronics. Remember, it is important to monitor you child’s time on these devices as well as what your child is watching or playing for appropriate content. Example rewards and example Reward System Chart enclosed.
10. **School Affairs**- It is important parents support teachers and are aware of their child’s academics from a young age. Have consistent communication with your child’s teacher to be aware of their progress. If the student misbehaves at school it is important to talk to them at home and follow it up with a consequence. For example, if a student misbehaves at school, this negative behavior is reinforced if the child gets a special treat in the evening. By rewarding or giving consequences for school behavior the student will know their parent takes school and school behavior seriously.

**Reward & Consequence List**

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| --- | --- |
| **Reward Ideas:** | **Consequence Ideas:** |
| Craft projects (playing with clay, painting)Playing a game of child’s choiceGoing to the playground/parkGetting an extra story read aloudChoosing a movie to rentHaving a playdate/sleep overFun activity (museum, bowling, mini-golf, arcade, biking, swimming)Getting a treat/meal outChoosing a small toy/item from dollar store | Loss of TV privilegesLoss of video games privilegesLoss of cell phone privilegesLoss of computer time privilegesGo to bed earlyDoing an additional choreTime out (generally 1 minute for each year of age) (can use car seat for time out when out of house)Loss of dessert (if they usually get one) |

**Reward System Chart- example\*\***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  Tasks | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| CompletesHomework |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Completes Chores |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 minutes reading |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Goes to bed ontime |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Total stars |
| Total Stars |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\*\*This is an example Reward System Chart, and you can change the tasks to fit the rules of your household. When starting a Reward System Chart, start with only a couple tasks and slowly increase tasks, because too many can be overwhelming. Child should get sticker when task is completed. If multiple reminders are given (more than 2 or 3) child does not earn a sticker. At the end of the week the stickers are totaled and child can earn a small reward for their effort.

Depending on severity of behaviors, you can start easy and then slowly increase how many stickers they must earn for prize. For example, the first and second week they need 18 total stickers to earn reward, but the third and fourth week they need 22 stickers, and the fifth and sixth week they need 26 stickers. Numbers should slowly increase until target behaviors are achieved.