

The Mind's Eye

Proactive Parenting

Q. With summer vacation around the corner, I will be spending a lot of time with my children soon. How can I get the most from parenting my kids this summer?

A. There are many ways to parent, but one of the best ways is proactive parenting. Proactive parenting involves guiding children so that they develop acceptable behavioral patterns.

Here are some simple tips that can help you become a more proactive parent this summer:

Teach by example—for instance, if you want your child to clean up, then you must clean up after yourself, too.

Teach independence—don't do tasks for your kids that they can do on their own (such as making their beds).

Teach responsibility—give your child age-appropriate choices to make, and hold them accountable.

Present a united front—all persons parenting a child must have similar policies for and similar reactions to his/her behavior.

Set ground rules—create rules that are reasonable and enforceable, and make sure children adhere to these.

Prioritize—know which battles to fight; don't engage in conflicts about trivial, insignificant misbehavior or minor rule violations.

Ignore bad behavior, when possible—never ignore destructive or disrespectful behavior, but teasing, whining and temper tantrums are attention-getting devices that should be ignored.

Don't give in—when it's time to fight the battle, you must win, even if your child starts to cry and whine.

Make consequences matter—if your child breaks a rule, consequences should be immediate and meaningful.

Remain calm and don't get personal—when disciplining your child, stay cool and maintain a sense of humor, perspective, and personal/emotional distance from your child's problems.

Realize that accidents happen—when you accuse a child of doing something on purpose that was, in reality, an accident, then they may feel incapable of doing anything right.

Don't set traps—attempting to trick children into confessions only leads to lies.

Give your child attention—when your child is behaving appropriately, give them attention; undivided attention can work wonders in improving a relationship with a child.

Empathize—try to relate to the feelings your child expresses; empathy can go a long way.

Tell the truth—be honest with your kids, but do not burden them with adult worries such as financial matters or serious illness.

Understand and accept your child—just like adults, children have their strengths and weaknesses; they will never be perfect!

Show love—take time to talk and listen to kids, and play with them, encourage them, support them and discipline them.



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