

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Five Steps for More Effective Parenting

1. Boost Your Child's Self-Esteem

Kids start developing their sense of self as babies when they see themselves through their parents' eyes. Praising accomplishments, however small, will make them feel proud; letting kids do things independently will make them feel capable and strong. By contrast, belittling comments or comparing a child unfavorably with another will make kids feel worthless. Choose your words carefully and be compassionate. Let your kids know that everyone makes mistakes and that you still love them, even when you don't love their behavior.

2. Catch Kids Being Good

Make a point of finding something to praise every day. Be generous with rewards — your love, hugs and compliments can work wonders and are often reward enough. Soon you will find you are "growing" more of the behavior you would like to see.

3. Set Limits and Be Consistent With Your Discipline

Discipline is necessary in every household. The goal of discipline is to help kids choose acceptable behaviors and learn self-control. They may test the limits you establish for them, but they need those limits to grow into responsible adults. Establishing house rules helps kids understand your expectations and develop self-control. Some rules might

include: no TV until homework is done, and no hitting, name-calling, or hurtful teasing allowed.

4. Be a Good Role Model

Model the traits you wish to see in your kids: respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness, tolerance. Exhibit unselfish behavior. Do things for other people without expecting a reward. Express thanks and offer compliments. Above all, treat your kids the way you expect other people to treat you.

5. Make Communication a Priority

Make your expectations clear. If there is a problem, describe it, express your feelings, and invite your child to work on a solution with you. Be sure to include consequences. Make suggestions and offer choices. Be open to your child's suggestions as well. Negotiate. Kids who participate in decisions are more motivated to carry them out.



— Adapted from KidsHealth