

Parenting Tips that Respect Children

- Honor your child's feelings about a person or experience. Whether a child misperceives the way something is said or done is irrelevant if it provokes emotion for your child. Adjust according to how your child feels; you will show your child you respect what they have to say and they will respect you for trusting their emotions.
- Be willing to be flexible with your child over punishments handed out in frustration or anger in the moment. We all make a big deal about things at times unnecessarily and if we are willing to be honest with our child when we overreact, they will respect what you say when you *mean* business. Set boundaries firmly, but keep in mind that not everything is a crisis.
- When you are feeling emotion or are upset about something, acknowledge the emotion and feel a shift in your body before you respond to your child. We all feel anger and frustration at times, but just as we teach our children not to take out their frustrations on other people and things, neither should we.
- Consider the qualities you want your child to have later in life and be careful not to push these qualities down in the present. It can be very challenging to keep in mind at a time of frustration, that later in life we want our kids to be independent, headstrong, and persistent. We need to nurture these characteristics as our children grow even when they are using them on us!
- Be willing to acknowledge, accept, and apologize for overreacting in a situation with your child. When you are willing to admit you are wrong, you show your child how to correct their own mistakes. They will respect your authority when *they are* doing something inappropriate.
- Encourage your child to make choices. Choices allow your child to have independence and makes learning more meaningful. Explain to your child that every experience comes with a choice and assist them with making healthy ones.
- Communicate with your child openly and honestly. Allow your child to share his opinions in a safe space; ask questions; and really listen to his answers.
- Children model 95% of what they see in the adult they are closest to. Make sure you are modeling the behavior you want your child to exhibit.
- Talk to your child the way you would talk to a friend. We often value our relationships with our friends as more important than the one's with our child.
- Respect your child's natural abilities. It is too easy to project our own desires in life on our child to fulfill. Each child has his own individual set of values and expertise which needs to be encouraged in order to grow. A child can grow physically with little support or encouragement, but will not thrive emotionally if he is not honored and nurtured for being who he is.