

Top Ten Tips for Parents

1. When your child wants to show you something, stop what you are doing and *pay attention to your child*. It is important to spend frequent, small amounts of time with your child doing things that you both enjoy.
2. *Give your child lots of physical affection* – children often like hugs, cuddles, and holding hands.
3. *Talk to your child* about things he/she is interested in and share aspects of your day with your child.
4. *Give your child lots of descriptive praise* when they do something that you would like to see more of, e.g., “Thank you for doing what I asked straight away”.
5. Children are more likely to misbehave when they are bored so *provide lots of engaging indoor and outdoor activities* for your child, e.g., play dough, colouring in, cardboard boxes, dress ups, cubby houses, etc.
6. *Teach your child new skills by first showing the skill yourself*, then giving your child opportunities to learn the new skill. For example, speak politely to each other in the home. Then, prompt your child to speak politely (e.g., say “please” or “thank you”), and praise your child for their efforts.
7. *Set clear limits on your child’s behaviour*. Sit down and have a family discussion on the rules in the home. Let your child know what the consequences will be if they break the rules.
8. If your child misbehaves, *stay calm and give them a clear instruction to stop misbehaving* and tell them what you would like them to do instead (e.g., “Stop fighting; play nicely with each other.”) Praise your child if they stop. If they do not stop, follow through with an appropriate consequence.
9. *Have realistic expectations*. All children misbehave at times and it is inevitable that you will have some discipline hassles. Trying to be the perfect parent can set you up for frustration and disappointment.
10. *Look after yourself*. It is difficult to be a calm, relaxed parent if you are stressed, anxious, or depressed. Try to find time every week to let yourself unwind or do something that you enjoy.

