



### **7. Helping Your Children Feel Safe**

- Respect their privacy as you would want them to respect yours; for example, if you teach your child that your room is out of boundaries to them, respect the same with their room. Allow them to feel that once they enter their room they can know that no one will look through their drawers, or read their diary.
  - Let your child live his/her life and let them make their own choices in life.
  - Instill in them, a sense of belonging by displaying individual and family portraits on the walls of the house.
  - Don't argue with your spouse in front of the children. If they are sleeping, argue quietly. Children may feel insecure and fearful when they hear parents bickering. In addition, children will learn to argue with each other the same way they hear their parents argue with each other. Show them that when people disagree, they can discuss their differences peacefully.
  - Give your child some space and let them choose what they want to do with their life.
  - Avoid favoritism. Surveys have shown that most parents have favorites, but most children believe that they are the favorite. If your children are quarreling, don't choose sides, but be fair and neutral.

### **8. Avoid rescuing them**

Help your kids know their options, and the consequences of each one, then both you and they live with whatever option they select, generally.

### **9. Provide order**

- Set boundaries such as bedtimes and curfews, so they learn that they have limitations.

By doing so, they actually get a sense of being loved and cared about by their parents. They might rebel at those boundaries, but inwardly enjoy knowing that concerned parents guide and love them.

- [Encourage responsibility](#) by giving them jobs or "chores" to do and as a reward for those jobs give them some kind of privilege (money, extended curfew, extra play time, etc.). As "punishment" for not doing these jobs, they have the corresponding privilege revoked. Even the youngest of children can learn this concept of reward/consequence. As your child grows, give them more responsibilities and more rewards/consequences for completing those responsibilities (or not).

- Teach them what is right and wrong. If you are religious, take them to the religious institute that you follow. If you are an atheist or an agnostic, teach them your moral stance on things. In either case, don't be hypocritical or be prepared for your child to point out that you are not "practicing what you preach".

- Make sure that they have a healthy way of life. Many parents do this the wrong way. Instead of forcing children to try eating something, give them a choice between two things. It can push children, especially preteens and up, to a very emotional point, if you begin to harp for them to change their eating habits. If they want something unhealthy, suggest an alternative or a smaller size. If you know they favor a certain unhealthy food at a restaurant, taking them there a lot is not good. And if you start *over-explaining* to the child that it is unhealthy or that they shouldn't get it -- they may take it the wrong way and feel like you are insulting them. Once this happens, they will no longer want to go out to eat with you, and they will feel bad eating around you which could make them want to sneak and hide junk food from you. When you tell them they can't have something or shouldn't... it can create one of two things. One, it could make them want it even more and find out how to get it anyways. Two, it could make them feel extremely bad (contrary/oppositional), and they might go all out with all unhealthy foods except that one which could be worse than giving choices to get cooperation.

- When trying to enforce healthy eating habits, start it at a younger age. Giving rewards of candy to children may create a bad habit, because once they get older, some may feel they should reward themselves which can lead to obesity. While they are young, start them out with healthier snacks. Instead of chips, try goldfish (crackers), grapes, etc. The eating habits they learn as they are younger are the ones they continue to have. Also, never make your child finish their plate, if they say they are hungry. This can continue throughout their life causing them to finish no matter what portions are on their plate.

- Don't routinely do things for your children that they can learn to do for themselves. While getting them a glass of water before bed is a nice way to make them get to sleep faster, don't do it so often that they come to expect it.

- Emphasis moderation and responsibility when it comes to alcohol consumption even when children are young. Explain that they will have to wait until they are old enough to enjoy a drink with friends, and talk about the importance of designated drivers. Failure to discuss these issues early sometimes contributes to sneaking and dangerous experimentation, if they don't understand. Again, don't be hypocritical or your child will (more than likely) ignore your advice.

## 10. Allow your kids to experience life for themselves.

Don't make decisions for them all the time; they must learn how to live with the consequences from the choices they make. After all, they will have to learn to think for themselves sometime. It's best they start when you are there to help minimize the negative consequences and accentuate the positive ones. They need to learn that their own actions have consequences (good and bad). By doing so, it helps them to become good decision makers and problem solvers so that they are prepared for independence and adulthood.

## 11. Spending Quality Time With Your Children.

Be careful not to stifle/smother them, however. There's a big difference between protecting someone and imprisoning them within your too unyielding demands.

## 12. Spend time with each child individually.

Try to divide your time equally if you have more than one child.

- Listen and respect your child and respect what they want to do with their life.
- **Set aside a day to go to a park, theme parks, museum or library depending on their interests.**
- **Attend school functions. Do homework with them. Visit their teacher at open house** . Even if it means taking some time away from work. Remember that children grow fast, and soon will be on their own. Your boss may or may not remember that you missed that meeting, but your child will most certainly remember that you didn't attend the play they were in.