

# 1. THE BASICS OF PARENTING

The following 7 points cover the basics of parenting



Why not try this little quiz and rate yourself as a parent.

	Good	Okay	I could do better
1. Taking good care of the child's basic physical needs, e.g. food, warmth, health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Keeping the child safe from physical danger and abuse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Being positive and caring towards the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Spending time playing with, talking to and teaching the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Providing a stable home with regular routines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Providing a good example, Being a role model.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Providing clear behaviour Guidelines, setting limits and consistently enforcing these.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**This is what good parenting is and always has been.**

As well as discipline, number 7, the first six factors are also important in ensuring your child learns good behaviour and grows up happy and well adjusted.

## 2. HOW CHILDREN LEARN BEHAVIOUR

There are at least five ways children learn behaviour

1. **Children learn through having regular routines** - Regular routines get children into patterns of behaviour. Routines are particularly important for establishing regular sleeping, eating and toileting patterns. Routines will help establish good behaviour patterns.
2. **Children learn by observing and copying others** - Especially their parents and older brothers and sisters. Therefore it is very important that you and others in the household set a good example.
3. **Children learn by having clear guidelines set** - They need to be clearly told (and sometimes shown) the behaviour that you want and also told that certain behaviours are unacceptable when they occur. Therefore it is important to set limits to your children's behaviour. Note that these limits often need to be backed up by consequences to be effective.
4. **Children learn by the consequences of their behaviour** - If their behaviour is followed by consequences they want or like (e.g. getting their own way or getting what or something they want) then they will repeat those behaviours more often. If their behaviour is followed by an unpleasant consequence (e.g. not getting to do something or having something taken away for a certain amount of time) they don't want then they are less likely to repeat those behaviours.
5. **Children learn by practicing behaviours.**
6. **Children learn through experience** - (or trial and error) which is just a combination of the above.



These are ways children learn unacceptable behaviours as well as positive behaviours

# 3. HOW TO TEACH BEHAVIOUR

To teach a child a behaviour, often just telling them isn't enough. You have to explain, demonstrate and get them to practice it several times.

## STEPS IN TEACHING BEHAVIOUR

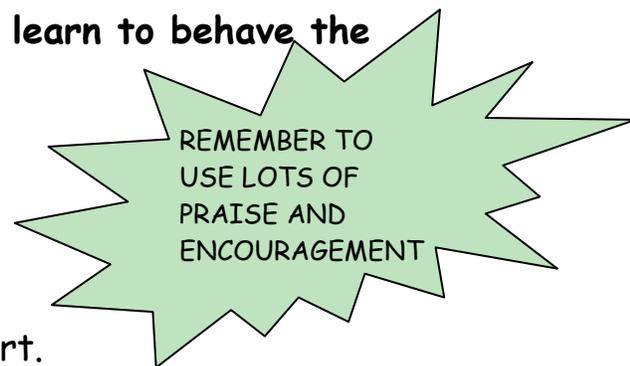
1. **Clearly explain the required behaviour.**
2. **Demonstrate;** So the child can observe what they are supposed to do.
3. **Get the child to practice;** Guide the through the behaviour if necessary.
4. **Practice and Feedback;** Praise the attempt as well as pointing out what wasn't quite right.
5. **Ongoing Practice and Reinforcement;** Do this over the next few weeks until the behaviour is learned.

(Tick charts can help a parent consistently teach and reinforce behaviours and also motivate a child).

- **Providing clear guidelines and regular routines.**
- **Setting a good example.**
- **Teaching and rewarding good behaviours so it increases.**
- **Ignoring or punishing unacceptable behaviours.**
- **This is what we so to help children learn to behave the right way.**

## BASIC SOCIAL SKILLS TO LEARN

1. Do what Mum and Dad tell you.
2. Speak pleasantly to people.
3. It is wrong to push, hit, kick or hurt.
4. Leave other people and their things alone.



# 4. DEALING WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR

It is normal for young children to misbehave at times, trying to get their own way and seeing how much they can get away with. What they need to find out is that you have the strategies and confidence to deal effectively with their behaviour and that you will consistently do so.

When you child misbehaves this is what you do:

1. Give a short clear instruction telling them exactly what they have to do  
e.g. "John, stop teasing your sister now"

2. Wait 5 seconds

If John does comply  
3. Praise him  
"That's good John. We try to speak nicely to each other in this house"

If John does not comply  
3a. Repeat the instruction (Perhaps a warning).  
E.g. "John if you don't stop teasing your sister you'll have 10 minutes time out in your bedroom".

3a. Wait 5 seconds

If John does comply  
5a. Give a positive comment  
"That's better John, you did what Mum said"

If John does not comply  
5a. Calmly follow with a consequence.  
E.g. "John you did not stop teasing your sister. Go to your room for 10 minutes". Just ignore any fuss or arguing and take them if they won't go

# 5. SETTING UP ROUTINES



Good routines become good habits and the earlier you start the easier it is!

Households run a lot more smoothly when there are some regular routines. Routines provide a systematic, orderly way of doing things and are important in establishing good patterns of behaviour in children. Times like getting ready for school, mealtimes and getting ready for bed go a lot more smoothly and with a lot less stress if routines are established.

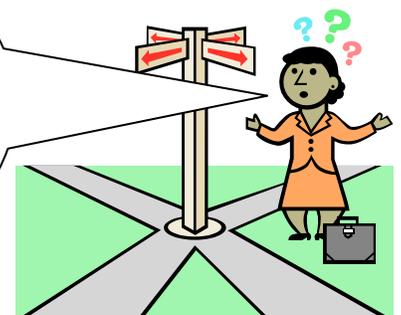


Activities like getting ready for school need to be broken down into the various behaviours involved

Getting ready for school                      Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri

Up and dressed by 7:45  
Wash  
Beakfast  
Clean teeth  
Lunch and bag packed by 8:30  
Smile and a hug good bye

What is the routine at your house? Does everyone know what they are meant to be doing? Do you spend the morning yelling or nagging at the kids to get ready? Would it help to have the routines, or expectations, written down and decided by everyone? Wouldn't it be better to praise what they have done then encourage them with the next step.



# 6. HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Everyone has to deal with problems - they are a normal part of everyday life. Life goes more smoothly for those people who know how to deal with and resolve problems that come along. This is a set of problem solving steps that can be applied to most problems:

## **STEP 1 - What is the problem?**

Say exactly what it is - be specific - write it down.

## **STEP 2 - Why do you think it happened?**

Consider and write down any ideas on why it is happening.

## **Step 3 - What are possible ways to solve this problem?**

Come up with three possible solutions if you can.

## **Step 4 - Choose the solution you think will work best for you**

It might be the simplest, the most practical or one your parent agrees to.

## **Step 5 - Work out your plan for how to put your solution into practice. Make sure its simple, practical and that you will be able to follow it through.**

## **Step 6 - TRY IT!**

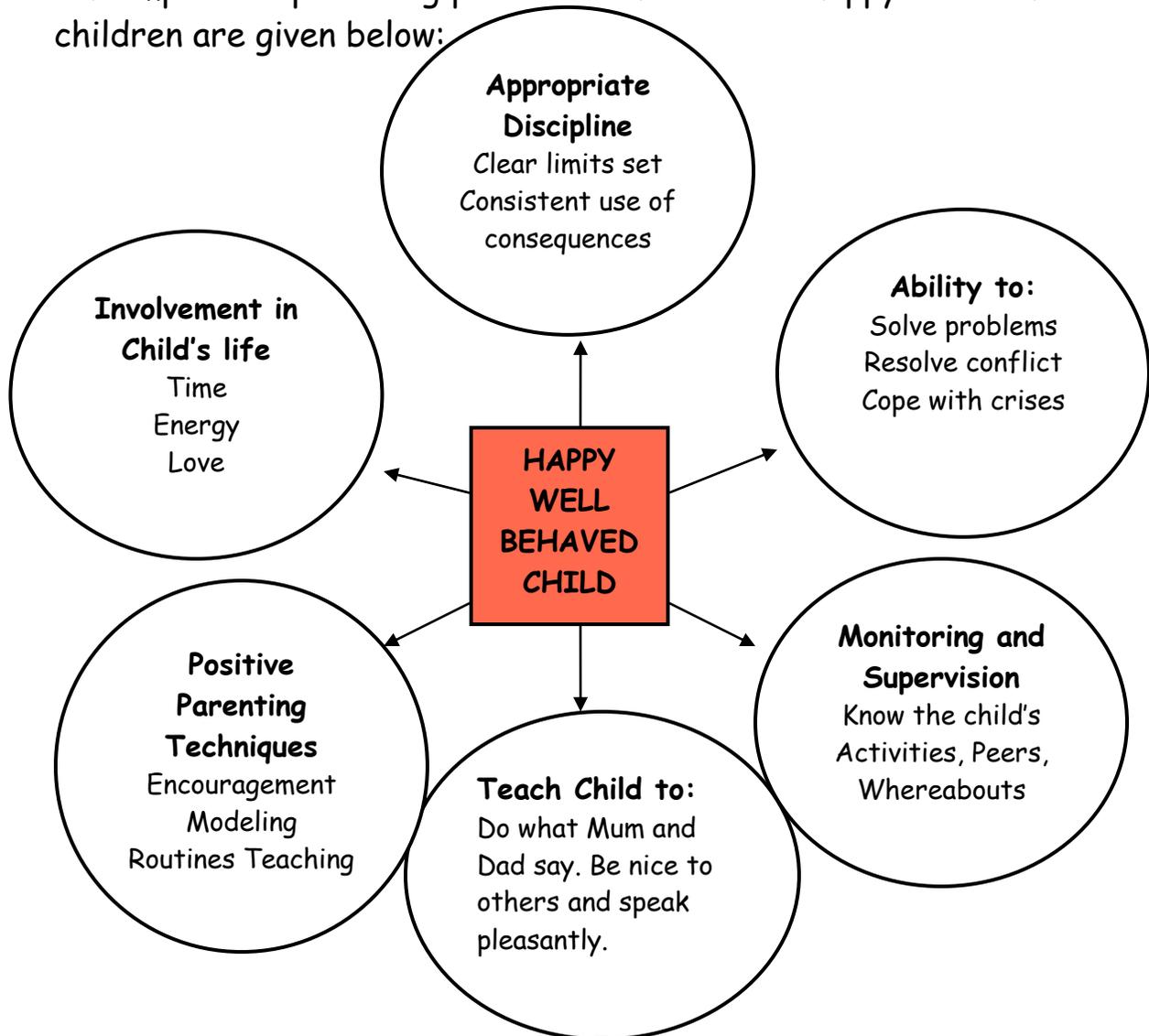
Put it into practice long enough to give it a chance to work.

## **Step 7 - Evaluate it**

Think. Is it beginning to work in overcoming the problem? If not, why isn't it working? How can you change your plan to make it work better? What else could you try?

# 7. KEY PARENTING PRACTICES

The important parenting practices that lead to happy well behaved children are given below:



## TO PREVENT PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS

Go over rules of required behaviour  
Teach and reinforce the right behaviour with praise or a reward  
Ignore or use a punishment whenever the wrong behaviour  
Do this consistently

## SUITABLE PUNISHMENTS

The best punishments are generally short and as immediate as possible - (especially for preschoolers)

- Take away a toy or a privilege
- Lose TV time, earlier to bed
- Take then away from an activity
- Time out

# 8. POSITIVE TIMES

Children need regular doses of positive time with their parents/caregivers. Often 5 to 10 minutes here and there throughout the day - e.g. helping them get started at an activity, playing a game, reading them a short story, asking them about what they are doing, building something out of blocks with them, going for a walk.



Good times with children is one of the great things about being a parent

These positive times are important for building a good relationship with your child - and enjoyable for you and the child - and often fun - and also make the child more likely to be co-operative and behave well. So you see, these positive times do a lot of good.

We all need praise and encouragement, especially children. It develops a child's self-esteem, helps them to become confident and encourages them to try.



Catch the child when they are good and praise them. This builds up good behaviour

When you praise a child make sure you say the exact behaviour you are pleased with e.g. rather than saying "good girl" say "Mary, I am really pleased that you get your schoolbag packed all by yourself".

Having positive times and giving positive comments for good behaviour each day will produce positive, happy, confident children.

Use lots of these words: Great, fantastic, well done, good effort, thank you, excellent, wonderful, you have tried really hard, wow, awesome, I love the way you did that etc.....

# 9. USE TIME OUT FOR PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

This is a common and effective strategy used by many parents. The theory is that you remove the child from a situation they like where there is company and interesting activities (e.g. lounge) and place them for a short period in a room where there is no company or things to do (bedrooms may have lots of toys and not be much of a deterrent). One or two minutes time out for each year of age is enough e.g. for a six year old 6 minutes minimum and 12 minutes maximum time out.

E.g. "Tipene, you hit you sister. We don't have hitting in this family. Ten minutes time out. Now go to your bedroom". As soon as the time is up go to the child's room and say "Your ten minutes is up, you can come out now". It is also good to talk about what happened, e.g. hitting and establish what happened, what they could do instead of hitting i.e. walk away, ignore, tell someone. Remember to let the child know that they are OK but that behaviour is not. If you are constantly telling a child they are naughty it makes the child believe that's what they are. However, if you let a child know that they are loved and cherished but certain behaviours are not Ok, It separates the child from the behaviour.

If the child says, "I don't care, I like it in my bedroom," when he/she leaves just ignore it, they just want you attention or to put off going to time out and by responding you are giving it to them. You have made your point - the child gets the message "This behaviour is not okay. This is a consequence for it and they mean what they say". Similarly if the child says "No, I'm not staying here", when you tell them they cannot come out, just ignore it or say "Fine, you can come out when you are ready". Remember, don't tell the child off when time out is over - they have had their punishment, they don't need telling off as well. You may in a calm voice say something like "Remember, you do not hit your sister".

With very difficult children you may need to take them there and hold the door shut or hold them in time out deliberately not looking at them or speaking to them till their time is up.



# 10. FAMILY VALUES

It is important to have clear rules and boundaries that everyone agrees to. If the whole family can decide together what they believe is important it allows everyone to feel part of the process and have a sense of ownership over the values. It also means everyone understand what each value means in a practical sense.

This is an example of family values. It is also important for these to be about how you want things to be instead of what you don't want them to be and these values are in a language children understand (e.g. instead a "no swearing" or "no running in the house" you could have "speak nicely to each other" and "walking feet inside").

## OUR FAMILY PROMISE

Nga taurangi a te whanau

In this house we will:

**1. TREAT OTHERS** as you would like to be treated ourselves

**2. PRAISE** each other's strengths and achievements

**3. SUPPORT & COMFORT** each other in rough times

**4. HELP & PROTECT** each other

**5. PLAY FAIR** whether winning or losing

**6. USE REASON** not violence or insult to settle arguments.

**7. SAY PLEASE, THANK YOU & EXCUSE ME** to each other

**8. SPEND TIME TALKING & LISTENING** together

**9. SHOW INTEREST** in each other's friends, hobbies whereabouts...

**10. RESPECT THE RULES** and boundaries of our home.

**11. DO OUR SHARE** of tasks around our home

**12. SHARE** at least one meal a day together