



Whale Done!

The Power of Positive Relationships

Positive Parenting Tip #1 Keep a positive attitude.

When we thought about our top five positive parenting tips, this one came to mind first. It came to us first in our thinking of positive parenting tips, it did not come first to us with regard to when we learned it.

We have always loved our children, we have not always liked what they did, what they said, or the decisions they made. When they have behaved, spoken, or decided something that we did not like, we have learned to really check our attitude.

When we confront, discuss, dialogue, or talk with our kids, they can tell what we think about them. We have learned that when they get the feeling that we are trying to control them as opposed to teach them, they almost always resist our efforts.

In order to have the greatest influence with our kids, we have learned that we have to be thinking good things about them in order to project our love and concern for them at all times (Yes, even when we have to hold them accountable, we want to make sure they know that we still love them.)



Keep a positive attitude.

Positive Parenting Tip #2 Remember to say please and thank-you.

We have found that treating our kids politely is the best way to encourage them to behave politely with us and others.

We work really hard at using "please" and "thank-you" with them in the same way that we expect them to use it with us, with each other, and with people outside our family.

Modeling "good" behavior is much better than just talking about it.



Remember to say please and thank-you.

Positive Parenting Tip #3 Talk about what you want rather than what you don't want.

We find that talking about what you don't want is pretty easy to do, and that we often slip in to this bad habit.

For example, we tend to gravitate to statements like:

- Don't spill that milk!
- Don't leave your shoes on the floor.
- Don't forget to do your homework.
- Don't speak to me that way!
- Don't slam the door!



When these statements get much better results:

- Please be careful with that glass.
- Put your shoes in the closet, please.
- Remember to do your homework.
- I would appreciate it if you would watch your tone when you speak to me.
- Please close the door rather than slam it.

Talk about what you want rather than what you don't want.

Positive Parenting Tip #4 Replace "but" with "and."

How would it sound to you if your supervisor came to you and said something like this: "We really like what you have done this year, but..."

You would probably forget the first part of the statement and focus on the last part (which is probably negative).

Well, your kids are the same.

Rather than say "You've done a great job with vacuuming the carpet, but you missed this spot." Try this: "You've done a great job vacuuming the carpet, and there's one little spot over here that needs some more attention."

"But" negates everything before it, and it usually precedes a critical or negative comment. "And" ties two thoughts together without the negative connotation.



Replace "but" with "and."

Positive Parenting Tip #5 Name the behavior don't label the child.

We suggest that you work especially hard at applying this positive parenting tip. Saying things like: "you're such a good boy" or "you have been a bad girl" are quick and easy. Frankly, they are lazy speech patterns.

What does a "good boy" or a "bad girl" look like? How do they act?

Rather than use labels like those above, speak about specific behaviors. For example:

- You have done a great job picking up all of your toys!
- Wow! I notice that you put your shoes away without being asked. I really appreciate that.
- Thank you for washing the car this afternoon. That really helps me out.
- The yard looks fantastic. You really put some effort into raking it, didn't you?
- I notice that you got straight A's on your report card. You can be proud of the work that went into that report card.



Name the behavior don't label the child.

Positive Parenting Tip #6 Be clear about your real objective.

This positive parenting tip becomes even more important as your kids approach their teenage years.

When they make a mistake, disobey you, break a household rule, or make a bad decision; you probably see the long-term implications clearly. In your effort to protect them from the same mistake in the future, you might even get angry with them. The anger, while often justified, can get you in trouble as you work to apply positive parenting techniques.

Be careful to focus your disciplinary approach on teaching the lesson you want your child to learn and not on expressing the depth of your hurt or anger. If you focus too much on your feelings, you run a major risk of having them miss the whole point of your disciplinary choice. They might take your efforts as evidence of you "punishing" them rather than "holding them accountable" or "teaching them a valuable lesson."

Venting your hurt, fear, or anger can do relational damage that you'll have a difficult time overcoming.



Be clear about your real objective.

Positive Parenting Tip #7 Use consistent standards for all disciplinary decisions.

Consistently applying discipline, enforcing household rules, and teaching appropriate behavioral lessons has been among our biggest challenges.

If you are anything like us, when you are tired, hungry, frustrated due to work pressures, or distracted by other tasks, you might overreact to an issue or ignore it because you are "too tired to deal with this."

We found that having a clearly defined set of rules, expectations, and acceptable behaviors really helped us when our kids were younger. Having a system, like [The Behavior Bucks System](#), helped our kids know what we expected of them and what they could expect as a result of their behavior.

Because we thought things through in a calm moment, we were better able to respond appropriately to situations, either good ones or bad ones, when they occurred at times when our logical filters had a few holes in them due to fatigue or other factors.



Use consistent standards for all disciplinary decisions.