



How to Instill Positive Values in Your Child

Our world seems to be suffering from a moral drought. Cold, indifferent and even deplorable treatment of children is not unusual. Children quickly grow to become adults and the lessons they learn in childhood give them a frame for understanding relationships, work and treatment of others. As parents, we instill our values in our children through our everyday interactions.

Here are 8 practical ways to practice instilling positive values and empathy in our children through regular interactions.

1. Start each day together.

Before you get caught up in the hustle and bustle that tends to dominate our days, gather your family together, especially your children. You may decide to worship, pray, meditate, or simply sit and have breakfast together. Do what suits your family best. The point is to put your family first. Demonstrate to your children that they are more important than the news, your job, and email.

2. Play at home.

Play facilitates an experience that engages all of our senses. Children are designed to learn through play and they are hungry to include you. Playing with your children provides opportunities for lessons on fairness, collaboration, and compassion. Games, like life, have rules. The sooner we expose our children to these rules and their benefits and consequences the sooner we instill those values in them. Playing at home is also a great way to show children that home is a safe and fun environment.

3. Use positive communication.

Our words have the power to lift children up, as well as to bring them down. We build and, unfortunately, destroy relationships with our words. We also communicate the value we place on others with our words. We want to see and experience more good in the world. Therefore, practice celebrating the natural goodness in your children, in other people, and in situations. There is always something worth appreciating. Maintain a positive outlook and point out the blessings you find.

4. Turn off the T.V.

We are looking for ways to instill positive values in children, and the media rarely does that. Limiting the influence of T.V. and other media sources, including phones, games and the Internet can create space for relationship. Even cartoons and children's programming tends to be aggressive and over stimulating, not to mention advertising and other content that pops up. If your child must watch T.V., do it with them so that you can interpret what is acceptable and emphasize positive values.

5. Apologize and forgive.

Apologizing and forgiving can be two of the most difficult acts of love and compassion to perform. Apologizing can be even more difficult when the recipient is a child, which also makes the experience a powerful way of demonstrating positive values to children. As parents, we make mistakes with our children. We are not always right. Our children make mistakes too. We need each other's forgiveness. Apologizing and forgiving help develop compassion and empathy in children.

6. Set at least one major task for the day for each family member.

We teach our children to be responsible by assigning them tasks. Show them that each member of the family and community contribute to its wellbeing. Instill the value of community in your children. This practice also helps children develop their goal-setting skills and resourcefulness. Accomplishing a goal provides great motivation. Help your kids become familiar with this early.

7. Volunteer together.

Volunteering provides you and your children with the opportunity to give back to the community, and to see your efforts transform lives. You don't have to look far to find people and organizations to serve. Take responsibility for providing voluntary service where you live, work, learn, or worship. We all benefit from receiving and providing service. Help your children discover that serving others also serves them. Through volunteering, your kids get to learn new skills, solve real-world problems, and practice social responsibility. Set a goal to volunteer once a week, month, or quarter.

8. Expose them to differences.

Our world is rich with variety. Help your children learn early that the world is for everyone – all seven billion of us. Let them see that not everyone looks, speaks, or thinks like them. Expose them to different people, cultures, professions, and abilities. Teach them that everyone is to be accepted and loved. Keep in mind that your children will likely adopt your worldview and treatment of those who are different.

If you would like more information on this topic you can contact Family Centre and ask to speak with the Community Support Worker at 232-1116.