

Encouraging the Best Child Behavior

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(StarWise Healing Techniques are based on Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs and Dr. Alfred Adler)

1) Misbehaving children are “discouraged” by mistaken ideas on how to achieve their primary goal—to belong.

>>You should address their mistaken ideas/beliefs about how to belong rather than just their misbehavior. Teach them the right ways to belong.

2) Use encouragement to help children feel “they belong” so the motivation for misbehaving is gone.

>>Celebrate each step in the direction of improvement rather than focusing on past mistakes.

3) A great way to encourage children is to simply spend special time with them having shared fun.

4) During personal private moments with children, ask them to share with you their “saddest time” and their “happiest time” during the day. Then you share with them. You will be surprised what you learn.

5) Have family meetings to solve problems with cooperation and mutual respect.

>>This is the key to creating a loving, respectful atmosphere while helping children develop self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and problem-solving skills.

6) Give children meaningful jobs. Expect them to contribute; teach them how.

>>Unless you are patient, you will often do things for children that they can do for themselves and feel important as a result. People feel purpose and belonging when they know they are needed to make a real contribution. Let them do this.

7) Decide together what shared chores need to be done and what fun you will share.

>>Do this democratically so everyone gets treated equally.

>>For example, put all chores/fun in a jar and each person takes out a few each week. No one is stuck with the same jobs all the time.

>>You should invite children and help them make rules and goals and list them on a chart titled, “Our happy group decided: _____”.

>>People feel ownership, motivation, and enthusiasm the more they are included in all decisions possible.

8) Take time to train children in advance of a situation.

>>Make sure that children understand what, for example, “clean the kitchen” means to you.

>>To them it may mean simply putting the dishes in the sink. You should ask, “What do you understand is necessary here?”

9) Teach and model mutual respect.

>>Be both kind AND firm—show respect for the person AND for yourself AND for “the needs of the situation.” This is very difficult during conflict, so plan ahead and/or have a family meeting later to discuss.

10) Proper timing will help enormously.

>>You cannot deal with a problem at the time of conflict—emotions get in the way.

>>Teach children about cooling-off periods.

>>You (and/or the children) can go to a separate room and do something to make your self feel better—and then work on the problem later with mutual respect.

11) You can only build on success.

>>Criticizing, punishing or ridiculing children to motivate them to do better NEVER works. “Time outs” should be time to recover your good feelings about yourself again.

12) Use "Positive Time Out."

>>Ask children to help you design a pleasant area (cushions, books, music, stuffed animals, food, etc.) that help them feel better.

>>Remember that children do better when they feel better.

>>When children are upset, ask them, “Do you think it would help you to take some positive time out?”

13) Punishment may temporarily work--it stops misbehavior for a short time.

>>In the long run, punishment and false rewards (bribery, flattery, begging, yelling, etc.) causes negative resentment, rebellion, revenge, and apathy.

>>Praise is addictive and fosters dependent, low self-esteem; encouragement leads to independence and high self-esteem.

14) Teach children that “mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn!”

>>The best way to teach children this lesson is by your own example.

>>Use 3 steps to recover from a mistake: (All 3 are needed in order.)

(1) Recognize and admit your own mistake to yourself.

(2) Reconcile with those involved--admit your mistake to them. Say “I’m sorry, I didn’t like the way I handled that” or “I should have handled that better.”

(3) Resolve to improve. Focus on solutions rather than blame.

15) Focus on solutions instead of consequences.

>>Many try to disguise punishment by calling it a logical consequence. Get people involved to find solutions that are (1) related, (2) respectful, and (3) reasonable.

16) Make sure the message of love and respect gets through.

>>Start with “I care about you. I am concerned about this situation. Will you work with me on a solution?”

17) Have fun! Bring joy into homes, offices and onto the streets.

18) Discuss problems using the sandwich technique. "Kiss, bite, kiss."

>>Sandwich criticism between two positive communications, such as planning fun events.

19) Discuss your feelings using the "I feel _____, when you _____, because _____."

20) Avoid using: (Instead of these words below, use positive encouragement)

>>Blame words like "You"

>>Superlatives like "always," "never" and swear (vulgar, insulting) words

>>Critical, negative words that focus on past mistakes.

21) Introduce and request the response/behavior you want in advance of a difficult discussion.

22) Express love, affection and joy to people in new, creative ways each and every day.