



Youth Connections  
(317)738-3273  
460 N Morton Street, Suite A  
Franklin, IN 46131

# Parenting Tips and Tricks



## INSTEAD OF THIS:

"If you don't finish your lunch, we're not going to the park."

## TRY THIS:

"When you're finished eating lunch, then we can go to the park."

## INSTEAD OF THIS:

"For the last time, come here right now!"

## TRY THIS:

"Do you want to come by yourself, or should I help you?"

## INSTEAD OF THIS:

"Don't slam that door!"

## TRY THIS:

"Please, close the door gently. Would you like me to show you how?"

## INSTEAD OF THIS:

"Stop throwing a fit or I'll put the toy in the trash."

## TRY THIS:

"I know you're very sad that you can't play with your toy right now. Would you like a big hug until you feel better?"

## INSTEAD OF THIS:

"I told you, you can't have cheerios for breakfast because we don't have any. Do not ask again."

## TRY THIS:

"I hear how much you want cheerios. I wish I had a magical powers to make a giant box appear just for you."

Taken from: [thejoyofthis.com](http://thejoyofthis.com)

## 24 Ways To Be A Great Parent

1. Take a walk together
2. Spend 30 minutes reading a book together.
3. Go for a drive and listen to music.
4. Have a foam sward fight with your son (or daughter!)
5. Write a note listing 5 things you're proud of about your child.
6. Start a journal with your child— write back and forth to each other.
7. Bake with your kids.
8. Let your daughter do your make-up one evening and take pictures.
9. Give your child 5\$ and turn them loose in the dollar store.
10. Play tic-tac-toe
11. Burn a CD of your child's favorite songs for the car.
12. Create things for your kids—sew, knit, crochet
13. Cuddle with your kids.
14. Let your kids plan the menu in your house for the next week.
15. Have a tea party.
16. Tell stories from your past.
17. Write letters to send to friends and family.
18. Write love notes and put them in their lunch boxes.
19. Take nature walks with your kids.
20. Get ice cream together.
21. Give your kids your undivided attention.
22. Have a picnic together.
23. Do crafts together
24. Have a game night in or out!

## Raising Grateful Children

We live in an entitled world and whether we like it or not, children in our culture are consumers. However, I don't blame the kids. As parents, we often foster this mentality with our own actions. We compare ourselves to what others have, we let media influence our home by not limiting screen time and we have a hard time deciphering between needs and wants.

Fighting the entitlement battle in our home is hard, but there are some things we are going to try to raise grateful children...

1. We are asking for hard work
2. We aren't making unrealistic promises.
3. We are sticking to consequences.
4. We are limiting media.
5. We are exposing them to the real world.
6. We are extending grace.
7. We are examples in our mistakes
8. We are raising them to be different.



Take from:  
wearethat-  
family.com

## What I Wish I had Known Before I had Kids (That I Know Now)...

I wish I had known that my children's behavior was a language—that their actions and words were telling me something about what they were feeling or thinking. I wish I'd remembered that they did not get up in the morning plotting to do things to frustrate me.

I wish I'd known that meltdowns and explosions usually meant my kids were tired, or hungry, or bored, or frustrated themselves. I wish I'd known that they needed an adult to help them find the words to express what was troubling them. But they sure didn't need a frustrated adult.

I wish I'd known more about child development, brain development and behavior. I wish I'd known that growing up is a slow process. I wish I'd known each developmental stage has its own way of seeing the world. I wish I'd known that most times they saw things very differently from me.

I wish I'd listened more to what was true about their hearts and spirits and personalities than worrying about what other people thought of their behavior.

—Dawn Hallman, M.A.,  
executive director of the  
Dallas Association for  
Parent Education

## Raising Happy Kids

### Too Many Kids...

- Believe that having fun or getting their way are the most important things in life.
- Don't know how to handle difficult feelings like sadness, hurt, and anger
- Operate as if they're the center of the universe
- Crumple easily in the face of tough challenges or disappointments
- Feel guilty or ashamed when they are not happy "enough"

### Too Many Parents...

- Over shield their kids from experiences that build resilience
- Downplay the importance of moral and ethical behavior
- Exhaust or neglect themselves to keep the kids happy
- Confuse their kids with mixed messages about what they expect from them
- Feel unnecessary guilt or shame when their children aren't happy "enough"

**It is our job as parents to address these things and work to make our kids and ourselves happy!**

13. **Tell her how beautiful she is.** She needs your reminders. She needs your pride. She needs your assurance. She is only human.

14. **Love her father.** Teach her to love a good man.

15. **Make forts with boxes and blankets.** Help her to find magic in ordinary life, to imagine, to create, and to believe in fairy tales.

16. **Read to her.** Show her the beauty of words on a page and let her see you enjoy them.

17. **Teach her to love with passion.** Let her get her heart broken and try again. She will love like you love or hate like you hate, so choose love for both of you.

18. **Share secrets together.** Communicate. Talk. Talk about anything. She is not only your daughter; you are not only her mother. Be her friend too.

19. **Teach her manners.** Because sometimes you have to be her mother, not just her friend.

20. **Teach her when to stand up and when to walk away.** Make sure she knows how to demand respect—she is worthy of it. Also, make sure she knows which battles are worth fighting for.

21. **Let her choose who she loves.** Let her love without your disapproving words. When he breaks her heart, be there for her with words of support rather than I told you so. Let her mess up until she finds the one. And when she does, tell her.

22. **Mother her.** Share with her the joys of motherhood, so one day she will want to be a mother too.

23. **Comfort her.** Because sometimes you just need your mommy, no matter how old you are.

24. **Be home.** She is your daughter and will always need a safe harbor where she can turn a key to see comforting eyes and a familiar smile; be home.

## 24 Rules for Mothers of Daughters:

1. **Paint her nails.** Teach her to care about her appearance, and then quickly remind her that living and having fun is most important.
2. **Let her put on your makeup.** Let her experiment in her attempts to be like you.
3. **Let her be wild.** Try to remember that you were her age once. Everyone makes mistakes—let her make her own.
4. **Be present.** Be there for everyday moments no matter how big or small.
5. **Encourage her to play dress up.** She needs to decide who she is and be confident in her decisions.
6. **Teach her to be independent.** Show her by example that women can be strong. Know who you are as a person and help your daughter find out who she is.
7. **Pick flowers with her.** Put them in her hair.
8. **Let her get messy.** Get messy with her, no matter how much it makes you cringe inside. The most wonderful memories are often the messy ones.
9. **Give her good role models**—you being one of them. Introduce her successful woman friends, read to her about influential women, read her words of inspirational women. She should know that anything is possible.
10. **Show her affection.** Daughters will mimic the compassion of their mothers. Kiss and hugs go a long way.
11. **Hold her hand.** No matter how old she is, hold onto her always. This will teach her to be confident in herself and proud of her family.
12. **Believe in her.** It is the moments that she does not believe in herself that she will need you to believe enough for both of you.

## Taking Our Own Parenting Advice:

**Settle Down**

Use Your Inside Voice

No Hitting

**BE KIND**

Keep Your Hands to  
Yourself

**Think Before you Speak**

Do Your Best

Keep it Positive

... Because it's what we want our kids to do!

## Pillow Talk: 20 Questions to Ask Your Kids

1. What do you like to dream about?
2. What is your best memory this year?
3. Who is your hero? Why?
4. How would you describe your family?
5. If you could change anything about yourself, what would it be?
6. What are you most proud of yourself for?
7. Who is the kindest person you know? Why?
8. What do you like most about your best friend?
9. What is one thing you would like to learn to do well?
10. If you were an animal, what one would you be and why?
11. When is the last time someone hurt your feelings? How did you react?
12. Do you know someone who is going through a hard time? How can you help them?
13. What is the scariest thing that happened this year?
14. If you could keep one thing, out of everything you had, what would it be?
15. Who do you think is really successful? Why?
16. What's the best thing about your teacher this year?
17. When do you feel misunderstood by grown-ups?
18. What three words best describe you?
19. What's something that makes you angry?
20. What's the best compliment you ever received?



13. **Go with her to the nail salon and each of you get a pedicure.** No, you don't have to get polish! Just enjoy the time with your daughter.
14. **Include her in your favorite hobbies.** Share with her the things you love, whatever they may be.
15. **Let her put on shows for you.** Then put on a silly one for her. It doesn't take much—a goofy tap dance, armpit farts, standing on one foot—to make a little girl laugh.
16. **Let her choose any color she wants for one wall in her room.** Yes, any. And then let her help you paint it.
17. **Roughhouse with her.** You won't break her, and rough play is good for teaching confidence and resilience.
18. **Inspire her with women role models who excel in traditionally male-dominated fields.** The few things she can't do will become obvious on their own, and the rest become possible if she's allowed to dram and has role models who achieved great things, as a girl.
19. **Don't shame her for what she wants to wear, but exercise the power to modify.** This one gets trickier with age, but most wardrobe choices by a toddler or little girl can be made to work. If a skirt is too short, leggings are great. If she picks a Spiderman tee for a wedding, let her wear it under a dress top.
20. **Look her in the eyes and have a real conversation.** Do this at least once every single day that you are together.
21. **As she gets older, tell her the truth about drugs and alcohol.** Don't use scare tactics, be honest.
22. **Teach her that "No" means "No", for both herself and others.** Teach her physical boundaries. Teach her how to say no directly, and that her no is to be respected, and that she shouldn't be afraid or embarrassed to protect her body.
23. **Allow her to be girly if that's her thing, but don't force her to be if she's not.**
24. **If she's still little enough, hold her until she falls asleep sometimes.** You'll miss it when you can't.

## Rules for Dads Raising Daughters:

1. **Tell her she is pretty, but tell her other good things about herself more.** Telling a girl she is pretty is great, but the point is that it shouldn't be the only kind of compliment she gets.
2. **Teach her that handymen don't have to be men.** Checklist of things to teach her: routine car maintenance, how to stop a toilet from overflowing, how to set a mousetrap, how to use the fuse box, how to turn the water main off.
3. **Let her play in the mud.** No need to fill the sandbox with only sugar and spice. Mix in some snips and snails and puppy dog tails, too.
4. **Remember that they way you talk about and treat women will have a lasting impact.** Your daughter will pick up on generalizations you make about women, whether positive or negative. Intentionally or not, you shape her identity.
5. **Indulge her imagination.** Play pretend with her. Even if its boring for you, its good for her.
6. **Cry when the family pet dies.** The point is to show that its okay for men to feel and express emotions when they come up.
7. **Teach her honesty and integrity in relationships by demonstrating them in yours.** Live the integrity you hope she will choose for herself.
8. **Read her books with great heroes**—both boy and girl heroes.
9. **Teach her that she has power over her own body and sexuality.** From when she is small, tell her that her body belongs to her, and she is the boss of it.
10. **Share music with each other.** Play your favorite music and tell her why it's great. Let her do the same.
11. **Dress like a princess if she ask you to...** and let her dress like a power ranger if she wants. It makes children feel important wthey you play the way she wants to play. Also, playing 'like a girl' won't make you one and playing 'like a boy' won't make her one.

## CLOSET LISTENING

- During the week take time to sit quietly near your kids.
- If they ask what you want, say "I just wanted to hang out with you for a few minutes."
- If they talk, just listen without judging, defending, or explaining.



## Lessons from “Mom’s with a Lesson Plan”:

### TO-DO LISTS

When I find my to do list so full that I am telling the kids I don’t have time to play, I know that it is time to reorganize my priorities. The easiest way for me to do this is on my to do list. Here are some things you might try adding to your next to do list.

- Watch Mike build. Chat with him while he works
- Say yes to Maddie when she asks for me to join her pretend play. (Set the timer, no interruptions for 30 minutes)
- Join the kids at the art table and work wit them.

### LET THEM HEAR YOU BRAG

Have you ever walked into a conversation and heard someone talk you up? Spilling compliments about you to someone else, for no reason other than that you are awesome? Those tokens of admiration are even sweeter because they weren’t meant for you to hear. This person thinks so highly of you that you are the center of their conversation, their choice of topic and everything they say is positive.

Now imagine being four and playing quietly wit dolls when you suddenly hear your Mom say your name into the phone. “Maddie is so creative, the other day she sang a song that had the most beautiful lyrics. I love to listen to her sing.” No big production necessary. Just a simple statement that says she is wonderful and Mom wants to tell the world.

The key is that while it may have appeared to be a happy accident that she heard it, I had planned everything. I knew which compliment I wanted her to hear, I moved a little closer to where she was for that part of the conversation, and I even raised my voice just a bit.

P.S. This works well with adults too!



9. **Help him with transitions and communications.** A boy needs a mom to help her prepare for transitions between activities.

10. **Engage in active play.** Charades, monopoly, art, sports, cooking, roughhousing, digging for worms, climbing, swinging, exploring, or collecting rocks are some of the many activities sons enjoy sharing with their moms.

11. **Teach socialization.** Mothers still remain the primary socialization role models for the majority of young boys.

12. **Consistently set limits.** It is important for boys to see their mother’s strength. Mothers of boys who are strong and loving refuse to allow their sons to treat others with disrespect.

13. **Demonstrate self control.** Teach your son how to control his impulses. Teaching different strategies for remembering tasks, listening to others, and controlling their urges and impulses helps a boy develop self-control.

14. **Recognize his uniqueness.** A boy needs a mom who believes in the unique abilities of their sons.

15. **Teach foresight.** Because many young boys live in the moment they have a hard time thinking ahead.

16. **Create responsibility.** Boys need a mom who encourages their sons to take initiative, to have responsibility. It is important that a mom teaches her son how to be a responsible member of the family.

17. **Enjoy his “boyness.”** The boys ware who they are, and we need to love them for who they are. Let’s not try to rewire them. A mom who respects her son’s energy level, creativity, sensitivity, unique learning style, need for movement, and special sense of wonder, teaches her son to enjoy being a boy.

## Raising Boys: 17 Things a Boy Needs from His Mom

1. **Help him empathize with outs.** Children who see “eye to eye” in relationships, not only appreciate their own experiences of others. It is important that a boy have a mom who will help him understand how others feel.
2. **Offer refuge.** Be a place of safety and love
3. **Know when to let go.** A boy needs a mom who understands her role as his mother will change as he grows and matures. A boy needs a mom who is patient and understanding.
4. **Show affection.** Boys needs moms who hug, cuddle, hold, and touch them. Stress hormones decrease in boys when their mothers hug, rock, and comfort them.
5. Recognize gender differences in brain development. The male brain needs time to recharge and boys need a mom who can help this by encouraging her son to get outside, listen to music, read, exercise, draw, or just take a time out.
6. **Understand his need for movement.** Boys learn better when they can move objects through space or when they have a large area to explore.
7. **Teach him about emotions.** Encourage your son to use all of his emotions. A boy needs a mom to help him recognize, respond to, and express a range of emotions by showing him how to recognize and read verbal and nonverbal communication signals.
8. **Limit screen time.** When a mom limits a boys screen time and encourages him to play outside in nature, she helps support her son’s brain growth and development.

## Nurturing Self Esteem in Kids

1. **Connect:** Dinner conversations are one way to really listen and engage with kids. It shows them that their lives are just as important as their parents. Or create fun, simple activities you can do as a family.
2. **Model Self Esteem:** Imagine the impact of a parent who is strong and confident in themselves. Squash the myth of perfection, let yourself and your kids see that Mom and Dad are growing, learning, and changing...just like they are. Celebrate your successes and admit your failures.
3. **Encourage Independence:** By establishing routines in your daily life, you let your kids know what to expect. When they can prepare themselves and move easily from one thing to the next it is an extra boost in confidence. When setting up these routines, make tasks as kid-friendly as possible.
4. **Respect their choices:** Make an “I like Me” Book. Help kids use conflict resolution. This is a great way to give kids the tools they need to solve problems, while embedding the idea that they are capable of handling things themselves.
5. **Learn and Teach New Skills:** Let your kids climb a tree, experiment with food, play in the mud, or what ever else they are drawn to. These playful lessons are not only teaching them skills, but they are also building their confidence to tackle more challenging problems in the future.
6. **Express Emotion:** Make an art journal, as a family or individually. Use the PIE approach to help your kids express their emotions in a healthy way.
7. **Appreciate Mistakes:** Knowing how to handle mistakes, accepting mistakes, and learning how beneficial they are goes a long way towards confidence too.

## 26 Rules for Fathers of Sons

1. **Love his mother.** He will learn to love like you love, and hate like you hate, so choose love for both of you.
2. **Let him drive.** Every child remembers the first time they drove on daddy's lap. He wants to be JUST LIKE YOU.
3. **Teach him to be picky.** Especially when it comes to women and burgers. Teach him to never settle
4. **Take him to a ball game.**
5. **Love with bravery.** Boys have this preconceived notion that they have to be tough. Teach him to be a man who can show love—this takes courage
6. **Teach him to be a man's man.** Show him how to be brave and tough around the guys. Then, remind him on the way home that it is alright to cry.
7. **Share secrets together.** Communicate. Talk. Talk about everything. Ask Questions. Share dreams, hopes, and concerns. Be his friend.
8. **Teach him manners**—polite words and smiles.
9. **Teach him when to stand up and when to walk away.** Teach him that he doesn't have to throw punches to prove he is right. Teach him that sometimes you say more with silence.
10. **Teach him to choose his battles.** Make sure he knows which battles are worth fighting. Help him to understand when to shut his mouth and walk away. Teach him to be the bigger, better person.
11. **Let him dance in tighty whiteys.** Teach him that there are moments when its okay to be absolutely ridiculous.
12. **Share music.** Introduce him to the classics and learn the words to the not-so classics.
13. **Let him win.** Sometimes he needs to know that big things are possible.

14. **Teach him about family.** Let him know that family is always worth fighting for. Family is always worth standing up for.
15. **Father him.** Share with him the joys of fatherhood, so one day he will want to be a father too. Remind him over and over again with words and kisses that no one will ever love him like you love him.
16. **Listen to him now.** If you don't listen to the little things now, he won't share the big things later.
17. **Let him try on your shoes.** Let him slip his little feet in and watch him as he hopes that someday he can fill them. He will fill them.
18. **Give him bear hugs.** The kind of hug only a daddy can give.
19. **Give him baths.** Because mom can't do everything.
20. **Teach him how to pee standing up.** Let him pee outside— it is the joy of being a man.
21. **Know the answers.** He will assume you do. If you don't know them, pretend you do and look them up later.
22. **Toss him around.** Because little boys love seeing the strength of their father.
23. **Ask his mother.** He will come to you with questions that he won't always want to ask his mother, about girls and about love. Ask her anyway, she will know the answers.
24. **Love him like you would love a daughter.** Little girls are not the only ones who need hugs and kisses.
25. **Don't say, do.** Every father should remember that one day his son will follow his example instead of his advice. Be a good one.
26. **Be his hero.** You are anyway. To him, you have the strengths of Batman, the speed of Spiderman and the brain of Ironman. Don't disappoint. Prove to him that Daddy's are the biggest heroes of all. Only Daddy's can save the day.