

Triple P - Positive Parenting Program



THE POWER OF POSITIVE PARENTING

The one thing you can rely on about being a parent is that your child's behavior will sometimes frustrate you. This doesn't mean you are a bad parent, and it doesn't mean that your child is uncontrollable.

Even the happiest of family households can suffer tension and stress when dealing with children's behavior. Parents may feel upset and drained if they find themselves having to 'battle' with their child over such everyday issues as mealtimes, shopping, or bedtime.

Since you love and care for your children, you will try your best to deal with such difficult behavior. However, it's unreasonable to think that you can be a perfect parent — we just aren't built like superman or superwoman.

When you think about it though, it's not too surprising that being a parent can be tough. Raising the next generation is a vitally important task requiring effort and patience, yet most of us begin our parenting careers unprepared for what lies ahead. More often than not we learn how to raise our children through trial and error. And no matter how much experience we gain, our children (and indeed

the everyday experiences of life itself) always seem to be able to come up with something new for us to deal with.

So how do we know if we are bringing up our kids well, and how do we go about reducing the stresses that occur when we find ourselves struggling with behaviors we just can't seem to get a handle on?

As a parent and psychologist who has spent more than 20 years researching why children behave the way they do, I believe there is simply no single right way to be a parent. It is up to you to decide what values, skills and behaviors you want to encourage in your child and to develop your own approach to dealing with your child's behavior.

That said, we all know that good advice at the right time can be a big help. Practical tips on why your baby cries, dealing with temper tantrums, helping your toddler learn to eat by themselves, or helping your primary schooler with their homework can make being a parent less stressful and at the same time more enjoyable.

That's the idea behind the Positive Parenting Program ('Triple P' for short) which we have developed at the University

of Queensland in Australia. The program is based on extensive scientific research and offers parenting suggestions and ideas that have proven effective across a wide cross-section of Australian families.

It's called positive parenting because it aims to make it easier for parents to develop a positive loving relationship with their children through encouragement, attention and good communication. Using a positive parenting approach will not only help family life run a little smoother, it will also make it less likely that your child will develop more serious behavior problems into their adolescent years.

PARENTING TIP

One way that parents can find more patience and time for their child is to make sure they also find time for themselves. Taking care of your own needs for intimacy, adult companionship, recreation and time alone will help make parenting easier. If you are spending plenty of quality time with your child and they are able to be looked after in a safe environment, a break away from them once in while will do both you and your child a world of good.

Dr. Matthew Sanders is a clinical psychologist at the University of Queensland in Australia and founder of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program.

Triple P can help you with more ideas about developing your child's skills or managing behavior.