

# 10

## Ways to Help Prevent Child Abuse

- ◆ **Be a nurturing parent.**  
*Children need to know that they are special, loved, and capable of following their dreams.*
- ◆ **Help a friend, neighbor, or relative.**  
*Being a parent isn't easy. Offer a helping hand to take care of the children, so the parent(s) can rest or spend time together.*
- ◆ **Help yourself.**  
*When the big and little problems of your everyday life pile up to the point you feel overwhelmed and out of control — take time out. Don't take it out on your kid(s).*
- ◆ **If your baby cries . . .**  
*It can be frustrating to hear your baby cry. Learn what to do if your baby won't stop crying. Never shake a baby — shaking a child may result in severe injury or death.*
- ◆ **Get involved.**  
*Ask your community leaders, clergy, library and schools to develop services to meet the needs of healthy children and families.*
- ◆ **Help to develop parenting resources at your local library.**
- ◆ **Promote programs in school.**  
*Teaching children, parents and teachers prevention strategies can help to keep children safe.*
- ◆ **Monitor your child's television and video viewing.**  
*Watching violent films and TV programs can harm young children.*
- ◆ **Volunteer at a local child abuse prevention program.**  
*For information about volunteer opportunities, call 1.800.CHILDREN.*
- ◆ **Report suspected abuse or neglect.**  
*If you have reason to believe a child has been or may be harmed, call your local department of Children and Family Services or your local police department.*

*Taken from Prevent Child Abuse America*

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# Family Support of Academics

**B**y showing an interest in your child/children's schoolwork, you're demonstrating their education is important to you. Your upbeat attitude toward school will make your child/children excited about learning.

## Everyday Tips

Say "tell me about it." Learn what children are doing in school. Encourage them to explain their assignments.

Beat the "why do I need to learn this?" blues. Show children how their schoolwork applies to their lives.

Let them know, "I'm here if you need me." Be available during study times even if it's just by phone.

Play detective. Help children search out answers to homework questions.

Get the tools for the job. Make sure your children have a dictionary and other reference materials available, and a quiet, well-lit place to study at home.

Hit the books. Go to the library together for research projects.

Talk with teachers. Get to know your children's teachers and talk with them about what you can do to help at home.

Go to school. Try to attend open houses, conferences, plays and other activities at school.

## Activity Ideas

**Let children play teacher.** Encourage your children to teach something they've learned to you or a younger brother or sister.

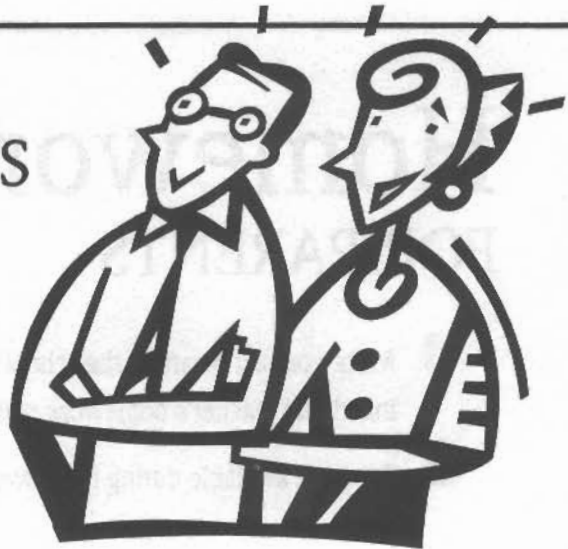
**Introduce yourself to your children's teachers in person or by phone.** And ask the teacher for specific suggestions for helping if your children have difficulties.

**Encourage your children's interest** in subjects like baseball or dinosaurs - go beyond schoolwork. Look for library books on the subjects and do research in reference resources just for fun. Encourage your children to make up stories or plays and to draw pictures. Or see a movie related to the topic.

**Make a "school corner" for studying.** A space as small as a corner tabletop can hold reference books and other school-related materials.

*\*Taken from The Little Things Make a Big Difference*

# Tips FOR PARENTS



- 1** Make a parent/ teacher conference and school's PTA meeting part of your monthly routine.
- 2** If you are not at home or available during homework period, check your child's homework when you get home.
- 3** Inquire about child's school daily.
- 4** Participate in your child's school activity at least once a year such as school party, field trips, lunch, etc.
- 5** Make sure bookbags, school supplies, etc. are by the door before the child goes to bed.
- 6** Sign all permission slips, notes, necessary letters, homework nightly. There's more time at night.
- 7** Designate a particular place in your home to place all school items (homework, notes, letters, etc.)
- 8** Make sure your child has sufficient supplies at home and school on a weekly basis.
- 9** If your child will be at home alone for a long period of time, monitor your child by calling home frequently.
- 10** Set-up a special time with each child. *This can be done while doing household chores together or while riding in the car.*
- 11** Be sure that each week includes family time such as special activities, meals, etc.
- 12** Restrict the type of activities that your child is involved in during school nights.
- 13** Be supportive of school staff. If you have concerns contact your child's teacher. Emphasize trustworthiness for your child.
- 14** Be sure you know the school policies and regulations. If you have concerns contact your child's teacher or principal.

# Bonding With Your Baby



## What's Happening

Attachment is a deep, lasting bond that develops between a caregiver and child during the baby's first few years of life. Loving attachment between a baby and caregiver is critical to the growth of a baby's body and mind. The brain's ability to regulate emotions and respond to stress can be damaged if a baby does not have a strong bond with a parent. This can result in lifelong problems. Babies who have this bond and feel loved have a better chance to grow up to be adults who trust others and know how to return affection.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal newborns:

- Have brief periods of sleep, crying or fussing, and quiet alertness many times each day
- Often cry for long periods for no apparent reason
- Love to be held and cuddled
- Respond to and imitate facial expressions
- Love soothing voices and will respond with smiles and baby noises
- Grow and develop every day; they learn new skills quickly and can outgrow difficult behaviors in a matter of weeks

## What You Can Do

No one knows your child like you do, so you are in the best position to recognize and fulfill your child's needs. Parents who give lots of loving care and attention to their babies help their babies develop a strong attachment. Affection energizes your child to grow, learn, connect with others, and enjoy life. Here are some ways to promote bonding:

- Respond when your baby cries. Try to understand what he or she is saying to you. You can't "spoil" a newborn with too much attention—babies need and benefit from a parent's loving care even when they seem inconsolable.
- Hold and touch your baby as much as possible. You can keep him close with baby slings, pouches, or backpacks (for older babies).
- Use feeding time to look into your baby's eyes, smile, and talk to your baby.
- Read, sing, and play peek-a-boo. Babies love to hear human voices and will try to imitate your voice and the sounds you make.
- As your baby gets a little older, try simple games and toys. Once your baby can sit up, plan on spending lots of time on the floor with toys, puzzles, and books.

**The best gift you can give your baby is YOU. The love and attention you give your baby now will stay with him or her forever and will help your baby grow into a healthier and happier child and adult.**

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and promote healthy families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting) or call 800.394.3366.*



# Setting Rules With Teens



## What's Happening

Teens may look (and think that they are) full grown, but their brains are still growing and their hormones are changing. This can affect:

- **Decision-making**—Teens make mature decisions at times, and childish ones at others.
- **Risk-taking**—Brain immaturity can result in impulsive or risky behavior.
- **Relationships**—Teens move a little further away from family and a little closer to friends.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal teens:

- Crave independence
- Question rules and authority
- Test limits
- Can be forgetful
- Have good days and bad days
- Drive you crazy and make you proud

## What You Can Do

As a parent, you want to set rules to keep your teenagers safe and healthy and to teach them to get along in the world. While it may be tempting to keep your teen in line by setting strict rules and harsh consequences, your teen is likely to respond by becoming angry and more defiant.

Tips to keep in mind:

- Involve teenagers in setting the rules. They may be more likely to follow them.
- Talk about the reasons behind the rules and what you expect from them.
- Choose your battles, and try to provide choices in the matters that are less important. For instance, you might let your daughter pick her own hairstyle if she comes home on time.
- Make sure your teens understand the consequences ahead of time. What will happen if they break the rules?
- Set consequences that are related to the behavior, and be consistent in following through. Ask teenagers to help decide what the consequences will be if they break the rules.
- Do not make consequences so harsh that you or your teen can't follow through. Consider taking away privileges, limiting time with friends, or assigning extra chores.
- Allow your teens to gradually earn more freedom.
- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents, and let them know your rules and expectations.

Cheer your teens on when they follow the rules! And make sure they know you love and accept them, even when they're not perfect.

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# Finding Help When You Need It



## What's Happening

Being a parent is a 24-hour-a-day job, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Extra challenges can add to a parent's stress. For instance:

- Having a new baby
- Having a child with a disability
- Feeling alone, or not having friends or family nearby
- Being a single parent or having a partner who does not support you
- Dealing with money troubles, problems with your job, or housing concerns

## What You Might Be Feeling

When life is stressful, parents sometimes feel:

- Angry—at your spouse, your friends, or even your children
- Lonely—like you are the only person dealing with so many problems
- Depressed—sad and unable to face your problems
- Overwhelmed—you don't know where to begin or you feel like giving up

## What You Can Do

Stay in contact with friends and family who support you and make you feel good about yourself. Other parents can be a good source of support. If you think stress may be affecting the way you treat your children, or if you just want some extra support, try the following:

- **Talk to someone.** Tell a friend, health-care provider, counselor, or a leader in your faith community how you feel. Or, join a support group for parents.
- **Get babysitting help when you need a break.** Some parents trade babysitting with another family, so each parent gets a break.
- **Reach out to other parents.** You may find parents with children the same ages as yours at a local playground, your church, or your child's daycare or school.
- **Call a help line.** Most States have help lines for parents. Childhelp® runs a national 24-hour hotline (1.800.4.A.CHILD) for parents who need help or parenting advice.
- **Talk to your child's school.** Teachers and school counselors often can point you to other places that can help.
- **Take a class for parents.** You can always learn new skills to care for your children. Classes for parents on discipline, school success, or child development can help you build on what you already know about raising a happy, healthy child.

It is normal for parents to feel overwhelmed sometimes, but don't let these feelings affect how you treat your children. Help is just a phone call away! Call a friend, family member, church, or social service agency to talk to someone.

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