

Single Parenthood



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NIH Work/Life Center

OBJECTIVES

- Assess your own parenting skills
- Identify what children need
- Create responses to the needs of your children
- Design specific activities to promote growth and harmony in your family
- Enhance your confidence and effectiveness as a parent

Single Parenting



- In the past 25 years the number of single parent families has doubled
- More than 80% are headed by single moms
- The “typical” family accounts for less than 25% of US households
- Almost 1/3 of children in the US (20 million) live in one parent homes

Essential Needs of Children

- To be loved, valued and encouraged
- To have their physical requirements met

To Feel Safe and Secure

“Pooh!” whispered Piglet.
“Yes, Piglet?” said Pooh.
“Oh, nothing,” said Piglet.
“I was just making sure of you.”



7 Essential Needs (Cont.)

- To have structure, consistency, and predictability
- To be children
- To have the parent be a strong role model

Practical Parenting Guidelines



**Meeting the Essential
Needs of Your Children**

Manage your own stress

- Leave work at the workplace
- Take time for yourself
- Use relaxation techniques
- Practice time management
- Laugh
- Surround yourself with support

Work on being a good role model

- You cannot NOT model.
- Listen well and talk respectfully.
- What would you most like adults to notice/admire about you? Model these skills/characteristics to your children.
- Remember that children are our children, not our peers.

Demonstrate love, respect, and appreciation

- Create an environment of kindness and courtesy
- Encourage apologizing, forgiveness, and “agreeing to disagree”
- Demonstrate love, respect, and appreciation so your child will know that you value him/her.
- Give hugs often; spend one-on-one time with him/her.
- Spend quiet time together – without the TV, radio, etc.

Have reasonable expectations for your child's behavior

- Be familiar with developmental stages.
- Match chores to developmental abilities.
- Know that unreasonable expectations can turn into inappropriate behavior.

Communicate

“Seek first to understand...
then be understood”

- Work on active listening.
- Solve problems together.
- Seek out your child’s opinions and ideas.
- Listen well and talk respectfully.
- Remember that whatever you say to your child can hurt or help him/her.
- Acknowledge feelings without judging.
- Focus on your child without being distracted.
- Have a pleasant and firm tone; avoid anger, sarcasm, name calling, and other demeaning manners.

Set limits – Discipline to teach, not to punish

- Make expectations and guidelines clear.
- Engage your child in setting a few basic rules.
- Avoid overindulging your child with material possessions and giving in to unreasonable demands.
- Help your child understand the consequences of his/her behavior.
- Don't discipline with anger.

Teach life skills

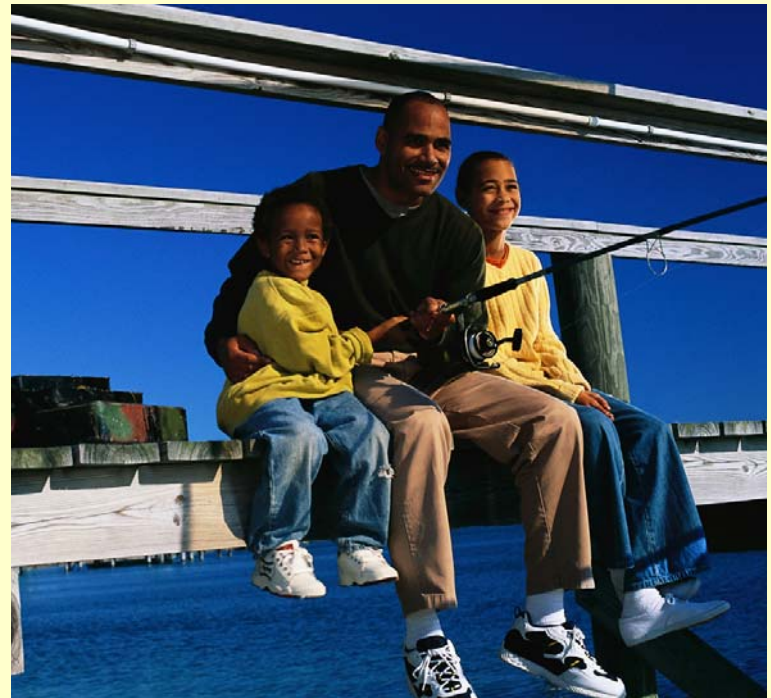
- Be a positive role model.
- Use everyday moments to help your child learn about life.
- Let child do what he can by himself; offer support, training, and encouragement.
- Engage your child in problem solving and decision making.

Organize and provide structure

- Have a plan but be flexible and creative.
- Create a family vision/make plans – together.
- Make the most of routines – they are more important than ever.
- Recognize and create (new) traditions around birthdays and holidays.

Play and have fun!

- Take time for being silly, relaxing.
- Let your child know that being with him/her is a source of pleasure for you.
- Build memories through family rituals.
- Read to your child, exercise with your child.
- Giving your time is better than giving things.



Know that you **MAY** not see results
immediately but...

Don't give up!