

The power of positive parenting

Professor Matt Sanders

THE ONE THING YOU CAN RELY ON ABOUT BEING A PARENT IS THAT YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR 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 behaviour. 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 behaviour. 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 behaviours we just can't seem to get a handle on?

As a parent and psychologist who has spent over 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 behaviours you want to encourage in your child and

to develop your own approach to dealing with your child's behaviour.

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.

“I believe there is simply no single right way to be a parent.”

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



forever parent



Healthy Child Manitoba
Putting children and families first

Manitoba 

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 behaviour problems into their adolescent years.

Every fortnight in this column I will be highlighting positive parenting approaches toward a wide variety of everyday family issues covering infants up to primary schoolers. We'll look at how children learn to misbehave and methods of dealing with misbehaviour, as well as practical strategies parents can use to deal with specific problems behaviours in a constructive way and to help children learn necessary social skills.

No matter what your parenting situation, I hope you will find something of interest every fortnight that you might like to use in your own family or even pass on to a friend. Even if a particular topic doesn't apply to you now it might be a good idea to cut out the column and keep it for future use. Since the issues we will be covering are ones that most parents have to deal with at some time or another, it might just come in handy.

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 once in while will do both you and your child a world of good.

If you are having continual difficulties in dealing with your child's behaviour be prepared to seek professional advice.

Find more parenting tips at: manitoba.ca/triplep or call 945-4777 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-877-945-4777.

Professor Matt Sanders is founder of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program.