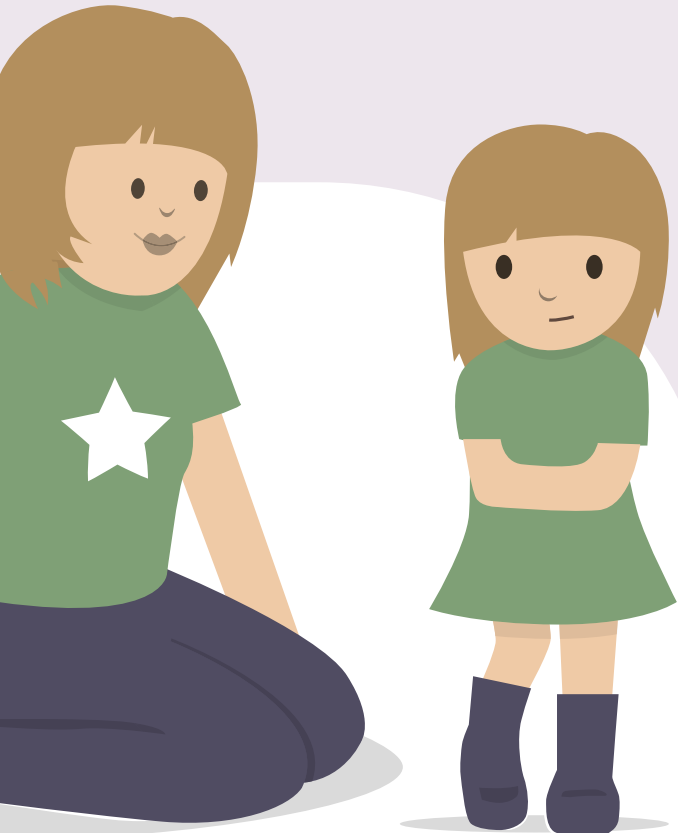


Choices

Children like to be included in making decisions – especially ones that involve them. When appropriate, discuss choices such as what to wear or which activities to attend. Help them work through problems with friendships and allow them to take responsibility for their actions. Children who are involved in making decisions are likely to feel valued and respected.

A sense of belonging

Children need to feel they belong. Family traditions are a great way to create strong, lasting memories and to give children a sense of connectedness and belonging. This doesn't have to be expensive, it could perhaps be having a regular Friday family film night or a special way to celebrate birthdays.



Helping you to be an even better mum or dad



For more information and tips on family life, visit www.careforthefamily.org.uk. You might like to:

- Attend a local *Time Out for Parents - The Primary Years* course www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses
- Read *The Sixty Minute Family* by Rob Parsons www.careforthefamily.org.uk/shop
- Visit the *Parenting* section of our website www.careforthefamily.org.uk/parenting

positiveparenting

Care for the Family is a registered charity and has been working to strengthen family life since 1988. Our aim is to promote strong family relationships and to help those who face family difficulties.

For information on the wider work of Care for the Family visit www.careforthefamily.org.uk

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Top Tips For Parents



The Primary Years



Many parents can feel under pressure to give their children the latest gadgetry, expensive toys, designer clothes or far-flung holidays, but other than healthy food, enough sleep and regular exercise, what do our children really need? Here are some tips.

Love

You know that you love your child, but don't assume that they automatically know it! It's important to tell them that you love them and show it by doing things with them. Imagine that they have an 'emotional love tank'.

Try to keep that tank topped up constantly by doing positive things, for example, say something encouraging, help with their homework, play a game together, listen to their problems. Keeping their tank topped up will help them to cope better with difficulties they face.

Understanding your child

All children are different. Your child may be easy going and flexible, active and strong-willed or quiet and cautious. Recognising your child's temperament will help you understand their behaviour and the way they view life, and make it easier for you to work 'with' rather than 'against' it. If you have more than one child their personalities may be different and what works for one may not work for another.

Praise

Children like to be told they've done well and praising them really helps build up their self-esteem. Catch them doing something right! Pick out specific behaviour and achievements you can praise, no matter how small, for example, "You did really well helping your baby brother today." Try to let them 'overhear' you praising them to others as well.

Time

Create opportunities when you can give your full attention to your child, like catching up on what has happened to them in school, and having fun with them. This quality time together will help your relationship grow strong and reap huge benefits when your child enters the teenage years and beyond.



Media Safety

It is important to protect our children from harmful material and teach them how to use the Internet safely. Talk to your child about what they are up to online, set boundaries with them, use parental controls and try to keep equipment with Internet access in a family room.

Bullying via mobile devices and the Internet has become more common. Encourage your child to talk to you about anything that makes them upset or frightened.

Boundaries

Children need the security of having boundaries because they know what behaviour is expected of them. Loving discipline is really important. It is about training children to choose to do the right thing in a situation as appropriate for their age and maturity.

Pick your battles carefully and follow-through with your decisions. For example, don't tell them if they misbehave that you will not allow them to attend a party if you have no intention of following that through.

Try to give realistic consequences for misbehaviour, and then as hard as it is, do follow them through so they can see that you really mean what you say.

Feelings

Being able to describe how you feel is a really important communication skill for your child to learn. Help them to express their feelings through words, rather than acting them out. For example, if they're angry try asking them to describe how that feels. By encouraging them to recognise and express their feelings in a healthy way you will help them to develop emotional maturity.