

THE 12 STEPS OF PARENTING

1. Always make an effort to show your children how much you care. Communicate that message to them in all interactions, especially when they are having problems.
2. Maintain a positive mental attitude about your ability to be a parent. Trust your instincts and know where you stand.
3. Teach your children the importance of values while they are young. Do not wait until your children come home intoxicated to tell them you will not accept drunkenness.
4. Do not rely on the police or your children's school, to be parents. They are unable to care the way you do.
5. Set clear rules and limits for your children. Most do not have the ability to set rules and limits for themselves.
6. Maintain your own supportive relationships. Your children cannot meet your emotional needs, nor can they establish parent-child boundaries.
7. Make sure your home is a safe, secure and positive environment. This includes appropriate privacy for each family member.
8. Follow through with consequences for your children's misbehavior. Make sure the consequences are immediate and relate to the misbehavior, not your anger.
9. Do not prevent the natural consequences your children receive for misbehavior outside of the home. They will learn quickly if you let them.
10. Guide your children through life. They will often need help with homework, social situations, future plans, and complex feelings. Never give up trying to direct and redirect their energy.
11. Do not accept responsibility for you children's feelings or the outcome of their decisions. When your children succeed or do poorly it is their reward or consequence, not yours.
12. Your role as a parent is to provide a foundation for a life to be built, and that foundation is strongest with love, direction, and respect. Remember that your children are not less than and no greater than you.

