

How To Teach Your Child Right From Wrong

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How To Teach Your Child Right From Wrong

0 - 1 YEAR

At this stage in life, the concepts of right and wrong are not possible to teach. Rather, an infant who is shown warmth, cuddling and loving attention is likely to grow into a healthy and happy adult.

1 - 2 YEARS

Rather than scolding a child or arguing with him about misbehavior, try to take preventative measures beforehand. If you don't want him pulling things out the cupboards, make sure they are secured. At this age of short attention span, discipline beyond a simple "no" is unnecessary and can have undesirable effects.

2 - 4 YEARS

Children of this age, unable to understand abstractions such as generosity and truth, imitate their parents. So set an example. Be firm in disallowing undesirable behaviour, but do so in a kind and friendly manner, without attempting to explain why.

4 - 6 YEARS

This is the time where you can really take some positive steps to reinforce your child's positive behavior. Give him lots of praise when it's due. Children of this age respond well to simple reasoning and explanations. Concepts such as truthfulness and generosity can be introduced. Continue to set an example of acceptable behavior. The child at this stage wants to please you and wants to be liked by others.

5 - 8 YEARS

Children develop a greater social awareness at this age. They understand the basic rights of others when taught fairness, values and the need to follow certain rules of behavior. Rules and limitations not only seem just to the child, but give him a good feeling of security.

8 - 11 YEARS

Due to natural growth and influences outside the home, your child has likely become more independent. He may begin to question your decisions, contradict or argue. You must remain firm in the important matters and flexible in less important ones. Demonstrate and discuss the child's duties and responsibilities to friends, relatives and society. Set examples of moral behavior. Sex education can also be important at this stage.

12 - 17 YEARS

These are normally rebellious years for most teenagers. In fact, teenagers who never rebel are probably in emotional trouble. As a parent you must weather the storm when your teenager begins to question and test conventional values, rules and beliefs. If you've instilled a sense of values at an early age, chances are he still retains many of those ideas. Try to keep lines of communication open and don't push the panic button. If communication does break down and tensions mount considerably, seek professional help.

18 YEARS AND OVER

At this stage most young adults are forming, or have formed, their own set of values. However, life still holds for them many unanswered questions, and a warm yet honest relationship can still go a long way in helping them reach mature adulthood.