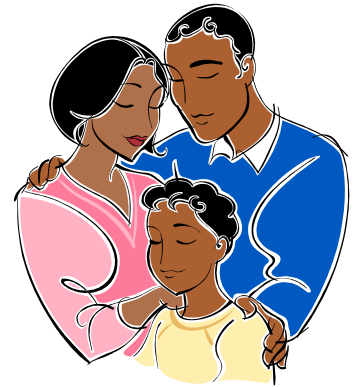


## Turn Around Parenting Goofs

Even the most dedicated and insightful parents are not perfect. There is no one solution to raising kids. Parents are going to make a few mistakes along the way but you can turn those goofs around. Here are a few ideas:



Find your temper...before you lose it. Losing your temper is counterproductive and it can change the child's focus of what they did into what you are doing. Focus on the child's misbehavior and give constructive criticism or punishment to fit the situation. For example, if your child is not listening and doing what he/she is told to do and is only playing with his/her game boy, don't yell and throw it away. Instead ask your child to give you the game boy and it will be returned to him/her when they can prove they can listen and do their chores.

Take the time to talk with your child about important issues. This will give the information they need to know how you feel about them and will help guide them into making good choices.

Take into consideration their personality before you decide on an activity. If your child is shy, avoid a large surprise party instead choose a party with a few close friends.

Instead of always having constructive criticism, try positive praise. Search for something positive about your child each day. This will help create good self-esteem.

Avoid becoming a mommy/daddy doormat. Setting limits and sticking to them is critical. You must also be in agreement as parents of what those limits are. As a child grows, new issues arise. Discuss them as parents before making a decision.

Work as a parenting team. Don't let your child work you against each other. Even if you are a divorced couple find ways to work together and support each other on important issues. Remember a child needs consistent structure.

Instill respect for rules and security. Don't use scare tactics when trying to keep a child in the boundaries you want them to be, this could instill fear and cause a phobia.

Think before you make a statement. Children listen to every word you say and can pick up bad habits. You could harm their self esteem.

Before you respond to a bad situation get all of the facts. Remember there are always two sides to everything. Your child is not perfect but they are not always the cause of the problem.

With life come changes and the ability to adjust to change. Handle stress in a positive manner. Take the time to think out the situation before you react. For example your child always plays well with other children. She/he is playing a child on the swing and your child suddenly pushes her off of the swing. Instead of losing your temper and scolding the child or worse defending your child's behavior, you should first check if the other child is alright and in a steady voice let the child know that his/her behavior is not appropriate and will not be tolerated. Encourage your child to apologize and if your child is old enough an apology letter is always a humbling experience. As a parent you should also apologize and assure the other parent this behavior will be handled immediately. You may take into consideration the incident and the aggressive behavior and consider a day or two away from the playground for punishment.

Set reasonable goals for your child. For instance; if your child has difficulty in math with a current D grade average with only 3 weeks until their grades come out, don't expect them to get an A. Telling them that they won't get to play baseball if they don't get an A is unreasonable. Instead, let them know that a D is not an acceptable passing grade and you expect them to try harder to get a better grade before the end of the 6 weeks. Also, they won't be able to play with the team until the grade is brought up. You may want to check on them weekly encouraging and helping them achieve their goal without doing the work for them

Set clear responsibilities but be flexible to time. Remember it is important that each member of the family does their part in household chores but there is time when children have special school projects that are due or practice time for sports may take longer than usual. Postpone the chores and make it clear that after this time has passed they are to get back on schedule.

Share time together. Develop family traditions and fun activities. Don't let the busy outside world take control of your home. You only have a short time with your children before they are grown and have families of their own.

Incorporate some time as a family, to the community or extended family members. This gives children a sense of connectedness.

Appreciate each child's uniqueness. Don't expect all of your children to be in the same sports or academic activities. Unconditional love for family members is a priceless gift all parents should give.

Give your child the same respect you expect. Such as you wouldn't like someone to yell at you or criticize you.

Do away with double standards. Take an honest assessment of your own behaviors and activities and make an effort to change those behaviors you wouldn't find acceptable in your children.

Give your children age appropriate opportunities to choose, negotiate and learn to care for themselves.

**For more information please contact your Employee Assistance Program at 800-862-3398**