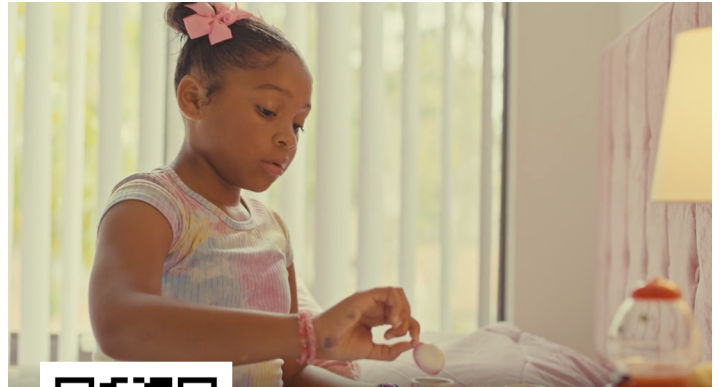


HOW DO I...

Promote good behavior in my children?

Advice for Parents and Caregivers

- Taking time out of **each day to do something with your child that they enjoy can contribute to a healthy parent-child relationship and help promote good behavior.** Kids appreciate your attention, whether it's asking about their day on the drive home from school or sharing a snack together.
- **Setting expectations helps guide you and your child when unwanted behavior happens.** Make sure your expectations are clear and realistic, and that you've discussed them with your child.
- **When you see good behavior, say so.** It's a great feeling to catch your child "being good." When they are rewarded with a "good job" or a high five for a specific behavior, it increases the chances that they will repeat that good behavior in the future.
- **It's normal to get frustrated or upset with your child's behavior.** When this happens, it can be helpful to take a moment and reset. Take a deep breath and even share what you're doing, "I'm feeling frustrated right now, and I'm going to take a beat. Then we're going to come back and have a discussion."
- **When you do give a consequence, make it immediate** or right after the behavior happens, brief (give the consequence and then return to "normal life"), and consistent.



Scan to watch our
video on this topic.

8 Tips for Promoting Good Behavior in Kids

1. **Take care of your relationship.** Connection with your child is key to building a relationship based on trust and respect. Try to spend at least a little time each day fully engaged with your child in an activity they enjoy.
2. **Set clear and realistic expectations.** Pick calm moments to go over expectations for how you want your child to behave during certain situations. And review them when your child needs to demonstrate that behavior.
3. **Catch them being good.** Use specific praise when your child behaves appropriately, which will increase the likelihood that they'll repeat the good behavior in the future. To reinforce your child's progress, you can link positive behavior to preferred activities, family outings, or daily privileges.
4. **Be thoughtful about consequences.** When you give a consequence, try to make it immediate, brief, and consistent. Try to return to reset as quickly as possible once the consequence is complete.
5. **Avoid harsh discipline.** Consequences don't need to upset children to work — it's more important that consequences are consistently applied when a behavior occurs, and you don't need to give them a time-out or take away something they like for it to be effective.
6. **Take a moment.** If you notice yourself getting frustrated or upset with your child's behavior, it can be helpful to take some time to yourself to calm down before stepping in.
7. **Be a detective.** Rather than focusing on the behavior itself, dig a little deeper to try to figure out what is really going on with your child so you can prevent the bad behavior in the future. The reason is not always simple or obvious, so look for patterns if it's an ongoing issue.
8. **Talk when calm.** Don't try to reason with kids in the middle of a meltdown. Instead, wait until things have calmed down to have a discussion in which you can actively listen to one another, share feelings, and hopefully arrive at a place of understanding.

To learn more, check out these helpful resources:

[Behavior Problems Resource Center](#)

The Child Mind Institute

[FAST Resources for Parents and Caregivers](#)

Seattle Children's Hospital

[Encouraging Positive Behavior: Tips](#)

Raising Children

The Child Mind Institute is dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders by giving them the help they need to thrive. We've become the leading independent nonprofit in children's mental health by providing gold-standard care, delivering educational resources to millions of families each year, training educators in underserved communities, and developing tomorrow's breakthrough treatments.