

# Tips For Parents

These tips are from a great website: [www.raisingkids.net.au](http://www.raisingkids.net.au)

**Catch him being 'good'**. This simply means that when your child is behaving in a way you like, you can give her some positive feedback, for example, 'Wow, you are playing so nicely. I really like the way you are keeping all the blocks on the table'. That works better than waiting for the blocks to come crashing to the floor before you take notice and bark, 'Hey, stop that'. This positive feedback is sometimes called 'descriptive praise'. Try to say six positive comments (praise and encouragement) for every negative comment (criticisms and reprimands) — the 6-1 ratio keeps things in balance. It also pays to remember that if left with a choice between no attention or negative attention, **children will seek out negative attention**.

**Get down onto her level**. Kneeling or squatting down next to children is a very powerful tool for communicating positively with them. Getting close allows you to tune in to what they might be feeling or thinking. It also helps them focus on what you are saying or asking for. If you are close to her and have her attention, there is no need to make her look at you.

**'I hear you.'** Active listening is another tool for helping young children cope with their emotions. They tend to get frustrated a lot, especially if they can't express themselves well enough verbally, so when you **repeat back to them what you think they might be feeling**, it helps to relieve some of their tension and makes them feel respected and comforted. It can diffuse many potential temper tantrums.

**Keep promises**. Stick to agreements. When you follow through on your promises, good or bad, your child learns to trust and respect you. So when you promise to go for a walk after she picks up her toys, make sure you have your walking shoes handy. When you say you will leave the library if she doesn't stop running around be prepared to leave straight away if she continues. No need to make a fuss about it — the more matter of fact, the better. This helps her feel more secure, as it creates a consistent and predictable environment.

**Reduce temptation**. Your glasses look like so much fun to play with — a child can hardly remember to stop themselves. Reduce the chance for innocent but costly exploration by keeping that stuff out of sight.

**Children do as you do**. *Your child watches you to get her clues on how to behave in the world, so, as a **role model**, use your own behaviour to guide her. What you do is often much more important than what you say. If you want your child to say 'please', say it yourself. If you don't want your child to raise her voice, keep your voice at a reasonable level too.*

**Show her how you feel**. If you can tell her honestly how her behaviour affects you, she recognises her own emotions in yours, like a mirror, and is able to feel for you. By the age of three, **children can show real empathy**. So you might say, 'I'm getting upset because there is so much noise I can't talk on the phone.' When you start the sentence with 'I', it gives your child the chance to see things from your perspective.

**Choose your battles.** Before you intervene in anything your child is doing, ask yourself if it really matters. By keeping instructions, requests and negative feedback to a minimum, you create less opportunity for conflict and bad feelings. [Rules](#) are important, but reserve them for the most important things.

**Whining: be strong.** Kids don't want to be annoying. By giving in to their annoying persistence we are unintentionally training them to do it more. 'No' means 'no', not maybe, so don't say it unless you mean it. If you say 'No' and then give in, they will be even more persistent with whining the next time, hoping to get lucky again.

**Keep it simple and positive.** If you can give [clear instructions in simple terms](#), your child will know what is expected of her. ('Please hold my hand when we cross the road.') Stating things in the positive gets their heads thinking in the right direction: 'Please shut the gate', rather than 'Don't leave the gate open'.

**Responsibility and consequences.** As children get older, you can increasingly give them responsibility for their own behaviour and the chance to experience the [natural consequences](#) of that behaviour. You don't have to be the bad guy all the time. For example, if she forgot to put her lunch box in her bag, she will go hungry at lunch time. It is her hunger and her consequence and it won't hurt her to go hungry just that one time. Sometimes, with the best intentions, we do so much for our children that we don't allow them to learn for themselves. At other times you need to provide **consequences** for unacceptable or dangerous behaviour. For these times, it is best to ensure that you have explained the consequences and that your children have agreed to them in advance.

**Say it once and move on.** It is surprising how much your child is listening even though she may not have the social maturity to tell you. Nagging and criticising is boring for you and doesn't work. Your child will just end up tuning you out and wonder why you get more upset. If you want to give her one last chance to cooperate, you can remind her of the consequences and start counting to three.

**Make him feel important.** Children love it when they can contribute to the family. Start introducing some **simple chores** or things that she can do to play her own important part in helping the household. This will make her feel important and she'll take pride in helping out. If you can give your child lots of practise doing a chore, she will get better at it and will keep trying harder. [Safe chores](#) help them feel responsible, build their **self-esteem** and help you out too.

**Prepare for challenging situations.** There are times when looking after your child and doing things you need to do will be tricky. If you think about these challenging situations in advance, you can [plan](#) around her needs with advance notice and [transition time](#) and talk to her about why you need her cooperation. Then she is prepared for what you expect.

**Maintain a sense of humour.** Another way of diffusing tension and possible conflict is to use [humour](#). You can pretend to become the menacing tickle monster or make animal noises. However, humour at her expense won't help; young children are easily hurt by parental 'teasing'. Humour that has you both laughing is great.