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Tips on being a good parent

Every person alive has had some experience with parenting, either as a parent or as someone with parents, and everyone, at some point, has believed that they could do it better. All the if’s that have been thought; “If I were the parent, I wouldn’t do that,” “If only my parents were more like so-and-so’s,” or “If only my son would do this thing.” Being a good parent doesn’t mean that bad parenting won’t happen and will happen frequently.  A good parent models behavior for future generations by being involved, teaching, and caring.

Good parents are involved in their children’s lives. They are active participants in their children’s existence in several ways, like attending events and inquiring about their and their friends’ lives. It means something when children can look out and see a parent supporting them and attending every event, no matter the distance, time of day, or personal inconvenience it might be for the parent. Good parents are joyful participants, not boastful about how much of a sacrifice they have made to attend. Better yet, create an event, something that will be a cherished memory that will anchor both parent and child to a moment in time with a sense of warmth, a surprise trip to get some ice cream, or setting up a carnival in the back yard using a latter, some buckets, and water balloons. Maybe even save some of the balloons and launch a surprise attack on Mom from the roof with Dad.

In addition, good parenting involves teaching. Once potty training has finished doesn’t mean it’s time to leave education to the school system. It’s a parent’s responsibility to teach about what it means to be responsible, caring, humble human beings. The foundations of who that child will become are taught by the first teachers they have.

Good parents will work hard to instill the concepts of character and citizenship in their children. Taking ownership of mistakes and understanding there are consequences for those mistakes is important, but more important is the understanding that from mistakes, there is the opportunity to learn something new. It’s also important to advocate for one’s self. Achievements are important and should be celebrated. Teaching the difference between celebration and gloating is an achievement good parents humbly acknowledge. Unfortunately, some of the hardest lessons come from life, and kids need help understanding those lessons, like the loss of a family member, a home, or another life-altering event. In these cases, good parents will counsel and be able to teach one about one of the best human qualities, compassion.

Finally, good parents care about their kids for a lifetime. A good parent should begin caring for their children before they even draw their first breath, and hopefully when the parent draws their last breath. It’s important to remember that their acts will leave an impression not just on their and their kids’ life but will be echoed into future generations. Kissing a scraped knee or any other booboo doesn’t just touch the skin; the soul, and that soul will grow up and remember that.

Some parents feel that buying things or spending lots of money is essential, and that’s fine, but it’s just icing on the cake. It’s important to remember that kind words and hugs are free. How a parent has participated, taught, and cared for a child will influence generations to come because its roots were established long before the branches of this parent and child.