



Parenting Tips

Practical strategies for today's parent

Parent Team LLC Ruth Fett M.S.C.

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Dear Ruth,

Welcome! Parenting is a wonderfully challenging privilege. Each parent has their own style and special touch they bring to this rewarding position. Over the next few months "Parenting Tips" will be examining tools of the trade. We will look at parenting tools to consider tossing out and tools to think about adding to your parenting toolbox.

Ruth recently wrote a short booklet as [a quick reference for parents](#). The booklet, "The Parent's Toolbox", outlines basic child development concepts that are key to understanding children. The booklet also discusses many more tools to add or consider discarding from your parental toolbox. "The Parent's Toolbox" is available online at www.ParentTeamGB.com or can be purchased at Tots2Teens Consignment Store at 345 Cardinal Lane in Howard.

Just a reminder that the March Parent Seminars are starting soon. Check out all the details at www.ParentTeamGB.com

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Two Tools to Consider Tossing Out of your Parental Toolbox

Two tools to consider tossing or at least moving to the bottom of your parenting toolbox would be:

Using threats to gain cooperation

Examples:

"Get in there and clean that room or no TV for a week."

"Put your jacket on now, or mommy will not buy you McDonalds' today."

Why should a parent consider tossing threats as a tool?

- 1.) When a parent threatens a child, it puts the child on the defensive and under stress.
- 2.) Children under stress by the threat are more likely to be non-compliant.

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starting up in March.

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3.) Threats build resentment and communicate to the child that the issue is more important to the parent than the child.

4.) Parents can understand this concept by considering how well they operate at work under a threat from their superior.

Asking when there is not a choice

Examples:

"Buckle your seat belt so we can go to grandmas', OK?"

"Eat just on more bite, pretty please honey?"

"Please turn off the TV, OK?"

Why should a parent consider tossing asking as a tool when there really is not choice in the matter?

1.) When an adult phrases a command in the form of a question it implies that the child has a choice. When the child chooses not to comply and the adult becomes angry, the child becomes confused.

2.) A parent is actually training the child to argue with them when they use asking as a tool to gain compliance.

Two tools to add to your parenting toolbox

Respect their struggles-

Examples:

"That math seems tough, let me know if you want any help."

"Going on a school bus for the first time is both exciting and a little scary, see you later sweetie."

"You were mean to the girls now they don't want to play with you, that's a problem. I am confident you will figure it out."

Why should a parent use "respecting their struggles" as a parenting tool?

1.) Rescuing our children from their problems sends the message that they are not competent enough to solve their own problems.

2.) Allowing our children to work through their struggles, as we stand by for support, tells them that we care about them, but also respect their abilities to deal with the situation.

Refer them to an expert -

Examples:

"You feel it is not fair for me to limit your use of energy drinks. Go on line to Web MD and find me studies that show the affects of energy drinks on teens and then we can discuss it further."

"I understand you are upset with your 8:00 bedtime. When we go see Dr. Griffin next week you can ask him how many hours of sleep a seven year old needs."

Why should a parent consider using the "refer them to an expert" tool?

- 1.) This teaches our children to look at reliable resources for information rather than their friends.
- 2.) It puts the ball in their court. If they do not wish to do the research or ask the questions to find the answers than the issue is dropped.

Children and Their Activities: How much is too much

Dance, soccer, piano lessons, bowling, scouts, playdates, swimming lessons, summer school, basketball, the list goes on forever of potential activities children could be involved in. How does a parent know how many activities to sign their child up to participate in? The answer to that is two fold. Developmentally speaking children 8 and under need more down time and sleep, whereas older children can tolerate a little more activity during their day. However, the most important factor in deciding how many activities to involve a child in is the child themselves. Look at factors like, when it is time for bed are they tired and ready to sleep? Emotionally do they appear overwhelmed by the rushing to and from activities? Perhaps most importantly, does the child interact regularly with the parent on the child's level? Playing, dancing, being goofy or just plain talking with the parent is the most important activity to be sure exist in a child's life.

Finding a balance of out-of-home activities and family activities is vital to the development of a child's social skills. However, be aware of the emotional and physical affects these activities have on a child. If a parent is uncertain about signing a child up for an activity, here are three good rules of thumb.

1. Never schedule two activities for the child on the same night, especially a school night.
2. Children 5 and under who spend the day in child care should only be involved in 1 other activity. Children who stay home with a parent or grandparent should be involved in 2-3 activities to help develop social skills.
3. Children 6 and older should be involved in no more than two activities outside of school. If they have interest in more than two areas, have them try one for six months and then switch to the other.

Remember that the #1 activity a child should have is connecting with their parent. What children need MOST is us!

Please call anytime for a FREE 30 minute consultation.

Sincerely,

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