

“The health, productivity, and creativity of any society are the direct result of how the children of that society were treated.”

—Dr. Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph. D



the
Nurturing Center

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

STRONG FAMILIES BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES

Ten Things To Do Instead of Spanking

By Susan Christofferson

The Nurturing Center's goal is to ensure that each child has the right to be treated with respect and live in safety with secure, healthy, nurturing relationships.

1. Give your child appropriate choices – young children feel frustrated by their “powerlessness”. We tell them when to eat, sleep and play. When children have the opportunity to make simple choices such as what to wear or which vegetable to eat they are more cooperative.
2. Offer positive direction – Frequently, parents spend a great deal of time telling children what not to do. Reframing and letting a child know what you expect helps children comply with family rules. Instead of “don’t run”, you can say “we walk in the house” or “don’t jump on the couch” becomes “couches are for sitting”.
3. Use distraction – when siblings or friends are arguing over a toy, engage them in finding another activity. If your child is using the wooden hammer on the piano, simply take the hammer and demonstrate how to pound the peg into the cobbler’s bench.
4. Give positive reinforcement – If you want behavior to repeat itself, pay attention to it. Sincere praise is a highly effective motivator
5. Buy a timer – If you have more than one child, do not expect that they will share. Using a timer, you can teach children the valuable social skill of “taking turns”. When two children want the same toy you can suggest that they get out the hourglass 3-minute egg timer. While one child watches the sand drip through, the other has the “turn”.

Ten Things To Do Instead of Spanking

By Susan Christofferson

6. Give information – Sometimes it only takes a word to let children know what you want them to do. The command, “WALK” when someone is running through a room stops children in their tracks.
7. Use a structured time–line – Children (and many adults) need time to prepare for change or transition. Give them a time–line; “in fifteen minutes, we’re going to clean up the toys and get ready for bed”.
8. Avoid confrontation – Never ask a question that can be answered with “no”. Asking a toddler if they want to get their coat on or take a nap will always be answered with a resounding “no”! Choices allow the child to feel competent. “Do you want to wear your red jacket or green sweatshirt”? “Do you want a story or a tape before rest time?”
9. Acknowledge their feelings – Let your child know that you are listening to them. Parent often inadvertently discount their child’s feelings. They say, “I’m hungry” we say, “you can’t be hungry, you just ate”. They say, “ I’m hot”, we say, “You can’t be hot it’s freezing in here”. Our response should be simply to respond by validating their feelings.
10. Set priorities – Many parenting journals remind us how quickly our children grow and change. Letting go of the small stuff or the inconsequential behavior helps us keep perspective.