

helping children thrive



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Helping your child identify their emotions

By Catherine Wilson

As parents, we tend to fixate on our child's progress when it comes to life skills and academics. But Focus on the Family Canada's vice-president of counselling, Wendy Kittlitz, advises parents not to be distracted from another top priority: their child's emotional development.

“To really equip a child well for life,” says Kittlitz, “parents need to give their child a voice. That means parents need to help their children identify their feelings, manage those feelings well, and express their needs in ways that are healthy, respectful and direct.”

When a child is not equipped with such skills, they risk moving into adulthood as someone who resorts to childish behaviours like sulking, whining and throwing tantrums to influence others. They're also more likely to struggle with intense emotions that so easily become destructive.

As an important first step, Kittlitz recommends that parents focus on nurturing their child's self-awareness with respect to his or her emotions: “Make it your goal to help your child reach a place where he or she is able to pause and self reflect, even in the grip of intense emotions, then constructively answer two questions: *What am I feeling?* and *What do I need?*”

Rules of engagement

For you to be most effective as your child's coach, it's important that you follow ground rules for healthy discussions around emotions.

First, understand that emotions are not right or wrong. Second, consistently *prove* to your child that it's "safe" to share their emotions with you. Whenever and however your child reveals their feelings – through tearful whispers or angry outbursts – it's important that you remain calm and respectful, keeping your own feelings and responses in check. *Never* pass judgment or try to "talk them out of it." Instead, respectfully validate their feelings using phrases like, "I'm sorry that you're so sad. That would make me sad too."

Connecting with feelings

A child's early steps in self-control involve learning to correctly identify an emotion and give it a name. Without help, many children aren't able to connect the dots between how they are feeling and the label for that *feeling*. And without a label for something as difficult to describe as a feeling, your child can't begin to talk about and make sense of that feeling. Consequently, you can't begin to help your child manage how he or she behaves in response to that feeling.

Here are a few ways you can help your little one practise connecting with his or her feelings:

- From the time your child is two years old, look for picture books that help him or her recognize simple emotions. Supplement this with creative projects. For example, make a clipart poster for your fridge showing various facial expressions, then play a game of trying to guess the emotion behind each expression.
- Make a point of talking openly, and often, about feelings. Model this for your children by identifying your feelings, and inviting your children to consider their feelings. You might say, "Right now, I'm feeling grumpy. I think it's because I'm hungry. How are you feeling?" Or, "I'm disappointed about that. Are you disappointed too?"
- In his book *It's Okay to Cry*, therapist Dr. H. Norman Wright suggests a simple way to engage very young children in dialogue about their emotions. Holding up your hand, with five fingers spread, simply say, "Here is one finger for sad, one for mad, one for happy, one for scared, and one for lonely. Let's see which of these you're experiencing." If the moment is appropriate you can add, "When you are feeling [name the emotion], what do you want to do?"

Peeling back the layers

One important concept to share with children is that we often experience *layers* of emotions. Anger, in particular, often hides another emotion that we have not recognized, or are simply unwilling to face, such as fear, hurt or frustration. If we're wise, we'll teach our children to look deeper than their surface emotion.

Counsellors Milan and Kay Yerkovich encourage parents to fix a list of emotions to the fridge, as an aid to help children and teens identify and discuss deeper, "hidden" feelings. With a list as a tool, it's easier to get to the heart of the matter, especially when used alongside questions like: "You look like you are feeling mad/sad, but I wonder if there's another feeling hiding underneath. Let's look at the list."

Or for tweens and teens: "It seems like something is really bothering you. Let's talk about that this evening. When you're ready, please pick a couple of words off the list that match how you feel, then come and tell me what they are."

Wright suggests that parents consider teaching young children to say, "I'm hurt-angry," or "I'm afraid-angry," or "I'm frustrated-angry." Some other helpful "emo-combos" to consider are *disappointed-sad*, *embarrassed-sad*, *worried-sad* and *left-out-sad*.

Once your child is able to identify and express their feelings – that is, to answer the question, *What do I feel?* – the next step is to help your child answer the second half of the self-control question: *What do I need?* This transition from focusing on feelings to focusing on solutions is key to mastering self-control.

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Download a free printable emotions chart to help children name their feelings.
FocusOnTheFamily.ca/EmotionsChart

Teaching self-control: Guiding your child with discipline

By Catherine Wilson

Every parent should ask themselves if the discipline strategies they're using are the best way to teach their child self-control. Will those strategies help their child learn to manage their emotions well?

One approach to discipline that comes highly recommended by Focus on the Family Canada's counselling team was developed by child psychologist Dr. Karyn Purvis and her colleague Dr. David Cross.

A foundational strength of Purvis and Cross' approach, as described in their book *The Connected Child*, is that it preserves a warm, loving connection between parent and child throughout the discipline process. Parent and child work together as allies in the struggle to resist sin and master self-control. The focus of this type of discipline is *retraining* rather than punishment, with an emphasis on *modelling* of preferred behaviour by the parent and opportunities for the child to *practise* the parent's example.

Checking our perspective

First and foremost, Purvis and Cross urge parents to be *fully present* when discipline issues arise: "Shift your mind-set, so that you see misbehaviours not as a headache, but as an opportunity to teach a child new skills."

It's important, too, that you embrace the role of a compassionate, patient, nurturing guide as you discipline your child. If you're prone to losing your temper, shouting or threatening your child when they misbehave, your approach may well be working against all you are trying to achieve. As Purvis and Cross are careful to point out, a child who feels threatened or fearful has difficulty mastering a new skill. Stress and fear effectively sabotage

learning by triggering a biochemical cascade in the body that reduces our ability to think clearly.

Interrupting misbehaviour

When your child's behaviour is out of line, Purvis and Cross recommend the following steps:

1. Interrupt the behaviour immediately and come alongside your child.
2. Get your child's full attention by kneeling down and making direct eye contact.
3. Simply state what the child did wrong.
4. Help him/her say aloud what he/she needs.
5. Show your child a better way of getting those needs met.
6. Give your child a chance to practise.

What should you say?

In their book, Purvis and Cross suggest simple scripts for parents to follow when they engage with their child about misbehaviour. Here's one: *"Jacob, it's not okay for you to hit Sam. I can see you are angry that he took the toy car, but we treat people with respect. Use your words and say what you need."*

Notice the **short sentences and simple language**. In the grip of strong emotions, your child will have trouble following what you are saying. Short, simple phrases are much easier for your child to process and remember. By simply and succinctly beginning with "It's not okay to," the child understands exactly the **problem identified is the behaviour**, not the child.

Next, the parent helps the child **recognize the feeling that preceded the wrong behaviour**.

The statement "we treat people with respect" reflects another **key strategy of well-defined rules**. Purvis and Cross encourage parents to repeat them often at home and unpack them as different situations arise. In a moment of misbehaviour, this repetition helps your child recall what "right behaviour" looks like.

Finally, concluding with, "Use your words," helps the child internalize that **they need to talk with others** to get their needs met, not take inappropriate action.

Give opportunity for practise

Purvis and Cross stress the importance of giving opportunities for your child to practise right behaviour as you discipline. "Research shows that motor memory can trump cognitive, thought-based memory for very young children," they write. "Speaking, hearing,

touching and acting out a new skill are great ways for children to cement learning a new lesson."

Another powerful tool Purvis and Cross recommend to parents is the "re-do." When a child is "caught in the act," the parent engages the child in a fun, light-hearted manner with a statement like, "Whoa! Let's try that again with respect." If the child complies, there's no drama, penalty or escalation of the situation – the parent simply guides the child to more appropriate behaviour, and helps them internalize it through practise.

Teaching negotiation

Although your child should always obey your direct request, there's huge value in teaching him or her that you are willing to compromise if circumstances allow. For example, to a child who is disappointed that it's time to go to bed, you might say, "Would you like a compromise? You can stay up another ten minutes. But your part of the deal is that you will go to bed quickly later, with no stalling or complaining." Once your child understands the concept, you can introduce compromising into his or her interactions with others.

Putting first things first

Focusing on discipline and retraining only makes sense if your child is in a fit state to receive it. When a child misbehaves, before you do anything, always ask yourself, *What does my child need most right now?* Here's a simple mental checklist worth running through:

- *Does my child need me?* Special one-on-one time might be a more urgent priority than discipline, since children will often act up if they've been feeling neglected.
- *Could intense "hidden" emotions like anxiety or sadness be prompting this behaviour?* If so, empathetic listening might be your best approach.
- *Is my child tired, hungry, thirsty or sick?*

Pausing to deal with any of these issues is a great opportunity to teach your child the self-awareness component that precedes mature self-control.

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Watch educator and author Cherilyn Orr explain why emotion coaching is essential to behaviour correction.
**FocusOnTheFamily.ca/
KidsEmotions**



Introducing your child to God

By Larry Fowler

Raising our kids to follow Christ is a lot like trying to navigate with no maps, GPS or street signs. But we don't need to feel lost. As we journey through each stage of our children's development, we can point them toward spiritual markers that will help them find true faith – becoming vibrant followers of Christ.

Spiritual marker for early childhood: **Respect**

For parents of young children, the journey of raising Christ followers starts with the task of instilling respect for God and his authority. While most of us enjoy teaching toddlers fun Bible stories, we can't stop there. Warm fuzzy feelings build affection for Jesus, but they don't build the foundation for spiritual wisdom. Awe, wonder and respectful fear of God lay that groundwork.

So how do you instill this respect? Teach your young children these truths:

- God is strong. He can do anything.
- God always keeps his promises.
- God gives us rules that we must obey.
- Even if Mommy or Daddy can't see what you are doing, God sees it.
- God disciplines us because he loves us.

Spiritual marker for early elementary years: **Wisdom**

Wisdom is the ability to apply God's Word to life situations. So to grow in wisdom, your children must first learn God's Word. From ages 5 to 8, add biblical teaching to your daily routine. Make sure you emphasize the following four areas:

Who is God? Is he an angry ogre? Is he a passive observer? Is God what you make him to be? Or is he the righteous, powerful and loving Creator?

Use Bible stories to teach about God. Take the story of David and Goliath. Many children's materials conclude, "You can do anything if God is on your side." But the story's application ought to be, "Make sure you are on God's side."

What is truth? Your kids will be bombarded throughout life by truth claims from the media, teachers and friends. If you are not successful in teaching them that truth and wisdom come from the Bible, they will struggle greatly with faith challenges later.

This means you must regularly include statements like the following in your conversation: "We can always trust what God says" and "God's Word is always right."

Who is man? Our humanistic culture treats man as basically good. That's why children often struggle with accepting the Bible's claim that man is sinful. If they've not experienced deep hurts, they probably see the people around them as good. Your children will not appreciate the need for a Saviour until they see themselves and others as sinners.

Who is Jesus? Growing up in a society that professes to value tolerance will challenge your children's faith. They may be called "intolerant" and "hateful" for claiming that Jesus is the only way to God. To withstand this pressure, your children need a secure knowledge of who Jesus is and why he is the only way.

Spiritual marker for late elementary years: Grace

The primary goal for 9- to 11-year-olds is to receive God's grace. You need to make certain that your children fully understand the Gospel and you need to ask God to help you discern the authenticity of their decision. Countless kids "respond" to the Gospel outwardly because of pressure from a Sunday school teacher or parent, while in their hearts they remain reluctant to submit to Christ.

Beyond accepting God's grace, your children also need to learn how to give grace to others. This age group is especially concerned with getting their fair share. But grace – forgetting what's fair and giving others more than they deserve – is the best way to be like Jesus.

Teaching your kids grace is a tall order. Their selfish nature will battle it. Friends will take advantage of it. So if they are going to learn how to give grace, they will need to see it consistently modelled by you.

Spiritual marker for middle school years: Trust

Young adolescents are beginning to wonder what their lives will hold. These years are a prime time for discussing the importance of trusting God with their future.

Here's one way to begin that conversation: Discuss Proverbs 3:5-6 with them. Ask, "What does it mean to 'trust in the Lord'? How about 'with all your heart'? Why is God's understanding so much better than yours? What does it mean, 'He will make your paths straight'?"

When I was 13, I told God I wanted him to have complete control of my life. I strongly believe that decision kept me out of all sorts of trouble during my teen years. In the same way, God can use your middle schoolers' commitment to him to guide your children through the coming years.

Spiritual marker for high school years: Perspective

Older teens may begin wrestling with tough questions for the first time: "Why is there evil in the world?" "Why is my teacher so unfair?" "Why did God let my best friend die in a car accident?" The lack of adequate answers can send their faith tumbling.

First, provide the perspective that God is sovereign in all things. Your teens need to hear your stories about the times when God worked difficult things out for good. They need to see you trust in God. Always stay open to your teens' questions, even if they are hard to hear. If you don't have an answer, admit it – then find the answer together.

Larry Fowler is the founder of the Legacy Coalition, a former executive director of global training for Awana Clubs International and an author.

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Watch author **Natasha Crain** explain how to have crucial faith conversations with your children. **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/DefendTheirFaith**

Your kids can avoid negative thinking traps

By Todd Cartmell



“Everyone stays up later than me!”

“If I make a mistake, they won’t like me anymore.”

“I’ll never be good at _____.”

These statements are negative thinking traps. I call them traps because just like a trap, you don’t usually see them coming. But once you are stuck in one, your progress is impeded, and it can take a bit of work to break free.

The problem with these negative thinking traps is twofold. First, the thoughts are negative. Second, they are often *untrue*. Scripture places a big emphasis on the truth. In Romans 12:3, Paul tells us to think with sober judgment, and in Philippians 4:8, he writes, “Finally, brothers, whatever is *true*, whatever is honorable, whatever it just . . . think about these things” [emphasis mine].

The child who is least likely to get stuck in a negative thinking trap is one who:

- knows what the traps look like
- knows how to get out of the trap if he or she accidentally steps into it.

Common traps

Let me introduce you to two of the most common negative thinking traps that can pull your kids off course.

1. Exaggerating the negative

This deceptive snare is the culprit behind many a tantrum. When a small problem occurs, it is easy for

a child to view the situation as bigger than it really is. In a young mind, one sports loss can mean that the team will lose all the games this season. One tough day at recess can mean she doesn't have any friends.

2. Using false labels

Extreme words take a difficult circumstance and twist it into something that it is not. Words such as *always*, *never*, *everyone* and *nobody* can blow a situation out of proportion. Name-calling words, such as *stupid* or *jerk*, make a situation feel worse by using labels that are not true.

The main problem with these traps is that they trick your kids into viewing a situation in a way that is skewed. And when your kid's thinking goes off-track, their feelings and responses go crashing off-track as well, leaving you to pick up the pieces.

Breaking free

When you think your kids might be caught in negative thinking traps, take the following steps to help them find their way out:

1. Listen

Everything starts here. You cannot get to the other steps without taking the time to really listen to your child's feelings and perceptions. Don't rush this step. Ask clarifying questions to better understand the details and keep listening until your child is confident she has fully communicated how she feels about the situation.

2. Name feelings

As your child talks, listen for the emotions he expresses and put names to those emotions. Your child may say he felt really bad, but perhaps he was really feeling frustrated, hurt or disappointed. Take your best guess at your child's feelings and check to see if you are on target. Use statements such as, "It sounds like you were feeling hurt when your friend didn't invite you to the party. Is that right?"

3. Summarize your child's view

When kids experience strong feelings about a situation, some may have a lot to say while others may say very little. Either way, try to summarize the main points your child has communicated to create a statement that can be examined. For example, "So

Ben, you are saying that because you didn't play well in your soccer game today, you are not good at any sports. Is that right?"

4. Help your child find "true thoughts" about the situation

You might ask this question: "We want to think about things in a way that is true, right?" Kids will almost always answer yes. Then, gently ask questions that will help your child examine his thoughts and assumptions and weigh the accuracy of these thoughts. This will help your child to slowly recognize the mistakes she may have made in her thinking. To continue with the example above, you might ask: "What makes you think you didn't play well today? Do you think other kids sometimes have games where they didn't play their best? What would be a better way to look at this situation?"

Your child may need some help answering these questions, and you can remind him of evidence from his own past experiences, your own or those of others. Use logic and, when possible, point your child toward solutions found in Scripture. You can remind your child that no matter what the problem is, God has promised to be with us, help us to learn from our experiences and help us to respond to difficulties in a healthy way.

Resolve the issue by helping your child find a more accurate way to view the situation, such as, "I didn't play my best today, but everyone has a bad game sometimes," and "I know God is always with me, even when I have a bad day." If possible, end your discussion with a short prayer, committing the situation to God.

Your words don't have to be perfect. The important thing is that you are connecting with your kids and helping them think accurately about difficult situations, which, in turn, will get them on the road to finding solutions based on truth. Just as important, you will be showing them that you care and demonstrating what it looks like to walk on God's path, even on a cloudy day.

Dr. Todd Cartmell is a child psychologist who's been working with children, teens and their families for about 20 years. He's a popular public speaker, a parenting workshop presenter and author.

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Watch counsellor Jenn Hall explain
how to help children deal with anxiety.
FocusOnTheFamily.ca/ChildhoodAnxiety



Equipping your child to resist pornography

By Focus on the Family Canada

When children accidentally encounter porn for the first time, they're typically shocked and upset. But many young kids – even if they were repulsed or traumatized – will feel an urge to seek out pornography again.

The reasons are primarily biological and developmental, and not at all reflective of the child's moral character. Paradoxically, porn is a powerful influencer precisely *because* it exploits perfectly normal, healthy drives in a child (or youth) at a highly vulnerable stage in their development.

Why pornography is difficult to resist

For both children *and* teens, porn quickly becomes difficult to resist for three reasons:

1. A sexual experience fuelled by porn spurs the release of **extraordinarily high levels of craving-inducing neurochemicals** in the brain. In short, porn makes
- the impulse to look at porn again feel more like an imperative.
2. Kids and teens have an **immature prefrontal cortex**, the “rational centre” of the brain that is meant to hold impulses and desires in check. That means their “Do it because it feels good” impulse is much stronger than the cautionary “I should pause and think about if this is a good idea.”
3. Adolescents quickly discover that masturbation to porn provides temporary but **effective distraction from stress, emotional pain and even boredom**. If no one warns them, kids don't recognize the danger of such an unhealthy coping strategy and the high risk of addiction.

There's also the power of memory. A child may immediately reject porn when they see it, but those images will pop up in their memory again and again. And pornographic images have remarkable staying power.

Freeing kids from memories of what they saw

Kristen Jenson, founder of Defend Young Minds, stresses that kids need to be taught how to slam the door on porn themselves – not just when they see it online, but whenever the images reappear in their mind.

In their book *Good Pictures, Bad Pictures*, Jenson and porn-addiction therapist Gail Poyner teach kids to react immediately when they encounter porn by following five simple steps:

1. Close your eyes
2. Always tell a trusted adult
3. Name it when you see it
4. Distract yourself [when the images return to mind]
5. Order your thinking brain [the prefrontal cortex] to be the boss

“You can't just say, ‘Don't think about it’; you have to give them something else to think about,” Jenson explains. “When they come to you and tell you they've seen something bad, praise them. Usually they'll be upset, so you have work through those feelings, but then you have to help them. You can ask, ‘What fun thing are you going to think about instead?’ ”

The best tool for distraction, says Jenson, is to encourage your child to re-live, in their mind's eye, a past experience that was really exhilarating and fun – like a rollercoaster ride or mountain biking. Songs, poems, and even prayers are also good distractions. “What you're doing in fact,” she says, “is you are actually developing another neural pathway away from that pornographic image.”

Recognizing emotional states that lead to temptation

In Poyner's secular book *Pandora's Box Is Open Now What Do I Do?*, she emphasizes that it's often emotional needs that drive kids to seek out porn, rather than sexual impulses: “Helping a child understand some of

the most common reasons they turn to porn can help them deal with these triggers on an individual level.” As well as teaching kids to monitor their emotional state, Poyner urges parents to help kids build and take ownership of their personal action plan for managing triggering emotions:

- *Feeling bored? Could you shoot some hoops? What else is really engaging for you?*
- *Mad at a friend? Discouraged? Who would be a safe person to talk to about it?*

It can help kids to have a go-to confidant who can talk them through moments of vulnerability – someone who can offer encouragement and help them deal with difficult feelings. Parents are a natural fit – particularly dads for sons – but it could also be a trusted uncle or aunt, or older sibling.

Here are a few more tips to help remove the temptation for kids to view porn:

- Don't leave your child wondering about sex. Provide continued sex education appropriate to their age and urge them to come to you as new questions, temptations and concerns arise.
- Don't give your child an Internet-enabled phone until they are at least 11 years old and you're confident they can handle the responsibility.
- Common times for kids to be tempted to view porn are at nighttime, after school and during school vacations. *Don't let your child keep their phone or computer in their room overnight.*
- Poyner warns that many kids are first introduced to porn at a sleepover. Give your child a code word they can text you from a friend's house and have a face-saving plan to pick them up.
- Friends can bring porn into your home downloaded onto their phones, so Poyner suggests having them put phones in a basket when they come over.
- Teach kids scripts that help them confidently refuse a friend's invitation to view porn.
- Make sure your child sees you rejecting oversexualized messages; e.g., turn off inappropriate TV shows and movies. Teach your family to decode false messages in media: *What is this saying about women? About manliness? About violence? About power? Do you agree or disagree with this message?*

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Watch counsellor Luke Campbell explain why
Christian families need to talk about pornography.
FocusOnTheFamily.ca/ProblemWithPornography

Empowering your child to deal with bullies

By Focus on the Family Canada



Schoolyard bullying is a complex problem for parents and school authorities alike. For Christian parents who have taught their children to “turn the other cheek,” repeated bullying presents a difficult dilemma. Should they encourage their victimized child to abandon the peacemaker approach and fight back?

Before making a decision on that score however, current research suggests that parents should first consider the question, *Why was my child targeted by a bully to begin with?*

Traits of a bullied child

A significant proportion of bullying incidents are brief and random, with the instigator attacking another child just once or twice, and for no apparent reason. In contrast, children who are frequently bullied tend to share certain characteristics. An often-bullied

child will usually demonstrate one or more of the following traits:

- Gives in easily to the aggressor’s demands
- Lacks self-confidence and has low self-esteem
- Is unable to project an air of indifference to verbal abuse
- Is anxious and fearful
- Exhibits an extreme emotional response to the abuse
- Lacks the skills needed to turn the situation around with humour or other verbal strategies
- Has few friends
- Was ineffective in rebuffing a bully in the first encounter, encouraging repeat attacks

This list of characteristics is not intended to imply that these children are in some way responsible for the attacks. No child *ever* deserves to be bullied, for *any* reason. What this list of traits does suggest, however, is that these vulnerable children are already at a significant disadvantage in their interactions with a bully. It really is unreasonable, and almost unconscionable, to expect them to be able to solve a serious bullying problem on their own. They will need help.

If your child is being repeatedly bullied, you *must* get involved. You need to ensure that the school authorities take action to stop the abuse.

Bully-proofing your child

When a child is targeted by bullies, child welfare advocates recommend that parents and teachers always step in to help stop the attacks. In addition to intervening in the immediate situation, Drs. Wendy Craig and Debra Pepler – two Canadian psychologists who have studied bullying extensively – stress that parents should work, over the longer term, to help a vulnerable child build social confidence, self-esteem and the skills needed to initiate friendships.

As you reflect on your child's strength and weaknesses, here are some questions to help you determine how you might begin bully-proofing your child:

- Does your child need training in how to be appropriately assertive?
- Would your son or daughter benefit from practising responses that project confidence and calm, instead of escalating emotion?
- Do you need to equip your child with effective verbal responses? Short responses that serve to end a conversation are best – responses such as “That’s your opinion, not mine.”
- Does your child interact in ways that are aggravating to his or her peers? How can you help him or her smooth over these “rough edges”?
- Where could your child receive age-appropriate training in conflict resolution?
- What extracurricular activities would allow your child to build on his or her natural talents?
- Where could your son or daughter meet more peers with similar interests?
- Is your family life overshadowed by discord or stress? Could other upsetting circumstances be weakening your child's emotional resilience? How might you restore a sense of peace and security in your child?

- What areas in the school could become “safe zones” for the time being? Could your child help in the library or clean up the lunch room during recess?

By focusing on these positive aspects of bullying prevention, you'll help build strengths that will serve your child well not only on the playground, but in many areas of life.

Let's return now to the question of “turning the other cheek.” Should a child be encouraged to physically defend themselves against a bully? Many Christian families do opt to enrol their children in martial arts training, but not just to build self-defence skills. Properly taught, a martial arts class will also foster self-confidence, self-control and respect for others. For Christian parents, increased self-assurance should be the goal behind enrolling a child in self-defence training.

It's important not to suggest to your child – either deliberately or unintentionally – that they can resolve a bullying issue by relying on their combative skills. When push comes to shove and a child defends themselves with a double knife-hand strike, a positive outcome to the bully/victim interaction is not guaranteed. In fact, Canadian research on bullying in the classroom suggests that responding to a bully with aggression – primarily verbal aggression in this particular study – typically prolongs the bullying encounter and escalates the intensity of the interaction. Remember, too, that most schools will come down hard on any student who retaliates with violence, no matter how they were provoked.

As you work with your child to resolve a bullying situation, remember that this is not your responsibility alone. An effective anti-bullying strategy must go far beyond equipping the victim. Schools need to enforce a clear policy of zero tolerance for bullying. Children who are bullying others need intervention strategies that equip them to manage their emotions. And all children need to be taught – by both parents and teachers – not to be passive bystanders, but to courageously intervene whenever they witness bullying of one child by another.










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Explore a collection of articles, broadcasts and resources on bullying and cyber-bullying.
FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Bullying

Additional resources and information

Books for **ADULTS**

-  ***How We Love Our Kids***
BY MILAN AND KAY YERKOVICH (C01677B)
-  ***The Connected Child***
BY DR. KARYN B. PURVIS, DR. DAVID R. CROSS
AND WENDY LYONS SUNSHINE (C01698B)
-  ***Signals***
BY CHERILYN ORR (F01887B)
-  ***Are My Kids On Track?***
BY SISSY GOFF, DAVID THOMAS AND MELISSA
TREVATHAN (C03314B)
-  ***Start With the Heart***
BY DR. KATHY KOCH (C03576B)
-  ***You Can't Make Me (But I Can Be Persuaded)***
BY CYNTHIA TOBIAS (C01879B)
-  ***Lord, Help Me Pray for My Kids***
BY TONY WOOD (F01940B)
-  ***Parenting Gen Z***
BY JASON JIMENEZ (F01927B)
-  ***The Worry-Free Parent***
BY SISSY GOFF (C04805B)

Books for **KIDS**

-  ***Good News for Little Hearts series***
Find the full series at Shop.FocusOnTheFamily.ca
-  ***Today I Feel Like a Jelly Donut***
BY KATIE KENNY PHILLIPS (C04728B)
-  ***Managing Your Emojis***
BY MICHELLE NIETERT AND LYNN COWELL
(C04733B)

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Focus on the Family **BROADCAST**



*“Understanding Your Child’s Love Style
(Parts 1 and 2)”*

WITH MILAN AND KAY YERKOVICH



*“What Your Kids Need Most to Grow Up Well
(Parts 1 and 2)”*

WITH DANNY HUERTA



“Connecting With Your Child (Parts 1 and 2)”

WITH DR. KARYN PURVIS



*“Creating a Safe Family Where Children
Can Thrive (Parts 1 and 2)”*

WITH JOSH AND CHRISTI STRAUB



“Helping Children Understand How They Feel”

WITH JOSH AND CHRISTI STRAUB



*“Leading Your Child Through Emotional
Milestones (Parts 1 and 2)”*

WITH SISSY GOFF AND DAVID THOMAS



*“Motivating Kids to Reflect the Character
of God (Parts 1 and 2)”*

WITH DR. KATHY KOCH



*“Surviving the Strong-Willed Child
(Parts 1 and 2)”*

WITH CYNTHIA THOMAS

Listen to these and more at **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Radio**

Find more articles and resources at **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/KeyParentingPrinciples**

We're here to help

We know that life can be overwhelming, and it can sometimes be difficult to know how to navigate the trials we face – whether it's a parenting challenge, depression and anxiety, stress and burnout, trauma, addiction, or grief. Whatever you may be dealing with right now, we want you to know you're not alone.

We are here for you with prayer and counselling support.

Every weekday our team prays together for the needs of families all across the country. You can email **prayer@fotf.ca** or submit your prayer request online at **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Prayer**.

Or if you'd like to receive prayer over the phone, call our team at **1.800.661.9800**.

We also offer a free, one-time phone consultation with one of our in-house counsellors. Our counselling staff are all committed Christians and registered (Masters level) counsellors with ministry experience. We can also refer you to a specialized counsellor in your area (fees will apply).

Call us at **1.800.661.9800** or visit **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Counselling** to learn more.



*“Train up a child
in the way he should go,
**EVEN WHEN HE IS OLD
HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT.”***

PROVERBS 22:6



19946 80A AVENUE, LANGLEY, BC V2Y 0J8 | 1 800 661 9800 | [FOCUSONTHEFAMILY.CA](https://FocusOnTheFamily.ca)