

FREE KIDS

Guidebook for parents on Healthy parenting



FREE KIDS

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Introduction



In today's rapidly changing world, raising children who are resilient, confident, and independent is more important than ever. However, a trend of overparenting has emerged, often stemming from parents' deep love for their children and a desire to protect them from the world's challenges. While well-intentioned, overparenting can unintentionally weaken children's ability to grow, learn from their mistakes, and develop critical problem-solving skills.

Our project, ***Free Kids, Let your children make mistakes*** is designed to address this crucial issue head-on. By focusing on education and providing practical tools, we aim to equip parents with the knowledge they need to foster their children's independence and mental well-being, all while minimizing parental stress.



Why Do We Need This Guidebook?

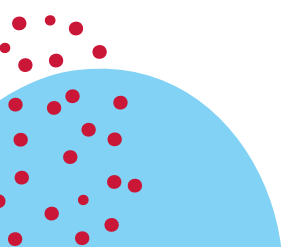
Parents are often flooded with conflicting information and advice on how to raise their children. This can create confusion, self-doubt, and anxiety—factors that can contribute to overparenting. What parents truly need is clear, research-based guidance that's easy to understand and apply in real-world situations.

This is where our guidebook, "Healthy Parenting - Building Independence in Children," comes in. It offers practical guidance and strategies for parents, helping them understand the signs and consequences of overparenting and providing effective alternatives.

What Is Our Goal?

The goal of our guidebook is to transform the way parenting is approached and practiced. We aim to encourage a shift from overparenting towards a style that respects children's individuality, promotes their independence, and strengthens their problem-solving skills. By doing so, we hope to contribute to the development of resilient, self-confident children who are capable of navigating the challenges of life effectively and responsibly.

We understand that this transformation isn't something that can happen overnight—it's a journey. With our guidebook, we aim to provide parents with a roadmap, highlighting the key milestones and offering practical strategies they can use in their day-to-day interactions with their children. Through this process, we strive to support parents and children alike in creating a healthier, happier, and more fulfilling family life.



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Disclaimer

This booklet is developed to be accessible and visually friendly for people who may have ADHD, dyslexia, are visually impaired, or suffer from visual stress. For this reason, some specific text and design layouts are chosen, improving the users' reading experience.

Chapter 1

Recognizing Overparenting



Recognizing Overparenting

Overparenting, also known as "helicopter parenting," is a form of over-involvement in a child's life, which often stems from a well-intended desire to protect the child from hardship and ensure their success. Overparenting can take many forms, and it is crucial to note that it is defined not by the intention, but by the effect it has on the child.

Here are some of the key signs and behaviors that can indicate overparenting:

Excessive Worry and Anxiety: Overparenting often originates from a deep-seated fear of the world's dangers and the parent's desire to protect their child. This can result in constant worry and anxiety about the child's safety, academic performance, and social acceptance.

Hyper-Involvement in Child's Activities: Overparenting can be recognized when parents become excessively involved in their child's activities, such as homework, extracurricular activities, and social interactions. This can include doing tasks that the child is capable of doing themselves or intervening too quickly when a problem arises.

Decision-Making Control: Overparents often control most or all of the decisions in their child's life, from what they should wear to what hobbies they should pursue. This stifles the child's ability to develop decision-making skills.

Recognizing Overparenting

Difficulty Letting Go: Overparents may find it challenging to allow their child to face challenges independently, even when it is appropriate for their age and development. They may step in to resolve conflicts with friends or negotiate grades with teachers, depriving the child of learning from these experiences.

High Expectations and Pressure: Overparents often have high expectations for their children's academic and extracurricular achievements and may exert pressure to meet these expectations.

The effects of overparenting on a child can be significant and long-lasting. Overparented children often struggle with self-confidence, problem-solving, and emotional regulation. They may also exhibit higher levels of anxiety and stress, lower levels of satisfaction with life, and a lack of resilience.

Understanding these characteristics is the first step in recognizing overparenting. The key lies in finding a healthy balance where parents can offer support and guidance while still allowing their child the space to make mistakes, learn, and grow.

The Wilson Family

Consider the Wilson family: Laura, the mother, and her 13-year-old daughter, Sarah. Laura is a dedicated parent who takes a keen interest in Sarah's academics and social life. She assists with Sarah's homework, accompanies her to every extracurricular activity, and is heavily involved in mediating any of Sarah's conflicts with her friends. Laura also makes many of Sarah's decisions, from what she should wear to school to what she should order at a restaurant.

The practice for goal setting is a process that helps participants identify and attain their goals. The process includes discussing the difference between goal setting and goal achievement, sharing a desired goal, creating a map to help navigate the journey to reach the objective and setting up supports needed to achieve the goal.

Our Recommendations

Self-awareness

1

Recognize and admit to the possibility of overparenting. Look out for signs like over-involvement in your child's activities, making decisions on their behalf, and frequent worry about their performance and safety. Acceptance is the first step towards change.

2

Educate Yourself

Learn about the effects of overparenting on a child's development. Understanding the long-term impacts can help you commit to changing your parenting approach.

3

Open Communication

Have an open and honest conversation with your child. Encourage them to express their feelings about your involvement in their activities and decision-making. This step can provide valuable insight into how your child perceives your parenting style.

4

Gradual Independence

Gradually start allowing your child to make their own decisions, appropriate for their age and maturity. This can start with small decisions like what to wear or what to eat, and escalate to more significant decisions over time.

5

Encourage Problem-Solving

Instead of rushing to solve your child's problems, guide them towards finding their own solutions. This can help them develop crucial problem-solving skills and gain confidence in their abilities.

6

Monitor Your Anxiety

Often, overparenting stems from a parent's own anxieties. Pay attention to your worries and fears, and consider seeking help to manage them if they're influencing your parenting style excessively.

7

Seek Professional Guidance

If you're finding it challenging to change your parenting style or if your child is showing signs of distress due to overparenting, consider seeking professional help. A counselor or a psychologist can provide valuable guidance and resources.

Additional Resources

Books



- The Overparenting Epidemic: Why Helicopter Parenting Is Bad for Your Kids . . . and Dangerous for You, Too! by George Glass and David Tabatsky.
- How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success by Julie Lythcott-Haims.
- Gift of Failure, The: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed by Jessica Lahey.

Articles



- The Association Between Overparenting, Parent-Child Communication, and Entitlement and Adaptive Traits in Adult Children
- The Benefits of Mindful Parenting

Videos



- "The Parenting Mistake That Makes Teens Push You Away | Dr. Shefali on The Oprah Winfrey Network"



TED Talks

- "How to Raise Successful Kids — Without Overparenting" by Julie Lythcott-Haims for TED Talks.

Podcasts



- "The Longest Shortest Time: The Accidental Gay Parents" This podcast explores various parenting styles and their impacts.
- "Parenting Without Power Struggles" by Susan Stiffelman is an excellent podcast that provides insights on raising resilient children.

Chapter 2

The Gift of Disappointment



The Gift of Disappointment

Disappointment is an inevitable part of life. Everyone experiences setbacks, missed opportunities, and unfulfilled expectations. While it's natural for parents to want to shield their children from these experiences, experiencing disappointment can be incredibly valuable for a child's development.

Firstly, experiencing disappointment can **help children develop resilience**, the ability to bounce back from setbacks. It can also teach them that it's okay to fail and that failure is often a stepping stone to success.

Secondly, disappointment can **help children develop empathy and understanding**. It can help them realize that not everything always goes as planned and that everyone, including themselves, faces challenges and setbacks.

Lastly, disappointment can provide an **opportunity for problem-solving and critical thinking**. When children face disappointment, they can learn to assess the situation, identify what went wrong, and devise a plan for improvement.

Therefore, while it might be challenging to see your child face disappointment, it's essential to remember that these **experiences can provide opportunities for growth and learning**.

Case Study

Consider the **Smith family**: Amy, a mother, and her 10-year-old son, Ryan. Ryan had been eagerly looking forward to the school's annual talent show, where he planned to perform a magic trick. He spent weeks practicing and was confident that he would win. However, when the day came, Ryan didn't win. He was deeply disappointed, and Amy was unsure how to help him cope with this feeling.

- **Discussion**

In this case, Ryan is experiencing disappointment for what might be the first time in a significant way. His mother, Amy, is naturally upset to see him hurting. However, this situation also presents a valuable opportunity for Ryan to learn and grow.

- While Amy might be tempted to immediately soothe Ryan or try to 'fix' the situation, it might be more beneficial to guide Ryan through understanding and coping with his disappointment. Amy can use this opportunity to help Ryan understand that it's okay to feel disappointed, and everyone experiences it. She can also help him think critically about the situation and devise a plan for improvement for the next talent show.

- **Role-playing Scenario**

Imagine you are Amy, and you are trying to help Ryan cope with his disappointment. How would you approach this conversation? Think about the words you would use and the tone you would set.

Case Study

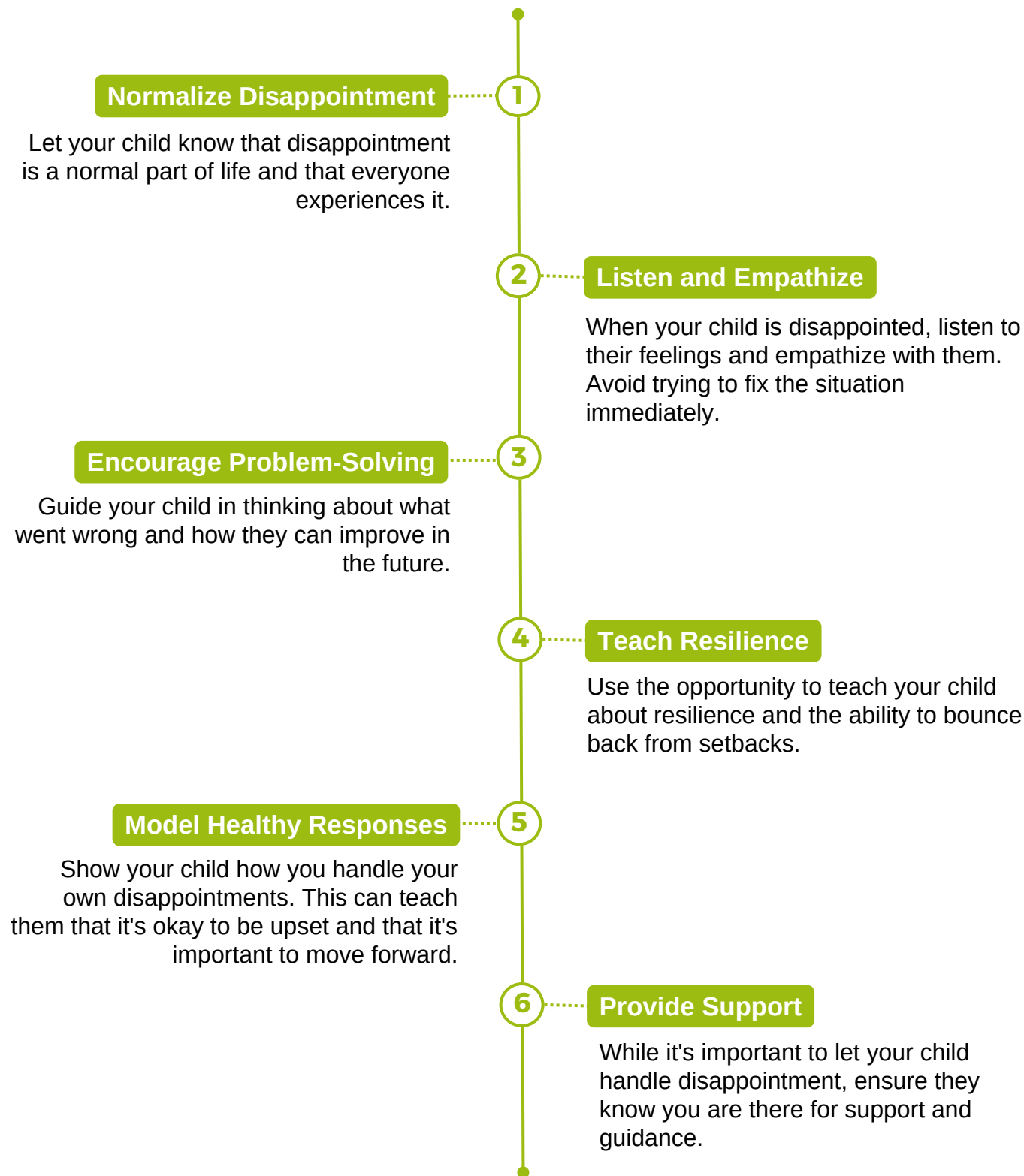
- **Pros & Cons Debate**

Consider the immediate comfort that might come from shielding a child from disappointment and compare that with the long-term benefits of allowing a child to experience and learn from disappointment. Which seems more beneficial in the long run?

- **Small Games**

Consider playing a game where a child has to face a minor disappointment, such as a board game where they might lose. Use this opportunity to discuss how to cope with disappointment and come up with strategies for future games.

Our Recommendations



Additional Resources



Research Papers

- [Children's spontaneous emotional expressions while receiving \(un\)wanted prizes in the presence of peers](#)
- [From children's expressive control to emotion regulation: Looking back, looking ahead](#)



Articles

- [Learning to Lose: How to Teach Your Kids to Handle Disappointment](#): This Parents.com article offers advice on teaching kids about disappointment and handling it.



Videos

- [Helping Kids Deal with Disappointment](#)
- [Flusterclux With Lynn Lyons: For Parents Who Worry - How To Teach Your Kids To Handle Disappointment](#)
- [Parenting: How To Help Children Handle Disappointment](#)



Podcasts

- [Ask Amy: My Kid Doesn't Hide "Gift Disappointment" Well](#)
- [Raising Good Humans](#): Hosted by Dr. Aliza Pressman, this podcast explores a variety of parenting topics including managing disappointment and fostering resilience in children.

Chapter 3

Finding Solutions



Finding Solutions

Problem-solving is often considered a natural skill that children acquire through observation and interaction with caregivers and adults. While some children may develop these skills on their own, many can benefit from direct and systematic instruction, particularly when it comes to solving social problems within relationships and social contexts.

Throughout the day, children face various challenges that require social problem-solving abilities. For simpler issues like choosing an alternative outfit when a favorite sweater is dirty, children and their parents may not even realize that problem-solving skills are being utilized, as they come naturally and without much deliberation. However, for more overwhelming problems that elicit strong emotional reactions, such as conflicts with siblings or falling out with friends, children may struggle to respond in helpful ways and may seek adult intervention to resolve these issues. Teaching children to become independent problem solvers strengthens their capacity to effectively handle both minor and major sources of stress (Nezu et al., 2013). This skill plays a crucial role in enabling children to develop and maintain meaningful relationships, achieve success in school, and cultivate positive mental health.

Developmental consideration

While it is important to foster children's independence in problem solving, we must also acknowledge the influence of their developmental stage. Social problem solving is a cognitive skill that relies on the prefrontal cortex, a brain region that continues to develop until the mid-twenties (Siegel & Payne-Bryson, 2012). Consequently, children's capacity to independently utilize problem-solving skills will vary. Caregivers should be prepared to provide ongoing support and coaching to help children strengthen the connections in their brains involved in social problem solving.

Promoting problem-solving approach to life

Our initial goal is to teach children that **encountering problems is a normal part of everyday life**. By approaching daily challenges as "problems to be solved" rather than overwhelming catastrophes, children can develop a positive problem orientation. With this mindset, children are more likely to be optimistic, believe in their problem-solving abilities, and understand that solving problems requires time and effort (Nezu et al., 2013).

While seeking assistance from adults is not necessarily problematic, if parents intervene too quickly to solve their children's problems, it may be driven by a desire to alleviate their children's distress or their own discomfort caused by witnessing their children struggle. Over time, this can create a reliance on adults to resolve their problems. Consequently, children may develop a negative problem orientation, perceiving problems as unsolvable threats, doubting their own ability to cope effectively, and experiencing frustration and distress when faced with problems or unpleasant emotions (Nezu et al., 2013).

Case Study

The case studies discussed in videos below explore **the process of effective problem-solving**. These studies examine situations where children face problems that require cooperation, communication, and shared decision-making to reach effective solutions.

The case studies highlight the importance of fostering positive relationships, active listening, and creative problem-solving techniques to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Adopting a problem-solving approach to conflict

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icvjlttoJeS0>

Problem solving techniques for your child

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5z3a60rEfg>

Parent understanding – problem solving

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3wY9BPFIAU>

Our Recommendations

How to teach problem-solving skills

The problem-solving steps: look for everyday challenges that children face and find ways to walk them through these problem-solving steps:

1 Help them to label or name the problem

Ask, "What is the problem?" Support children to give their problem a name and figure out what is wrong. Help them gather information about the problem while sticking to the facts. Once they have been able to define the problem, assist them in determining what their goal is and what they would like to have happen..

1

2 Help them to consider possible ways to solve the problem

Ask, "What are all of the things you could do about it?" It's important to remain curious and encourage as much independent thinking as possible. Younger children may need help generating possible solutions, however, try to avoid giving older children all the answers or ideas. During the brainstorming process, children may identify solutions that are not realistic or effective. This is not the time to discredit their ideas. They can be gently guided to think about the pros and cons of their proposed solutions in the next step to help them arrive at a decision on their own.

2

3 Support them to consider the pros and cons of their proposed solutions

Ask, "What will probably happen if you try each of these possible solutions?" Help children to think about the potential consequences and benefits of each solution..

3

4 Encourage them to choose a solution to try out

Ask, "Which solution do you think will work best?" After looking at each of the possible solutions and the desirable and undesirable things that might happen, support children to choose the solution they think will be most successful in solving their problem. Help them put it into action.

4

Our Recommendations

Help them evaluate how it went

5

Ask, "How did it go? How successful were you in solving the problem? What did you learn?" Even if their solution is not successful, it can be framed as a learning experience instead of a failure. It's simply giving them more information about the problem that can help better inform them as they move through the steps again to determine another solution to try.

6

Encourage them to try again

Ask, "Given what you learned, is there another solution that might be more effective?" Support children in working through the problem-solving steps again to adjust their plan.

7

Give Credit

Give children credit for their effort, creativity, and perseverance in solving problems and encourage them to give themselves credit for their attempts at developing and using problem-solving skills.

Role model problem-solving skills for children: Children learn new skills and behaviours by observing and imitating others. Parents and caregivers hold the most influence in the lives of young children and are, therefore, in the best position to model these skills for their children. This can be done by talking out loud about the problem-solving steps for the benefit of children when parents encounter challenges.

Parents and caregivers can also facilitate family problem solving to address every day challenges that families face, such as managing the family schedule with everyone's extracurricular activities. Engaging in the problem-solving steps together as a family is a great way to promote a family culture that embraces a problem-solving approach to life. It also supports children to become independent problem solvers and prepares them to be better equipped to face the challenges they encounter in life.

Books



- Creswell, C., Parkinson, M., Thirlwall, K., & Willetts, L. (2017). *Parent-Led CBT for Anxiety: Helping parents help their kids*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Friedberg, R.D. & McClure, J.M. (2015). *Clinical Practice of Cognitive Therapy with Children and Adolescents: The nuts and bolts (2nd Ed.)*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Government of Canada. (2006). The human face of mental health and *mental illness in Canada*. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. Retrieved from https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Practice/human_face_e.pdf
- Nezu, A.M., Nezu, C.M. & D'Zurilla, T.J. (2013). *Problem-Solving Therapy: A treatment manual*. New York: Springer Publishing Company: New York.
- Siegel, D.J. & Payne Bryson, T. (2012). *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Virgo Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Report, Manitoba 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/mha/strategy.html>

Articles



- <https://www.kidthink.ca/how-to-promote-independent-problem-solving-in-children/>
- <https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/how-teach-problem-solving-strategies-kids-guide>
- <https://www.verywellfamily.com/teach-kids-problem-solving-skills-1095015>

Additional Resources



Videos

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khZINzlyZ7s>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPQNKMtO_bo
- Ted Talk How to Teach Kids Better Problem Solving by Michael Arnold https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkF7sHjI7_A

Chapter 4

Congruent Parenting



Congruent Parenting

A cluster analysis based on two parenting dimensions (parental support and behavioral control) revealed four congruent parenting styles: an authoritative, positive authoritative, authoritarian and uninvolved parenting style.

Parents and children often report different perspectives about parents' behaviors. Such lack of congruence is important because it may reflect problems in their relationship and may be associated with children's maladjustment.

Parents have an important task: figure out who their child is-his or her skills, preferences, beliefs, values, personality traits, goals, and direction-get comfortable with it, and then help him or her pursue and live a life that is congruent with it. But parents also want to have influence. They want their kid to be independent, but not if he or she is going to make bad choices. They don't want to be harsh and rigid, but nor do they want a noncompliant, disrespectful kid.

They want to avoid being too pushy and overbearing, but not if an unmotivated, apathetic kid is what they have to show for it. They want to have a good relationship with their kids, but not if that means being a pushover. They don't want to scream, but they do want to be heard. Good parenting is about striking the balance between a child's characteristics and a parent's desire to have influence.

Congruent Parenting

Raising a confident and independent child is no small task, but it is one of the most important things a parent can do. Every child is unique, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach to parenting. However, parents can use specific strategies to help their children gain the confidence and independence they need to become successful adults. We can talk about ten tips to help you raise a confident and independent child. From focusing on developing strong problem-solving skills to establishing trust and communication, these tips will help you guide your child towards becoming a happy and confident adult.

1) Encourage Them to Try New Things

One of the best ways to foster confidence and independence in your children is by encouraging them to try new things. This can include activities such as sports, music lessons, art classes, theater, and much more. Allowing your child to explore different activities and hobbies can help them build confidence and independence in themselves. It will also help them learn new skills that can be applied to other areas of their life.

When encouraging your child to try new things, set realistic expectations for them. Tell them that it's okay if they don't excel right away and that they may need some practice before they start to see results. As they continue to work on something, remind them that even though it may not come easily, their effort will eventually pay off.

You can also give them positive reinforcement when they do something new. Praise their efforts and let them know that you are proud of them for taking the initiative to try something new. This will help build their self-esteem and make them more likely to take on new challenges.

2) Teach Them How to Handle Rejection

Children's biggest challenge as they grow up is learning how to handle rejection. As parents, it's important to equip our kids with the tools to handle rejection healthily so they can build resilience and thrive. First, help them identify and express their emotions. Rejection can be difficult to process and often causes strong emotions such as sadness, anger, or fear. Encourage your child to talk about their feelings and validate them. This helps them to understand that their feelings are normal and that it's ok to experience them. Second, teach them problem-solving skills. Instead of dwelling on the negative feelings caused by rejection, try to shift the focus towards finding solutions.

Ask your child questions about potential solutions and help them devise an action plan. This will help them develop problem-solving skills and become more resilient. Third, show them that rejection doesn't have to define them. Remind your child that rejection is a part of life and doesn't have to define who they are. Encourage them to focus on their positive qualities and strive towards their goals. Finally, role model resilience yourself. Show your child that you handle rejection with grace by setting a good example. Model healthy coping strategies such as engaging in physical activity or constructively expressing your feelings. Showing your child how you handle rejection can go a long way in teaching them how to do the same.

3) Allow Them to Fail

It is a natural part of life for children to make mistakes and experience failure. Parents need to help their children understand that mistakes are part of life and that failure is an opportunity to learn and grow. Allowing children to fail teaches them resilience and helps them develop the skills they need to succeed. When children are faced with failure, parents should provide guidance and support while also allowing them to experience the consequences of their mistakes. It can be difficult to watch your child struggle with a difficult situation, but it's essential to allow them the space to work through it independently. This will help them build their problem-solving skills and their confidence in their abilities. Parents should also take time to talk about failure with their children and explain why it is an important part of learning and growing. Discussing real-life scenarios and examples can help teach children that failure isn't something to be feared but something to be embraced as a learning opportunity. Parents should remember to give their children positive reinforcement when they successfully deal with failure. Encouraging words, hugs, and high-fives can go a long way in helping your child build confidence in their own ability to cope with difficult situations and develop a strong sense of self.

4) Encourage Them to Be Physically Active

Physical activity is an important part of your child's development and overall health. Exercise can help them to maintain a healthy weight, reduce stress, and build strong muscles and bones. It can also give them a sense of accomplishment and confidence in their abilities. Encouraging physical activity from an early age can help your child form positive habits and attitudes towards exercise that will last into adulthood. Here are some tips for encouraging your child to be physically active:

- Make time for physical activity as a family. Taking the time to go for a walk, play a sport, or even just run around the backyard can be a great bonding experience.
- Let your child choose their own activities. Allowing them to explore different sports and activities can help them find something they really enjoy and will want to keep doing.
- Model a healthy attitude towards physical activity. Your child will learn from you, so if they see you being active and having fun with it, they will likely pick up on that.
- Create an environment that encourages physical activity. If possible, try to make sure your child has access to safe outdoor spaces where they can run around and have fun.

5) Teach Them Good Money Management Skills

Money management is an essential skill to teach children, as it can greatly impact their lives. Parents should start teaching kids the basics of money management early in life. Start by introducing basic concepts like budgeting and saving. Explain how different purchases affect a budget and why saving is important. As they age, teach them more complex concepts like investing and tax planning.

Please encourage them to save some of their money instead of spending it all at once. Help them set up a savings account and open a bank account. Talk to them about setting financial goals, such as saving for a car, a house, or college tuition. Explain how to use credit responsibly and how to manage debt. Show them how to shop around for the best deals and explain the importance of comparison shopping.

Make sure your children understand the value of money and that it must be earned. Help them find ways to earn money through part-time jobs or chores around the house, and encourage them to save some of that money for a rainy day. Teaching your children good money management skills now will help them throughout their lives.

6) Help Them Develop Good Study Habits

One of the best ways to help your child become confident and independent is to teach them good study habits. Establishing routines, such as studying each day simultaneously, can help your child stay focused and organized. Make sure they have a dedicated workspace, such as phones or TVs, free of distractions. Encourage your child to take breaks in between studying to give their brains a chance to rest. Be available to answer questions and provide support but try to do something other than the work for them. Doing too much for them will create a dependency on you and hinder their progress. Instead, please make sure they have access to the resources they need, such as textbooks, online classes, and tutors, and let them figure out how to use them independently. It's also important to discuss their goals with them and find out what they need to do to achieve them. Let them take responsibility for their learning, and be sure to provide plenty of praise and encouragement when they are making progress.

7) Encourage Them to Be Creative

Creativity is a great skill to foster in children, and one of the most important ways to do this is by introducing them to different art forms. Whether painting, drawing, playing an instrument, or creating sculptures, allowing your child to explore the creative arts can help build their confidence and independence. It will also give them an outlet for their ideas and a chance to express themselves. Please encourage your child to experiment with different materials and techniques and to express their own unique style. Participate in activities such as visiting art galleries or attending theatre performances together – even taking up a creative hobby of your own can inspire them! A great way to inspire creativity is by teaching them a new language through books or classes. Finally, let your child see you be creative. Whether writing a story or trying out a new recipe, show them that everyone should embrace creativity!

8) Help Them Make Their Own Decisions

One of the best ways to raise a confident and independent child is to teach them how to make their own decisions. This is an important life skill that will serve them well. As parents, we must provide our children with the tools and knowledge they need to make informed decisions.

Start by teaching your children the value of making decisions based on sound reasoning and research. Please encourage them to use their best judgment and remind them that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Help them understand that taking risks is okay as long as they are making informed decisions.

Encourage them to consider all the facts before making a decision. Help them weigh the pros and cons and evaluate all available options. This can be done through open dialogue or by teaching them how to use decision-making tools, such as flowcharts.

Let your children make their own decisions, even if you disagree with them. Allow them to learn from their own mistakes, but also be there to offer guidance when needed. By allowing your children to make their own decisions, you are helping them build confidence in themselves and teaching them the importance of being independent thinkers.

9) Teach Them How to Handle Criticism

No one likes to be criticized, but it's an inevitable part of life. It's important to teach your child how to handle criticism healthily so that they can develop confidence and resilience. Here are some tips for teaching your child how to handle criticism:

1. Focus on the positive: Ask your child to focus on the positives and take away any lessons they can learn from the experience. This will help them build a more resilient attitude and look at criticism more positively.
2. Take responsibility: Encourage your child to take responsibility for their mistakes and use it as an opportunity to learn and grow.
3. Don't take it personally: Teach your child not to take criticism personally and remember that it's not about them as a person.
4. Speak up: Remind your child that it's okay to speak up when they feel criticised unfairly or if someone is being mean or disrespectful.
5. Use constructive criticism: Teach your child to differentiate between constructive and destructive criticism and use it to their advantage.

Teaching your child how to handle criticism, you'll be helping them develop a strong sense of self-confidence and independence.

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5. Use constructive criticism: Teach your child to differentiate between constructive and destructive criticism and use it to their advantage.

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10) Encourage Them to Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to teach your child valuable life skills, such as empathy, respect, and responsibility. Encourage them to get involved in volunteer activities or community service. Not only will they learn the value of helping others, but they'll also gain a sense of self-worth by doing something meaningful and productive. Volunteering can also allow them to explore different career paths and better understand how their actions can positively impact the world around them. Encouraging your child to volunteer at a young age can help shape their values and instil a strong sense of civic responsibility.

Key Takeaways

Raising a confident and independent child is an important part of parenting. Encourage your child to try new things, handle rejection, and accept failure. Teach them good money management skills and how to study effectively. Help them develop creative thinking and allow them to make their own decisions. Make sure they know how to handle criticism and encourage them to volunteer and give back to their community. With these tips, you can help your child become a confident, independent individual with a strong sense of self. Start by setting clear boundaries while still allowing them some freedom to explore. Let your children take risks and learn from their mistakes while providing guidance and support. Encourage open communication and provide consistent discipline while still being fair and loving. Instil in them the idea that mistakes are okay and that the most successful people learn from those mistakes to grow stronger. Celebrate their successes no matter how small!

(This chapter will provide guidance on how to work together as parents to provide a congruent effort towards raising independent and self-confident children.

BEFORE

Aron is 8 years old and attends a private school in Bucharest. He is a happy, independent and self-contained 8 year old boy that enjoys tennis and drawing. He also has a passion for singing and acting. He attends piano lessons and enjoys drama. He has a huge imagination and has a very good command of spoken language.

His mum approached a specialist because she couldn't understand why he has recently developed the 'I can't do it' attitude. Also, his teachers have recently been complaining that he is portraying behavioral problems at school although he does not physically hurt others. He can be quite moody, changing from someone that is kind and lovable to someone who is stubborn and disruptive for no apparent reason; He appears to have his own inner frustrations. Arnold's mother wanted him to understand himself more and have the maturity to deal with what others say. His mum felt that because he was born three months prematurely, his development has been slower than the children of his age, could there be a link? He has always been a poor and fussy eater. He is the youngest in his year group and appears to reach each milestone later than others. He finds it difficult to come to terms with the fact that he is smaller than other children of his age.

AFTER

PARENT

He is a lot calmer. His shouting and screaming has stopped and he doesn't say 'I don't care' anymore. He was brilliant this week. We played ludo and he lost. Normally if this was the case before(coming to the workshop), he would have cried and shouted and got really angry demanding to be the winner. But all he said was 'it's just a game' and was fine about it. My husband was so surprised that we talked about it when he went to bed that night. We told our daughter too, He absolutely loves coming here. He really wants to come. He gives his mum 5 minute reminders in the morning so that he can get there on time. He is a lot happier in himself and there have been positive subtle changes.

ARON

I am more focused and confident. I think I will be able to make friends a bit easier. I like myself better through relaxation – I calm myself to like myself better.

Our Recommendations

9 Steps for more effective parenting:

1 Boost your child's self esteem

Avoid making loaded statements or using words as weapons. Comments like "What a stupid thing to do!" or "You act more like a baby than your little brother!" cause damage just as physical blows do. Let your kids know that everyone makes mistakes and that you still love them, even when you don't love their behavior.

1

2

2 Catch kids being good

The more effective approach is to catch kids doing something right: "You made your bed without being asked — that's terrific!" or "I was watching you play with your sister and you were very patient." These statements will do more to encourage good behavior over the long run than repeated scoldings.

3 Set limits and be consistent with your discipline

Discipline is necessary in every household. The goal of discipline is to help kids choose acceptable behaviors and learn self-control. They may test the limits you establish for them, but they need those limits to grow into responsible adults.

3

4

4 Make time for your kids

Many parents find it rewarding to schedule together time with their kids. Create a "special night" each week to be together and let your kids help decide how to spend the time. Look for other ways to connect — put a note or something special in your kid's lunchbox. Don't feel guilty if you're a working parent. It is the many little things you do — making popcorn, playing cards, window shopping — that kids will remember.

Our Recommendations

Be a good role model

5

Model the traits you wish to see in your kids: respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness, tolerance. Exhibit unselfish behavior. Do things for other people without expecting a reward. Express thanks and offer compliments. Above all, treat your kids the way you expect other people to treat you..

6

Make communication a priority

Make your expectations clear. If there is a problem, describe it, express your feelings, and invite your child to work on a solution with you. Be sure to include consequences. Make suggestions and offer choices. Be open to your child's suggestions as well. Negotiate. Kids who participate in decisions are more motivated to carry them out.

Be flexible and willing to adjust your parenting style

7

As your child changes, you'll gradually have to change your parenting style. Chances are, what works with your child now won't work as well in a year or two.

8

Show that your love is unconditional

When you have to confront your child, avoid blaming, criticizing, or fault-finding, which hurt self-esteem and can lead to resentment. Instead, try to nurture and encourage, even when disciplining your kids. Make sure they know that although you want and expect better next time, your love is there no matter what.

Know your one needs and limitation as a parent

9

Focusing on your needs does not make you selfish. It simply means you care about your own well-being, which is another important value to model for your children.

Additional Resources

Books



- How Parents Can Raise Resilient Children: Preparing Your Child for the Real Tough, by Frank Dixon
- Develop happy children, by Frank Nixon
- Raising Human Beings: Creating a Collaborative Partnership with Your Child, by Ross W. Greene Ph.D.
- The Danish way of parenting, by Jesica Alexander

Links



- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/nine-steps.html>
- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/looking-after-yourself/communication-conflict/problem-solving-for-parents>
- <https://www.personalfn.com/guide/steps-to-plan-childs-education>

Videos



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyO8pvpnTdE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWXL0WXV7Xo>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UqxNpCIdAE
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4lygHEsbhU>

TED Talks



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMxqTXgRO9E>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66cYcSak6nE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A71OktxTPac&t=138s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fL09e8Tm9c&t=565s>

Chapter 5

Age-Appropriate Responsibilities



Age-Appropriate Responsibilities

As parents, one of our key responsibilities is to equip our children with essential life skills that will prepare them for adulthood. Assigning age-appropriate responsibilities and involving children in running the household can be an effective way to achieve this goal. By actively engaging children in the tasks and decision-making processes within the home, we foster their sense of responsibility, independence, and self-confidence. This theoretical guide aims to provide parents with practical guidance on how to assign age-appropriate responsibilities and involve children in running the household effectively.

Recognize Developmental Stage and Capabilities:

Every child develops at their own pace, so it is crucial to consider their age and developmental stage when assigning responsibilities. Younger children may have limited abilities, while older children can handle more complex tasks. Tailor the responsibilities to match their capabilities and gradually increase the complexity as they grow.

Create a List of Age-Appropriate Chores:

Compile a comprehensive list of household chores, categorizing them based on difficulty and time required. Start with simpler tasks such as tidying up toys, making their bed, or setting the table for younger children. Older children can gradually take on more demanding responsibilities like laundry, meal preparation, or cleaning specific areas of the house.

Age-Appropriate Responsibilities

Offer Choices and Encourage Ownership:

Empower your children by giving them options to choose from when assigning responsibilities. Provide a selection of suitable chores and let them decide which tasks they would like to undertake. This approach not only gives them a sense of autonomy but also promotes ownership and accountability for their assigned duties.

Set Clear Expectations and Guidelines:

Clearly communicate the expectations associated with each responsibility. Explain what needs to be done, how it should be done, and any specific rules or guidelines to follow. Use simple and age-appropriate language to ensure they understand their role. Be patient and provide guidance initially until they grasp the tasks fully.

Provide Age-Appropriate Training:

Teach children the necessary skills to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Demonstrate the tasks, step-by-step, and allow them to observe and practice under your guidance. Provide constructive feedback to help them improve their skills. Encourage questions and be available to support them as they learn.

Rotate Responsibilities and Encourage Collaboration:

Periodically rotate the assigned responsibilities to allow children to learn various skills and prevent them from feeling burdened by the same chores. Additionally, promote collaboration among siblings by assigning joint tasks, enabling them to work together and learn important teamwork skills.

Age-Appropriate Responsibilities

Make it Fun and Engaging:

Transform household responsibilities into enjoyable activities. Incorporate elements of fun and creativity to make them engaging. You can play music, turn tasks into challenges or competitions, or create a reward system to motivate and recognize their efforts. Maintaining a positive and supportive environment will make household responsibilities more enjoyable for children.

Be Flexible and Understand Priorities:

Recognize that children have other commitments such as school, homework, and extracurricular activities. Adjust their responsibilities accordingly to ensure a balanced schedule. Be open to discussing any difficulties they might face and work together to find solutions that accommodate their needs while still fulfilling their responsibilities.

Express Appreciation and Encourage Autonomy:

Regularly acknowledge and appreciate your child's efforts in carrying out their responsibilities. Praise their accomplishments and recognize their contributions to the household. This positive reinforcement fosters their self-esteem and motivates them to continue taking responsibility. Gradually encourage autonomy by allowing them to complete tasks independently while providing support when needed.

By involving children in running the household and assigning age-appropriate responsibilities, we empower them with valuable life skills, promote independence, and nurture a sense of responsibility. This theoretical guide has outlined key principles for parents to consider when engaging children in

This case study explores the experiences of the **Thompson family** as they assigned age-appropriate responsibilities to their children and involved them in running the household. The Thompsons aimed to cultivate a sense of responsibility, independence, and teamwork in their children while promoting their overall development.

Background:

The Thompson family consists of parents David and Lisa and their two children, Emma (age 9) and Jacob (age 13). David and Lisa recognized the importance of teaching their children life skills and involving them in household tasks to prepare them for their future roles as responsible individuals.

Implementation:

Assessing Age-Appropriate Responsibilities:

David and Lisa carefully assessed the capabilities and interests of Emma and Jacob. They created a list of age-appropriate responsibilities for each child, considering their developmental stages. Emma was assigned tasks such as making her bed, sorting laundry, and organizing her toys. Jacob was given more challenging responsibilities such as vacuuming, washing dishes, and assisting with meal planning and preparation.

Setting Clear Expectations and Guidelines:

David and Lisa had a family meeting where they discussed the importance of household responsibilities and explained the expectations associated with each task. They emphasized the significance of completing tasks diligently and to the best of their abilities. They also established guidelines to ensure the tasks were carried out safely and efficiently.

Providing Age-Appropriate Training:

Recognizing that training was necessary for their children to perform their responsibilities effectively, David and Lisa provided age-appropriate training for each task. They demonstrated and explained the steps involved, allowing Emma and Jacob to observe and then practice under their guidance. They offered constructive feedback and encouragement to help them improve their skills.

Rotating Responsibilities:

To provide a well-rounded experience, David and Lisa implemented a rotation system for certain tasks. Emma and Jacob switched responsibilities every few months to expose them to different aspects of running the household. This allowed them to learn new skills, understand the importance of each task, and appreciate the efforts required for various responsibilities.

Encouraging Ownership and Decision-Making:

To foster a sense of ownership and independence, David and Lisa involved Emma and Jacob in decision-making processes related to household tasks. They encouraged their input on meal planning, grocery shopping, and organizing family events. This gave them a sense of responsibility and allowed them to contribute their ideas and preferences to the household functioning.

Recognizing and Appreciating Efforts:

David and Lisa made a conscious effort to recognize and appreciate the efforts of Emma and Jacob. They praised their accomplishments and expressed gratitude for their contributions to the household. They celebrated milestones and improvements, reinforcing the positive impact of their participation and motivating them to continue taking responsibility.

Our Recommendations

Based on the case study of the Thompson family and their successful implementation of age-appropriate responsibilities, here are some recommendations for parents who wish to involve their children in running the household:

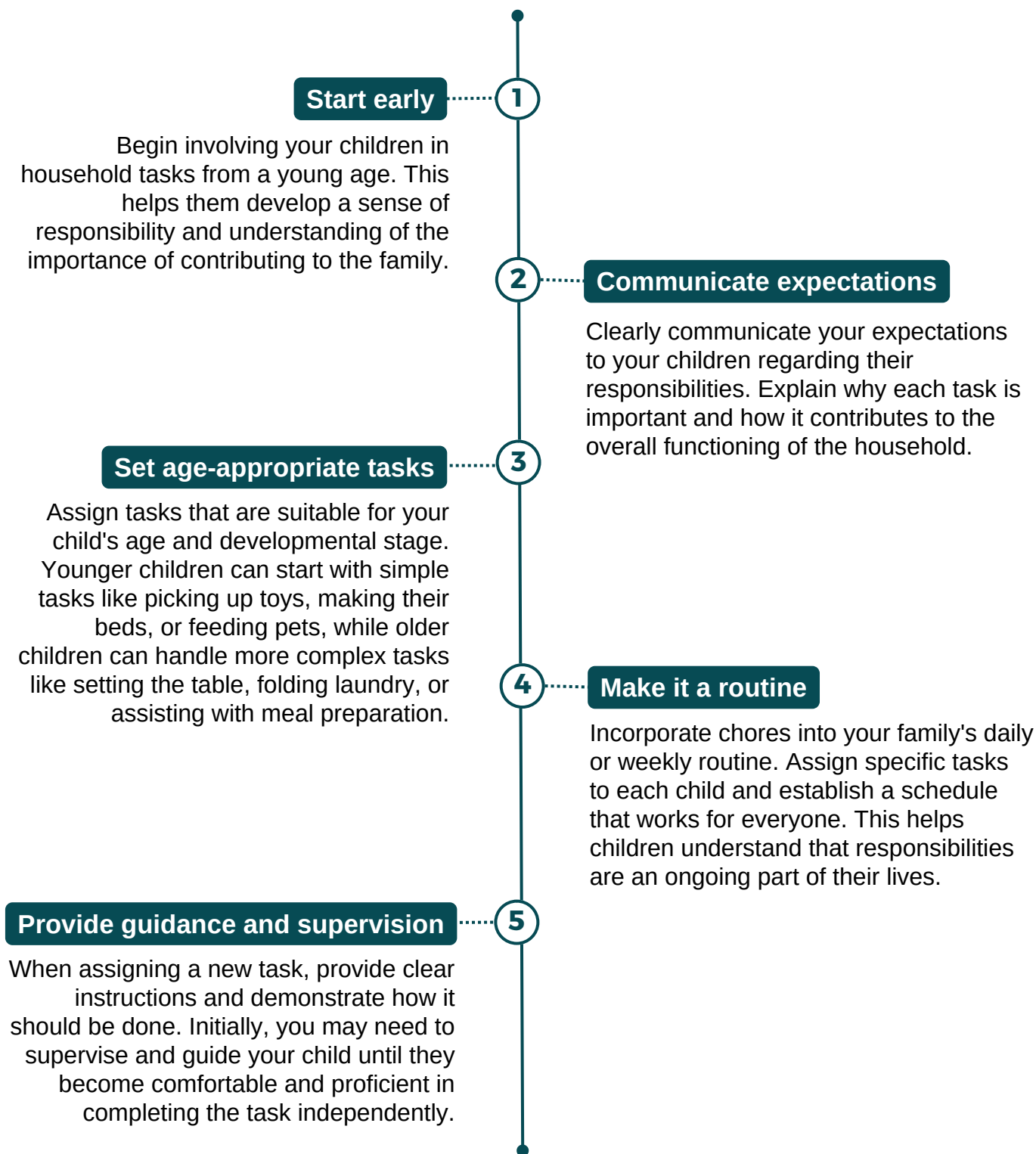
- **Assess Individual Capabilities:** Take into account the age, maturity, and abilities of each child when assigning responsibilities. Consider their developmental stage and gradually increase the complexity of tasks as they grow older.
- **Communicate Clear Expectations:** Clearly explain the expectations associated with each responsibility, including how it should be done and any specific guidelines to follow. This clarity helps children understand their roles and reduces confusion.
- **Provide Training and Guidance:** Take the time to demonstrate and explain the tasks to your children. Offer hands-on training and provide guidance until they feel confident in completing the responsibilities independently. Remember to provide constructive feedback to help them improve.
- **Rotate Responsibilities:** Implement a rotation system to expose children to different tasks. This helps broaden their skills and prevents them from feeling burdened by the same chores. Regularly assess their progress and adjust responsibilities accordingly.
- **Foster Ownership and Decision-Making:** Involve children in decision-making processes related to household tasks. Allow them to contribute ideas and preferences for meal planning, organizing events, or setting up routines. This fosters a sense of ownership and empowers them to take responsibility.

Our Recommendations

- **Encourage Positive Reinforcement:** Recognize and appreciate your children's efforts in completing their responsibilities. Offer praise, express gratitude, and celebrate milestones. Positive reinforcement motivates children to continue taking responsibility and boosts their self-esteem.
- **Create a Supportive Environment:** Establish a positive and supportive atmosphere when involving children in household tasks. Make it enjoyable by incorporating fun elements such as playing music or turning tasks into games. Encourage collaboration and teamwork among siblings.
- **Gradually Increase Autonomy:** As children become more comfortable with their responsibilities, gradually increase their autonomy. Allow them to take ownership of their tasks and complete them independently. However, always be available for support and guidance when needed.
- **Continuously Assess and Adapt:** Regularly assess your children's progress and adjust responsibilities based on their development. Be flexible and open to discussions regarding their preferences, challenges, and any adjustments required to ensure a balanced schedule.
- **Emphasize the Value of Responsibility:** Continuously reinforce the importance and value of responsibility in daily life. Help children understand the impact of their contributions to the household and how these skills will benefit them in the future.

Our Recommendations

Suggestions for parents to provide guidance on assigning age-appropriate responsibilities to children and involving them in running the household:



Our Recommendations

Offer praise and appreciation

Recognize and acknowledge your child's efforts and accomplishments. Offer praise and appreciation for their contributions to the household. This positive reinforcement encourages them to continue taking on responsibilities.

6

Rotate tasks

To prevent monotony and to help children develop a range of skills, periodically rotate the assigned tasks among your children. This gives them the opportunity to learn different responsibilities and prevents them from feeling burdened by the same tasks all the time.

7

Make it fun

Find ways to make household tasks enjoyable. You can turn tasks into games, play music while working together, or set challenges and rewards for completing chores. This helps create a positive association with responsibilities and makes the experience more enjoyable for children.

8

Lead by example

Children learn by observing their parents' behaviors. Set a good example by fulfilling your own responsibilities and involving yourself in household tasks. When children see you actively participating, they are more likely to follow suit.

9

Foster independence

Encourage your children to take ownership of their responsibilities and complete tasks independently. Provide support and guidance when needed, but allow them to develop their skills and problem-solving abilities.

10

Remember, the goal is not to overload children with too many responsibilities but to gradually involve them in age-appropriate tasks that contribute to the smooth running of the household and help them develop valuable life skills.

Links



- "Age-Appropriate Chores for Kids" - <https://www.verywellfamily.com/age-appropriate-chores-for-kids-4581339>
- 10 Tips for Teaching Kids Responsibility" - <https://www.parentingscience.com/teaching-kids-responsibility.html>
- How to Get Kids to Do Chores (Without Resenting It)" <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-moment-youth/201405/how-get-kids-do-chores-without-resenting-it>
- "The Importance of Chores for Kids" <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/chores.html>
- "Chores for Kids: A Guide to Age-Appropriate Chores" <https://www.thespruce.com/chores-for-kids-free-printable-1106188>

Chapter 6

Making choices



Making Choices

In today's fast-paced world, where parents strive to provide the best for their children, it is essential to recognize the significance of allowing kids to make choices and develop independence. Allowing children to exercise decision-making skills not only fosters their personal growth but also equips them with essential life skills that will serve them well into adulthood. In this chapter, we will explore the importance of giving children choices within a safe and supportive environment and provide practical guidance on how parents can approach this aspect of parenting.

a) **Developing Independence:**

Encouraging children to make choices empowers them to become independent individuals capable of navigating the complexities of life. By engaging in decision-making processes, children learn to analyze situations, weigh options, and consider consequences. These experiences provide valuable opportunities for growth, self-discovery, and the development of critical thinking skills.

b) **Building Confidence and Self-Esteem:**

When children are allowed to make choices, they gain a sense of autonomy and self-confidence. The ability to make decisions, even if they sometimes lead to mistakes, helps children develop resilience and learn from their experiences. This process contributes to the cultivation of healthy self-esteem and self-belief, enabling children to trust their judgment and abilities.

Making Choices



c) **Fostering Responsibility:**

By granting children the freedom to make choices, parents promote a sense of responsibility. When children understand that their decisions have consequences, they learn to take ownership of their actions and understand the impact of their choices on themselves and others. This responsibility extends beyond personal choices and prepares children to become responsible members of society.

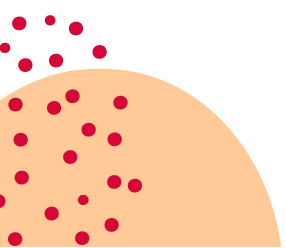
d) **Nurturing Individuality and Identity:**

Every child possesses unique interests, preferences, and perspectives. Allowing them to make choices enables them to explore their individuality, discover their passions, and shape their identity. It supports the development of a strong sense of self and encourages children to embrace their own values and beliefs.

e) **Strengthening Parent-Child Bond:**

Enabling children to make choices within a safe and supportive environment strengthens the bond between parents and their children. It demonstrates trust, respect, and open communication. By involving children in decision-making processes, parents create opportunities for meaningful conversations, shared experiences, and a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives.

In the following sections, we will delve into practical strategies and recommendations to help parents navigate the process of allowing their children to make choices effectively. By following these steps, parents can empower their children to become independent individuals while providing the necessary guidance and support along the way.



Case Study

Emily is a 12-year-old girl who has always been sheltered by her parents. They have made most of her decisions, from choosing her extracurricular activities to deciding what she should wear. Emily's parents have taken an overprotective approach to her upbringing, making decisions on her behalf and not actively involving her in the process. They believe that by doing so, they are ensuring her well-being and protecting her from potential mistakes and hardships. However, this has resulted in Emily lacking confidence in her decision-making abilities and feeling unsure about expressing her own preferences. Emily has grown up feeling dependent on her parents and unsure about her own preferences and abilities to make choices. She heavily relies on her parents for guidance and struggles to assert herself in different aspects of her life, hindering her growth and independence.

- **What is happening?**

Emily's parents have been overprotective and controlling, making decisions on her behalf without giving her the opportunity to exercise her own judgment. This has resulted in Emily feeling dependent, lacking confidence in her decision-making abilities, and struggling to assert her own preferences.

- **What is the effect of it?**

The effect of Emily's situation is that she lacks a sense of autonomy and self-confidence. She may feel uncertain about her own capabilities and may struggle with decision-making and asserting her own preferences. This can hinder her personal growth, independence, and ability to develop essential life skills.

Our Recommendations

1

Recognize the impact of overprotective behavior

- Understand that Emily's parents' overprotective behavior has limited her ability to make decisions and develop independence.
- Recognize that it is essential to address this issue to empower Emily and promote her growth.

2

Reflect on your parenting style

- Emily's parents should reflect on their tendency to make decisions for her without involving her in the process.
- Consider if their actions align with fostering independence and decision-making skills in Emily.

3

Encourage open communication

- Create a safe and supportive environment where Emily feels comfortable expressing her thoughts and ideas. For example, when Emily wants to share her ideas about a school project, put aside distractions and actively listen to her, asking follow-up questions to encourage further discussion.
- Initiate open conversations about decision-making, allowing her to share her perspectives and preferences. Use open-ended questions to prompt Emily to express her thoughts and feelings more fully. For example, instead of asking yes or no questions, ask questions like, "How do you feel about this situation?" or "What are your thoughts on this topic?"
- Create a judgment-free zone, assuring Emily that her thoughts and opinions are valued and respected, even if they differ from your own. For instance, if Emily expresses a different perspective on a topic, respond with statements like, "I appreciate hearing your viewpoint. Let's discuss it further."

4

Start with small decision-making opportunities

- Give Emily simple choices, such as deciding which book to read or what game to play. For example, ask Emily, "Would you like to play a board game or go outside and play soccer today?"
- Selecting a bedtime story: Present Emily with a few age-appropriate books and let her choose which one she would like to read before bed. Example: Say, "We have 'The Adventures of Peter Rabbit' and 'The Jungle Book.' Which one would you like to read tonight?"
- Deciding on a weekend family activity: Provide Emily with a few options for a weekend outing or activity and let her have a say in what the family does. For example, say, "We can go to the park, visit the museum, or have a picnic. Which one sounds most appealing to you?"

Our Recommendations

- Selecting an extracurricular activity: Discuss various extracurricular options with Emily and let her choose which activity she would like to pursue. Example: Present her with choices like dance, painting, or martial arts, and ask, "Which activity are you most interested in exploring?"
- Planning a family movie night: Involve Emily in selecting a movie for a family movie night by presenting her with a few suitable options. Example: Ask Emily, "We have 'Finding Nemo,' 'Toy Story,' and 'Moana.' Which movie would you like us to watch together?"

5

Discuss pros and cons

- Engage in discussions with Emily about the advantages and disadvantages of different choices.
- For instance, when deciding on weekend activities, discuss the pros and cons of going to the park versus visiting a museum.

6

Provide guidance without imposing decisions

- Offer guidance to Emily by sharing your experiences and insights related to the choices she faces.
- Instead of making the decision for her, say, "Based on my experience, here are some factors to consider when making your choice."

7

Embrace mistakes as learning opportunities:

- Teach Emily that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process and an opportunity for growth.
- When she makes a decision that doesn't yield the desired outcome, discuss what she learned from the experience and how she can apply it in the future.

8

Gradually increase responsibilities

- Age-appropriate chores: Assign Emily age-appropriate household chores that align with her abilities, such as setting the table, feeding a pet, or making her bed. Start with one or two responsibilities and gradually increase them over time as she demonstrates competence and responsibility.
- Budgeting and money management: Introduce Emily to the concept of budgeting by giving her a small allowance or providing opportunities for her to earn money. Help her create a simple budget, dividing her allowance into categories such as saving, spending, and giving.

Our Recommendations

- Planning a family outing: Involve Emily in planning a family outing or vacation by allowing her to research and propose ideas for destinations or activities. Guide her through the process, discussing factors like budget, transportation, and accommodations, while giving her autonomy in decision-making.
- Managing personal belongings: Encourage Emily to take responsibility for her personal belongings, such as organizing her school bag, cleaning her room, or keeping track of her belongings when going out. Provide guidance on how to keep things organized and develop systems that work for her.

9

Strike a balance between support and autonomy

- Find a balance between providing guidance and allowing Emily the freedom to make her own decisions.
- Encourage her to take the lead in decision-making while assuring her that you are there to support and assist when needed.

10

Celebrate achievements and efforts

- Recognize and celebrate Emily's achievements and efforts in making decisions independently.
- Praise her for her thoughtful choices, problem-solving skills, and growing confidence in decision-making.

For example, in the case study, Emily's parents can start by giving her choices in simple daily situations, such as selecting her afternoon snack or choosing a game to play. As Emily gains confidence and experience, they can gradually involve her in more significant decisions, such as selecting extracurricular activities or planning a family outing.

By following these step-by-step recommendations, Emily's parents can address the issue highlighted in the case study and empower her to make choices, develop independence, and enhance her decision-making skills. Remember that these recommendations should be adapted to Emily's specific age, maturity, and individual needs, providing her with opportunities to learn, grow, and become a confident decision-maker.

Additional Resources



Books

- *Parenting with Love and Logic: Teaching Children Responsibility* - by Charles Fay and Foster Cline
- *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind* - by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson



TED Talks

- Ted Talk_The art of choosing - *The Art of Choosing* by Sheena Iyengar



Podcasts

- Podcast_Parenting Beyond Discipline - *Parenting Beyond Discipline* by Erin Royer-Asrilant
- Podcast Hi, Fam - *Hi, Fam* by Avital Schreiber Levy

Chapter 7

Teaching best practices from the IO1



Teaching best practices from the IO1

Giving children less and less autonomy seems to have become a parenting norm and the pandemic ended up worsening this trend. Most parents constantly monitor and direct children, or schedule them to be monitored and directed. As a result, an increasing number of children aren't able to perform simple tasks by themselves. Becoming autonomous means gradually gaining a form of control over oneself and one's life. As children learn to do things by and for themselves, they gain confidence in their own abilities. The more we step in to help, control, oversee, and warn, the less resilient a child will be. Fostering autonomy is an essential part of development and will allow a child to:

- Exercise their critical thinking skills
- Feel comfortable in their bodies
- Gain a greater sense of their identity
- Learn from their own mistakes
- Make decisions independently
- Process their emotions

Teaching best practices from the IO1

How can we help children become independent adults?

An essential step toward accomplishing this goal is autonomy-supportive parenting. Parents can support the development of autonomy by:

- labeling and validating a child's feelings and perspectives. Validating feelings is an essential component of mental health and growth. By normalizing emotions, parents can help children understand that everyone has challenging moments.
- minimizing judgment and control. Instead of trying to control children, parents should try to influence them. By adopting a more collaborative parenting style parents make room for children to develop greater autonomy.
- allowing children to make choices. By providing age-appropriate opportunities for children to make independent choices and decisions, parents are giving them a healthy sense of agency and control.
- supporting growth and new challenges by scaffolding and practicing new skills with children. In construction, scaffolding helps supply extra support to the building being erected. When the building is finished, the scaffolding is removed, and the structure is able to stand independently. Parents who use scaffolding education offer children similar support.

Teaching best practices from the IO1

- letting children solve problems on their own. Parents often feel as if they should swoop in and rescue their child when they encounter a challenge. But when problems arise, it's often better to brainstorm together and list possible solutions to the challenge at hand. Offer guidance when needed but encourage children to problem-solve independently.
- letting children struggle (safely). Every child encounters failure at some point. Trying and making mistakes or failing is part of growth. If children do not develop healthy coping mechanisms around failure, they are more vulnerable to anxiety. It is essential for parents to model that failure and making mistakes are essential parts of the learning process. By letting children learn from their mistakes, we are giving them an important opportunity to develop resilience, confidence, and coping skills.

Case Study

Paul is a 7-year-old boy who feels scared whenever he has to face a new situation or obstacle. His first reaction is to give up without even trying. This inability to do anything by/for himself goes from simple things such as tying shoelaces, packing a school bag doing chores to doing his homework by himself, or dealing with a conflict with a peer.

- **What's happening?**

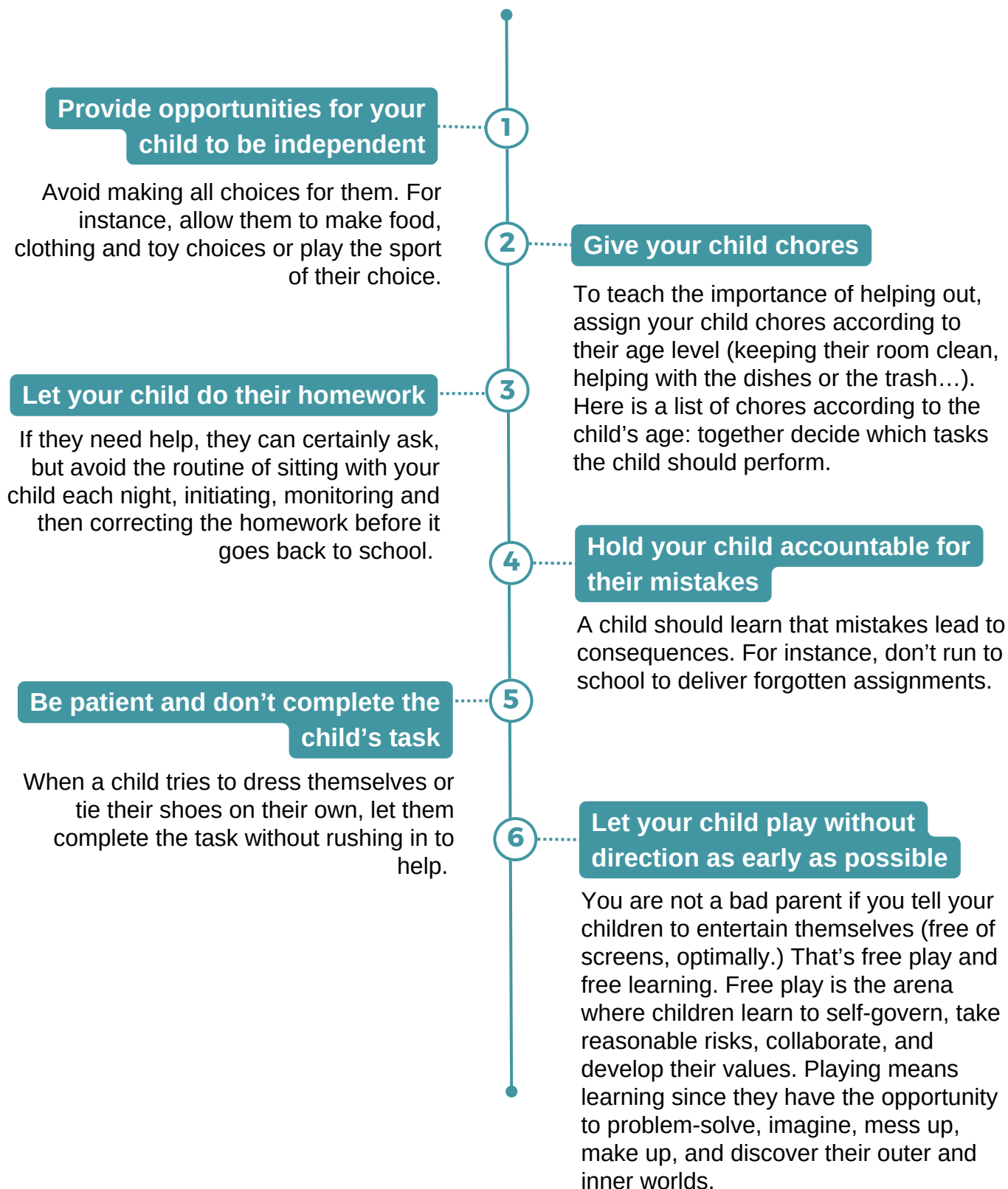
Paulo isn't used to doing age-appropriate tasks and isn't given the opportunity to learn by practicing. Paulo hasn't learned to keep persisting with a task until he is able to perform it because his parents always jump in and complete it for him. Whenever an obstacle comes along or a problem arises, Paulo's parents fix everything.

- **What is the effect of it?**

By stepping in and doing everything for their child, Paulo's parents are making his life harder in the long run: they are not helping him develop his autonomy and problem-solving skills and they are preventing him from learning how to be resourceful, persistent, and resilient. Instead of letting him experience disappointment and frustration, they are shoving setbacks, mistakes, and failures out of his way. The message they are sending to their child is "You can't handle this", which leads to Paulo feeling insecure, fearful, and lack of self-confidence.

Our Recommendations

Steps parents should follow in this type of situation:



Our Recommendations

7 Make room for unscheduled time in your children's schedule

Parents sometimes say "He/She just wants to do everything! It's not us, it's him/her!" That might be true so your job as a parent is to model valuing free time and create room for it. Childhood shouldn't be so exhausting!

7

8 Stop stepping

Stop stepping in whenever you think something is either too hard, too dangerous. When you do you are really saying to the child "You can't handle this".

8

9 Avoid bailing your child out of certain situations

A child may try to quit once they become uncomfortable in a certain situation. Don't come to your child's rescue all the time but allow them to figure out a way to cope on their own. Growth also results from times of discomfort.

9

10 Allow your child to resolve their issues with their peers

Parents shouldn't take part in arguments/fights their child might have with their peers. A child should learn conflict resolution skills.

10

11 Ask your child questions instead of solving their problems

Help them brainstorm solutions. A parent should help a child begin to think of ways to solve a problem on their own. If you give the child a solution, you will contribute to a lack of confidence in their own decision-making. For instance, if your child is learning to ride a bike without training wheels, help and teach and allow them to fall a few times under your supervision. Mistakes are the greatest teachers.

11

12 Respect the struggle

Give your child time to go through the process. It is our protective instinct that makes us want to bail our children out, but sometimes it is important that they go through the struggle. Struggle builds character.

12

To conclude, keep in mind: **allow your children to experience some distress as they develop autonomy. Support them, hug them, listen to them, but don't jump in.**

Additional Resources



Books

- Raising Human Beings: Creating a collaborative Partnership with Your Child - by Ross W. Green
- How to Raise an Adult - by Julie Lythcott-Haims



Links

- <https://youaremom.com/>
- https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog_

CONCLUSION



Conclusion of the Guidebook

Navigating parenthood is a journey of continuous learning and adjustment. We hope that this guidebook has provided you with valuable insights and practical tools to help foster independence and resilience in your children.

Remember, the goal is not to achieve perfection, but to strive for balance and flexibility in your parenting style. Overparenting comes from a place of deep love and concern for your child, but it's essential to recognize when this care becomes excessive or restrictive. Allowing children to make mistakes, face challenges, and find their solutions is a fundamental part of their growth and development.

As you move forward, remember the principles and strategies discussed in this guidebook. Practice mindful parenting, assign age-appropriate responsibilities, allow for decision-making, and ensure congruent parenting efforts. Keep in mind that each child is unique, and what works for one may not work for another. Be open to adjusting your approach based on your child's individual needs and circumstances.

Our ultimate goal with this guidebook is to empower you to raise confident, capable, and independent children. We believe that with your love, guidance, and the tools provided in this guidebook, you are well on your way to achieving this.

Remember, you are not alone on this journey. Reach out to other parents, teachers, or professionals when you need support or advice. Continue to educate yourself and stay open to new parenting strategies and ideas.

Lastly, don't forget to take care of yourself. Healthy parenting starts with a healthy parent. The better care you take of your own physical, emotional, and mental well-being, the better you can support your child's development.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guidebook. We wish you and your family all the best as you continue this incredible journey of parenthood.

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