

Parenting Tips
Trempealeau County Promoting Safe and Stable Families
By
Cyndy Jacoby, UWEX Family Living Agent

Parenting Tools

With many hobbies such as cooking, gardening, sports, or woodworking, we use tools of some sort as we build, create, or participate. As we gain interest or skill, we need to add more tools to get the most out of our involvement with the hobby. If you love cooking, you can't have too many cookbooks or recipes. The same is true about parenting. If parents want to be really involved and get the most out of the parenting role, parents need to rely on an assortment of tools designed to help nurture, teach, and guide their children.

In this article, you will find guidance tools that are used to manage conflict and to teach responsibility. The tools are organized into four groups: 1) encourage thinking, 2) show concern, 3) confront the situation, and 4) care for yourself.

Encourage Thinking

- Set limits and explain the reason for the limit.
- When the child forgets the rule, repeat the rule once.
- If the child impulsively acts but does know the rule, tell him to stop what he is doing and tell you the rule he's just broken.
- Use the word "do" more than the word "don't." When children hear too many "don'ts," the meaning of the word is weakened.
- After an incident of misbehavior, ask the child how he might solve the problem.

Show Concern

- If you are unsure of what has happened, ask your child to describe it. Listen without blaming or criticizing. You may ask for clarification to determine the extent of the child's responsibility for the problem.
- Ask your child what he thinks is the problem or concern. Show your child that you want to understand the situation.
- When your child becomes so frustrated she loses control, help JUST ENOUGH to get through the problem. Give encouragement and avoid taking control. Your child needs to experience getting back in control and going on without being totally rescued.

Confront the Situation

- Don't be afraid to say "no" or give "the look." Act in a calm, firm manner to let the child know how serious you are about the rule.
- If your child acts in an out-of-control rage, gently and firmly restrain the child as you speak reassuringly. When the child settles down, release him. *If you must use this tool more than rarely, seek professional help.*
- When a child cannot handle a situation, calmly remove the child from the environment.

Care for Yourself

- Remove yourself from a tense situation by going into another room or taking a short walk.
- When you are stressed, take 10 breaths that come from deep in the abdomen. Slowly exhale and release your muscle tension.
- Seek professional help when a problem seems insurmountable. Seeking professional help shows HOPE, not helplessness.

To learn more about parenting tools, contact Cyndy Jacoby, Trempealeau County UW-Extension Family Living Program, PO BOX 67, Whitehall, WI 54773. Phone: 715 - 538-2311, Ext. 209 or toll free 1-877-538-2311, Ext. 209. Email: cindy.jacoby@ces.uwex.edu



Family Living Program

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