
29 August 2016

Dear Friends,

We hope that this month's edition of the Newsflash finds you all well! We know that many of our partners and Firelight's friends work with young children focusing on Early Childhood Development (ECD). Recently we have read interesting reports and proposals from partners who work with parents to improve ECD outcomes, so we are inspired this month to share some resources relevant to that topic with you all.

Specifically, this issue is focused on the area of "positive parenting", which is an approach to parenting that focuses on a creating a beneficial relationship between parent and child through positive reinforcement, language and development. We hope that the articles and tools we share with you related to this subject may be useful in your own work as you work with parents and teach parenting skills in order to improve children's ECD outcomes.

If you or your organization have positive parenting tips, resources or information that you would like to share with other Newsflash readers, please reach out to us by emailing newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Article) Positive Parenting: What is it? Why do it? But how?

(Paper) Successful Parenting Skills that Shape Children's Behaviors

(Article) Positive Parenting- Encouragement vs Praise

(Resource) Advancing Human Rights: Update on Global Foundation Grantmaking

(Resource) Funds for NGOs

Positive Parenting: What is it? Why do it? But how? (By Rebecca Eanes)

"There is no single effort more radical in its potential for saving the world than a transformation in the way we raise our children." - Marianne Williamson

WHAT IS POSTIVE PARENTING?

The message of Positive Parenting is reaching far and wide. More and more parents are understanding that a change must be made in our child rearing practices. It is exciting to be part of this growing movement, which I honestly believe will better society.

For those new to Positive Parenting, my friend, Dr. Laura Markham, explains beautifully.

Here is an excerpt from her explanation:

Positive parenting -- sometimes called positive discipline, gentle guidance, or loving guidance -- is simply guidance that keeps our kids on the right path, offered in a positive way that resists any temptation to be punitive. Studies show that's what helps kids learn consideration and responsibility, and makes for happier kids and parents.

Positive Parenting isn't a method, a set of rules, or a "style." Positive Parenting is a belief, a way of living. We believe children should be treated with respect, free from fear of violence and shame, and guided with loving encouragement.

It is better to bind your children to you by a feeling of respect and by gentleness, than by fear. - Terence

WHY?

There are many benefits of positive parenting. Most importantly is the secure attachment between parent and child, which encourages healthy development. Secure attachment builds resilience, paves the way for how well your child will function as an adult in a relationship, and have a positive impact on brain development, just to name a few.

Let me get scientific on you for a second. The brain is not fully matured until we're in our 20's! The first 3-6 years are crucial for brain development.

The "survival center" of the brain is the only section fully developed at birth. This is responsible for regulating autonomic functions, etc. It is also the center for the "fight, flight, freeze" response.

Between birth and roughly age 4 (development is unique to each child), executive functions come online as kids develop this mid brain function. By age 3, their brains are highly organized but very inefficient. They have some access to their higher brain around age 3, but it is the efficiency that we need to help them work on.

By 5-6 they are able to have some level of self regulation; they can pause reflect but not always. This is a process that matures for the next 20 years.

Another thing is the brain won't keep connections that aren't reinforced and utilized. If not engaged in coping skills, creativity, and empathy, the brain will prune away weak neural connections. Immature brains need special handling! Under stress or fear, we all lose access to executive function.

What am I getting at? Children are not biologically capable of understanding and following all of our rules. *Most times, misbehavior is NOT a matter of defiance, but of cognitive ability.* This is where the paradigm shifts! We know so much more now about child development, so it is time our practices catch up to our knowledge.

We now know the harmful effects of spanking. We now understand why time out is not a desirable method, and we know that punishing children really doesn't teach the lessons we want to teach.

HOW?

The very first step in becoming a positive parent is to adjust your thinking. *This is the hardest but most important part of PP. Look for a blog post coming soon dedicated entirely on changing your mindset!* Discipline, in PP, doesn't mean to punish, it means to *teach*. There are many ways we can teach our children morals, values, and what is acceptable!

MODELING

This is so, so important. Behave the way you want your children to behave. They learn by watching your example! Let them see you being compassionate and kind. Speak to them respectfully. Each interaction with your child is teaching her something. If you want her to learn not to interrupt you in conversation, model by not interrupting her when she speaks as well. If you want him to use his manners, use yours. When you yell at your kids, you teach them to yell. Adversely, when you speak gently, you teach them to do the same.

PLAY

Play is vital to childhood. Children learn openly through play. I believe this is when they learn best! Their brains are engaged, receptive, absorbing everything! This is a wonderful opportunity to not only **connect** with your child, but to teach valuable lessons! Here are some ideas to teach through play:

Make a game! My 4-year-old son and I made a manners game during craft time. One box was used for appropriate behaviors, and the other for inappropriate behaviors. I wrote down several behaviors/manners on stars, and I let him choose which box to put each star in. He enjoyed this game, and he got every single one right.

Puppet Shows! It doesn't have to be a big production. Make some sock puppets if you'd like, or draw a face on your hand with a pen or paint. Use the puppets to act out a scene and teach a lesson. This can also be done with toys. You can use toys and act out different scenes. Kids REALLY do listen and absorb lessons through play!

Role Playing! Be your child, and let your child be you. Show her what is appropriate in certain situations. We have role-played eating at a restaurant, how to sit quietly in Bible School, how to handle various situations. The kids have a blast, and they always remember!

Daily Words! We have a daily word that we study each day. I explain the meaning, and we will act out what it means. This not only builds vocabulary, but words such as empathy and gratitude teach wonderful values!

Story time! Of course there are lots of children's books that teach morals and manners,

but we like to make up our own stories here too! My youngest prefers to look through books, but my oldest really likes to listen to made-up stories. Throw in some good life lessons in there- they are listening!

VISUALS

I wanted to find a way to teach my 5-year-old some responsibility. Playing "beat the timer" worked great for a while, but he is the type of child that is helped by visual cues. So we made a chart for him. There are no rewards involved. This is purely a visual reminder for him of what he needs to do when.

Once kids can read, chore and time charts remind children so YOU don't have to! Be creative! Get your child involved in making the chart. You can clip pictures from magazines or draw pictures of your child doing various activities. Visual reminders can also help children become more organized and independent.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

A day at the park, a few hours at the library, playing with friends, *life IS learning*. What if your child witnesses another child being inappropriate? This is an opportunity for you to talk about what happened and teach appropriate behaviors.

EMPATHY

Teaching our children emotional intelligence is an important part of parenting. We must accept all of our children's feelings. This doesn't mean we must accept all the behaviors that come with them, of course we must teach healthy ways to channel those feelings, but ALL feelings are acceptable. Being empathetic with your child will help him regulate his big emotions, like fear and anger, more quickly and model for him how to be empathetic with others.

TALK IT OUT! Talk WITH your children. Listen when they talk. This is a great way to connect, and connection leads to cooperation! Our children aren't born knowing our rules. Punishing them for bad behavior doesn't teach them good behavior. We have to give them the tools to do better before we can expect them to do better.

CONNECTION. EXAMPLE. TEACHING. RESPECT. EMPATHY. LOVE. These are your best parenting tools.

Source: Rebecca Eanes, <http://bit.ly/2c0O5OR>

Successful Parenting Skills that Shape Children's Behaviors (by Dr. Christopher Heffner)

Abstract

This paper will clearly point out the positive attributes of effective parents. It also points out certain skills that parents must have to effectively shape their children's behaviors.

Effective parenting includes developing and clarifying clear expectations, staying calm in the midst of turmoil when your child gets upset, consistently follow through with positive and negative consequences, being a positive role model, role playing corrective behaviors and lastly, praising your child for his behavior. All these things are just beginning to be researched in depth, and this brief overview gives a sound basis for understanding the interesting relationship between parents and their children.

Introduction

Effective parenting has never been more important to a family's success than today. Proper parenting shapes the coming generations, and the way the next generation will behave, affecting the world around them. History has taught us that parenting without a proper foundation has always and indefinitely lead to confusion for any developing child. That is why the attempt of trying to be a successful parent is so important and will be the most important job of one's life. Knowing what healthy methods are best for one's child during parenting is time consuming but a rewarding effort.

Developing and Clarifying Clear Communicative Expectations.

Before one concentrates his efforts on disciplining a child for misconduct, one must have a strategy, or game plan, for teaching their child how they are expected to behave (Christophersen, 2003, pg. 680). In addition, parents must model the appropriate behavior for their children if they want their children to be successful in their behavior, but that will be discussed later.

First, developing clear expectation of what both parents want is the basis and the first steps to parenting. Depending on the background, or what is deemed as right and wrong, parents, within reason, should plan and communicate their expectation to each other. Creating a list of expectations (such as social, academic, religious, family oriented, personal appearance or hygiene) for different settings and activities will help parents be very specific and concrete in teaching their children (Burke, 1997, pg. 73). Some expectations are certainly more demanding than others; however, parents must take into consideration the child's age, ability, developmental status, and resources that are available to the family (Burke, 1997, pg. 73).

For example, expecting a four year old child to prepare dinner for the family and then punishing him for not meeting the expectations is very unreasonable due to his developmental status and age, as one can see. Ray Burke states, in his book, *Common Sense Parenting*, that one way to see if one's expectations are reasonable is to answer these three questions: 1) Have you (as a parent) taught the expectation to your children, 2) Can your children clearly understand the expectations given, and 3) Can your children model and perform what you have expected (Burke, 1997, pg. 74-75). Clearly these three questions cover the majority of whether ones expectations for their child are realistic or not due to the child's age and ability.

Second, once both parents have set appropriate expectations and rules for their child, the next step is to communicate those expectations clearly to their child in word and in deed.

One question to take into consideration is how one plans on communicating those expectations verbally (Burke, 1997, pg. 77). For example, if a child draws on the kitchen table, keeping the feedback positive and specific on what they should have done will have a clearer understanding of how he or she should perform in the future when confronted with a similar situation. Another question is how is one going to communicate those expectations through one's behavior (Burke, 1997, pg. 77). By acting out the expectations that the parents have clearly stated to the child, the child will associate the "perfect model," from the parents.

Finally, another way of getting to express clear communicative expectations is to hold family meetings together. The family can set time out of the week to express what expectations are to be held within the family household, as well as going over any concerns or clarifications between both parents and the child. Doing this will only help improve the child's behavior for the better not communicating expectations and then punishing one's child can cause confusion, anger, and in sometimes spite in the child (Dodson, 1923, pg. 43).

Staying Calm in the Midst of Turmoil

Staying calm is an important part before applying any positive or negative consequences to your child's behavior. As Ray Burke states, "children can be sarcastic, defiant, rebellious, and possibly violent. Parents have to prepare themselves for times like these and learn to keep their cool (Burke, 1997, pg. 83)." There are times when children will make their parents so furious that the parents get caught up in the moment and as a result are not able to think properly. The parents must be aware of what is going on around them, they must know their limits to which the child pushes, and redirect situations back in focus to properly respond otherwise? Some tips that Burke offers in his book, *Common Sense Parenting*, are to; practice positive thinking, to not take what your child says personally, to keep focus on behaviors instead of what you think the reasons are for your child's misbehaviors, and if you ever get angry and say or do something you regret, to always go back and say you are sorry (Burke, 1997, pg. 87-89).

Consequences and Consistency

Positive consequences are used to increase or encourage desirable behaviors (Dodson, 1923, pg. 12). Catching your child doing good acts and following directions are great examples of when to apply a positive consequence. Positive consequences can range from short term rewards (such as candy and extra play time) to long term rewards (such as trips and gifts). Also you must use positive consequences that will work for your child, as well as using consequences that don't cost money (e.g. helping mom while she loads the groceries into the van for being so good while in the grocery store shopping). Creating a reward system can be helpful in shaping behavior (Dodson, 1923, pg. 13). A list of actions you want him to do less of and rewarding him when the opportunity to disobey is given but avoided, and a list of actions you want him to do more of (Dodson, 1923, pg. 13). Everything listed above will give you clear expectations of when and why positive consequences are given.

Negative consequences are defined as, “adding a negative consequence to prevent or decrease a certain behavior, which is problematic, or taking away something that the child holds dear” (Hurlock, 1929, pg. 87). Doing extra chores in the house, taking away a positive, and having no television for the night are examples of negative consequences.

Children will soon realize that the behaviors that are causing these consequences are to be avoided. As Burke states, “finding a negative consequence that works effectively is quite a challenge and if your child misbehaves remember to stay calm” (Burke, 1996, pg. 47). Staying calm and focusing on one will help your child learn the appropriate behaviors. Everything mentioned prior would hold absolutely no water and crumble to failure if it is not being done with consistency. Consistency is the “backbone” to discipline (Cutts, 1952, pg. 7). As Cutts states in his book, *Better Home Discipline*, “You must be consistent in what you ask and forbid and in what you punish...if not, inconsistency between both parents could lead to certain paralysis (Cutts, 1952, pg. 7).” To a child, inconsistency gives double messages; children need to know where they stand in their behaviors (Braga, 1975, pg. 31). Consistency is the key to being a successful parent, showing the child that you are reliable and serious.

Being the Role Model to Your Child

Do what I say and not what I do is a common phrase that is often repeated; however it only confuses children. Children will not do what the parent says, since they will do what the parents have modeled. Children model the behaviors that the parent has presented to them time and time again. Looking at the messages one sends to his or her child is easily seen by analyzing one’s own behaviors. The parents’ main goal is to always set a positive example that the children can model by (Burke, 1997, pg 150).

Role playing proper behavior with the child is another way of role modeling. Role playing with your child is another method to teach your children proper behavior without resorting to the use of punishments or consequences. Each and every time you practice doing the right thing in a situation with your child; you increase the chances for their success and decrease the likelihood that your child will see that problem behavior in the future (Burke, 1997, pg. 97). Robert Eimers provides a simple four step role playing format helps parents teach their child appropriate behaviors. These four steps are one: 1) taking roles, swapping roles with your child, 2) set the stage, narrate the situation that occurred for your child; 3) begin the role play, and 4) give critiques by giving feedback on the performance, using praises when needed (Eimers, 1977, pg. 43). Techniques such as role playing can help a child to think in advance and rehearse adaptive responses to potentially frustrating situations, thus developing a more thoughtful and flexible response to the everyday problems that they face (Schaefer, 1982, pg. 112-113).

Effective Praising

Ray Burke states, “Praise is powerful. Praising your child is one of the most important things you can do as a parent. Praise is nourishment. It helps your child grow emotionally, just as food helps your child grow physically” (Burke, 1997, pg. 51). One could not have summed up what the effects of praise are any better than that. Praise is a method of

keeping focus on the positive of any situation. Charles Schaefer's book, *How to Influence Children*, states that praise is to give a "realistic, positive appraisal of a child's performance" (pg. 230).

The reason behind giving praise is to build up self esteem, to give a belief of personal satisfaction, with the addition of feeling secure within ones self (Hurlock, 1978, pg. 311). There is a sense of confidence that one has when one knows that someone has paid attention and has encourage them with a positive response, due to their efforts. Norma Cutts stated that praise makes you radiate "well-being" (Cutts, 1952, pg. 245). So in praising your child it will only encourage them to do well at whatever task they are faced with doing.

Source: Dr. Christopher Heffner, <http://bit.ly/1NZVopn>

Positive Parenting- Encouragement vs Praise (by Bright Horizons Family Solutions)

We live in a culture where a blue ribbon, a gold star, a trophy, or at minimum an enthusiastic "Good job!" has become commonplace and even expected when children participate in an activity, regardless of their effort or outcome. Many feel these practices are important to build a child's self-esteem and are harmless, but in fact, they are neither.

While each of these events in and of themselves are not individually harmful, and are sometimes perfectly appropriate, the practice of continually praising or over-praising a child can be. The problem with praise is that children begin to expect constant acknowledgement and conversely are alarmed when they don't get it. They come to rely on external praise rather than develop internal motivation or confidence in their emerging abilities. They stop doing things because they should or they can, and instead do them for the recognition.

Further, according to Carol Dweck, Ph.D., a professor at Columbia University, children who come to rely on praise take fewer risks, because they are unwilling to lose their praise-worthy status. When children seek praise (consciously or unconsciously) they tend to avoid anything they won't get 'right': which is unfortunate because mistakes, trial and error, and risk-taking are critical elements of any learning process.

This matters whether you're parenting a toddler or teen. The impact of praise on a child starts early. In fact, in a study facilitated by Dr. Dweck children as young as fourteen months had begun developing opinions about themselves and their abilities based on the praise their parents gave them. As children age, if they only define themselves by good grades, winning, or anytime they receive praise, they'll feel less competent or worthy when these things are absent (i.e. the real world).

So what should we do instead?

As an alternative to praising a child's end result or the child themselves, we should offer encouragement for their efforts and attitudes. Encouragement can be inspirational and motivating - a gentle, supportive nudge that helps children meet important goals - instead of self-defining and limiting.

And when we do praise children, it should be genuine: praise that is specific (i.e. "That was very kind of you to clean up your toys without being reminded") rather than generic (i.e. "You are wonderful") and praise focused on behavior (i.e. "You came up with a very creative solution") rather than the person (i.e. "You are so smart").

In Dr. Dweck's study, children who received encouragement were more likely to believe their intelligence could change and they could do better if they tried hard, whereas children who were praised felt their intelligence was fixed and were already, even in the toddler years, avoiding experiences perceived to be challenging.

Here are a few concrete examples of praise versus encouragement:

Generic or Person-Centered Praise	Encouragement or Genuine Praise
You are always so beautiful.	I like the combination of patterns you chose to wear today.
Good job!	You really stuck with that - your hard work paid off.
What a smart kid you are!	I can tell you're working hard on reading because you finished a longer book.
What a pretty picture.	The colors you chose for that sunset are unique.
You sure are strong.	That was the first time you've jumped rope without stumbling.
You are so organized.	I appreciate the way you organized the shelf, it makes it easier to find everything.
I am so proud of you.	You look proud of yourself! You really proved you can do it.

Sure - encouragement may not roll off the tongue as easily, but it is worth the effort. Here are a few additional benefits to encouraging children rather than praising them.

Encouragement:

- Recognizes and fosters continual growth and effort.
- Does not cause children to compare their achievements, or compete about who is smarter, prettier, faster, etc.
- Fosters independence - children gain a sense that their own abilities can get them what they need and want.
- Emphasizes effort, progress, and improvement rather than just results.
- Recognizes contribution rather than completion or quality over quantity.
- Promotes perseverance rather than giving up if a child doesn't initially achieve the

success he expected.

- Allows children to learn about, rather than measure, themselves.
- Prepares children for real-world challenges where they will be expected to do much more than show up to earn recognition.
- Doesn't build false self-esteem (i.e. "I am so smart. I can do anything") but instead builds determination and confidence (i.e. "I have the ability to do many things if I work hard").
- Does not do for children what they can do for themselves.
-

Children who receive encouragement or genuine praise are also more resilient. Because they are focused on their effort and believe they can change their circumstances through determination or learning, they are not as shaken by adversity.

On the flip side, children who have been praised for a fixed personal characteristic such as their intelligence or good looks, are confused by set-backs and view them as a personal reflection rather than a growth opportunity. In addition, children who receive stickers or a high fives for doing mundane tasks like putting their shoes on, begin to expect praise when praise isn't called for and take it personally when it doesn't come (which will inevitably happen as they age); the praise becomes more important than the achievement.

Of course, it is okay to express pride in your child; it is a natural way to demonstrate love and support. But it is important to understand that if self-confidence and development are the goals, encouragement is a much more useful strategy. After all, when our children are on their own and faced with a challenge, we know it won't help them to think, "Why can't I do this? I should be smart enough." but it will serve them well to think, "This is tough, but with effort I can probably figure it out."

As parents, we can do a lot in these younger years to build that kind of thinking from the start. There is no need to take drastic steps and snatch the soccer participation trophy out of your child's hands, but some reflective thoughts and words of encouragement on your child's effort and growth throughout the season will ensure their joy comes from their developing abilities and confidence in their own skills rather than the shiny award sitting on their shelf.

Source: Bright Horizons Family Solutions, <http://bit.ly/1m2fFKi>

Resource: Advancing Human Rights: Update on Global Foundation Grantmaking

International Human Rights Funders Group have released their latest research on global human rights funding! This resource allows you to explore rights funding by issue, population, region, and strategy supported. We hope our Newsflash readers will use this resource to inform funding strategies, identify potential funding partners, understand the

funding landscape in specific areas, and leverage additional resources to address gaps.

To see and use this resource, please visit humanrightsfunding.org.

URL: <http://bit.ly/29PYxFx>

Resource: Funds for NGOs

Funds for NGOs is a great resource for organizations looking for funding, and is where Firelight finds many of the opportunities that we share with you in the Newsflash. Usually we will feature one opportunity from a site like Funds for NGOs which we feel is the most relevant to all of our Newsflash readers. This month, while reviewing the site, we found many opportunities that may be relevant to our readers but are country-specific, so rather than sharing one general opportunity, we are sharing the link to the site so each reader has the chance to find something relevant to them! To see more, visit the Funds for NGOs website.

URL: <http://bit.ly/2cn5u7l>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

For more information contact:

Firelight Foundation
740 Front Street, Suite 380
Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
www.firelightfoundation.org
+1 831-429- 8750