

## 6 A's of Good Parenting

Parenting is all about relating. The better our relationship with our children, the better are our chances at effective parenting. Youth expert, Josh McDowell, believes there are six factors that play into good parenting. He calls them the 6 A's.

### 1. Affirmation

When we affirm a child's feelings it gives them a sense of authenticity.

Have you ever heard the old saying, "Laugh with those who are happy and cry with those who are sad?" It means that when our child is sharing his feelings or opinions, they want us to listen to them, identify with them and affirm them.

It would go something like this. Your son comes home and says, "Man! My math teacher made me so mad today, he said I wasn't trying."

Well, your instinct might be to try to downplay the situation like this, "Oh son, he probably didn't mean anything by it. Let it go." Or you might say—before you even address his feelings—"Now son, were you trying? Maybe he had a point." Or, "You're a big boy now; you can't get so upset about things."

Those are all attempts to control or fix the situation. Instead try, "Son, I am so sorry that happened. How do you feel about it now?" Then just listen, let him know you understand how he's feeling and thank him for sharing his feelings.

Even when we don't agree with our children, we can still affirm their feelings and them as individuals.

### 2. Acceptance

When you give unconditional acceptance you give a child a sense of security.

This basically comes down to one principle that must be conveyed to our children: "I don't love you because of what you do or achieve, I love you because you're my child."

Our love and affection should not be based on grades, behavior or achievements.

### 3. Appreciation

When we express appreciation it gives a child a sense of significance.

Appreciation is one of the most powerful motivations for right behavior. So, the more we "catch" our children doing things right, and we express our appreciation, the more motivated they will be to behave better. You can express that appreciation, by saying something like, "Thanks for telling me the truth about what happened. I know it wasn't easy, but I really appreciate the way you are owning and taking responsibility for your actions." Appreciation can also be expressed by writing a short note of encouragement to your child.

#### **4. Availability**

When we are available to our children it gives them a sense of importance.

We can say all we want about how important our children are to us. But if we're not available to them, our words will ring hollow.

Sometimes, our automatic response to our kids when they approach us is, "Not right now, I'm busy." But our children should come before our TV-watching, our hobbies and our work. So when our kids come to us, our response should be to stop, drop and listen. Stop what we're doing, drop to our knees, and listen to them, hug them, play with them.

#### **5. Affection**

When we show our children affection it gives them a sense of lovability.

All children want to feel like they are lovable. If they don't get love from you they will get it somewhere else.

Here are a few things you can do to show affection. Wink at your daughter across the dinner table. Give big hugs to your son. Develop a bedtime tuck in routine for your children. Hold your daughter's hand. Have a special nickname for each of your kids. Wrestle with them on the floor. Give them piggy back rides.

#### **6. Accountability**

When we hold children accountable it gives them a sense of responsibility and self-control.

Children need the disciplines of responsibility and self-control to function successfully in life. As parents, we must create rules and boundaries for our children. Once those guidelines are set, we must be consistent in enforcing them.

What are some ways you can demonstrate these six A's to your children on a daily basis?

This article was written by Mark Merrill and FamilyMinute.com