

Ten Top Tips[©]

when being a parent of a small child is not easy

1. **Perfect parents don't exist.** So get rid of this thought. Parenting is a developmental process. Parents grow and develop just like their children do.
2. **Be aware of what to expect from the different ages and stages.** To help make parenting easier, develop an understanding of what to expect from your child at the different ages and stages. When your expectations are realistic and relevant to your child's stage of development, it is easier to put routines into place and to establish the boundaries necessary for their growth and development.
3. **Implement routines.** Routines help both parents and children by providing structure. It is through routines that children learn what to expect in their lives and this helps them feel more secure.
4. **Set boundaries.** Boundaries are essential for children as they grow. They provide security for your child as they know what is expected of them, their behaviour included.
5. **Be consistent.** Children need consistency. Children become very confused and, therefore, unmanageable when their lives (including boundaries) keep changing.
6. **Play with your child.** You don't have to play with your child all the time, but you can get so much from having fun and playing together. This is a great time to talk together, to get to know each other and to simply enjoy.
7. **Listen to your child.** Listening is a very powerful parenting skill. By beginning this pattern in the early years you are setting in place an invaluable skill that is vital to the parent/child relationship. Practice listening to your child, even if he or she is only babbling.
8. **Build your child's self-esteem.** Healthy self-esteem is fundamentally important. Focus upon building your child's self-esteem by acknowledging their achievements and supporting them through mishaps. Read books and watch videos that help you understand the importance of self-esteem and what you can do to support your child.
9. **Take care of yourself.** Parenting is about balancing time. You need to make time for yourself, for your partner and for all of your family together.
10. **Don't be afraid to seek support.** Effective parenting is a very challenging task, but extremely important all the same. Therefore, it is advisable to know what support is available and to use it. It is okay to ask for help when the demands become overwhelming. You may be surprised at the amount of useful and practical information available to parents.



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