



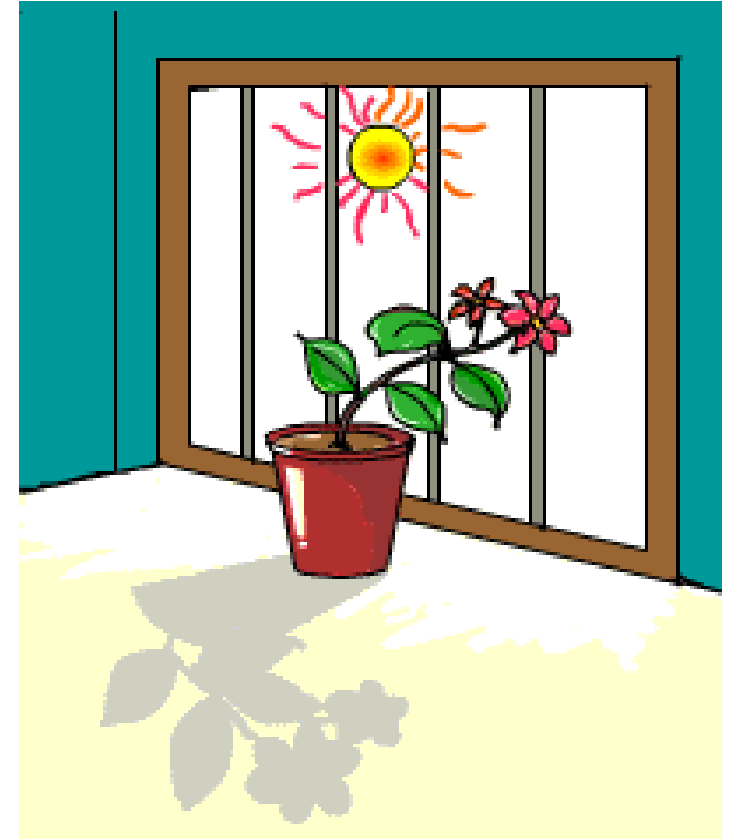
What Children Deserve From Their Parents

Presentation by
Lee Slater –
Counsellor, MBACP

Children quickly learn cause and effect

That every action gets a re-action

- Infants intuit what they have to do to get their needs met
- As children develop they learn that to get positive attention and praise from their parents and carers, or avoid negative attention, they must meet certain discernible conditions set by their primary care givers
- By the time they are teenagers, children have developed a complex system of rules they know they have to abide by if they want praise and positive attention, or to avoid negative attention
- As parents, what we say and what we do has a direct and profound impact on shaping our children
- We can help cultivate the conditions they need to flourish



Our Most Vulnerable Times

There are three stages in our lives when we are at our most mentally and emotionally vulnerable



Infancy – Early Childhood



Adolescence



Old Age

By adolescence, the first signs of lifelong emotional and mental health difficulties will start to emerge*

* Cambridge University Research

As parents, we want to give our children the best shot we can

So, what can we do?

Trust and Respect Your Child

- Acknowledge and affirm your child's right to have their own feelings. There are no right or wrong feelings
- Respect the feelings of their other parent – you're teaching your child to respect the feelings of others
- Believe what your child is telling you
- Encourage their independence, their ability to think and act for themselves
- Acknowledge their right to have their own friends, to do the activities they enjoy, and to develop and have their own opinions.
- Respect their privacy in terms of time, space and personal belongings e.g. bathroom, bedroom, journals



Promote Emotional Security

- Help your child feel emotionally safe
- What you say and what you do will help your child feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves.
- Be gentle: listen, let them speak
- Be consistently trustworthy and reliable



Provide Physical Security

- Shelter, Food, Clothes.
- Provide familiar structure through consistent maintenance of family routines and traditions
- Provide children with a sense of pride and self-respect by teaching them personal hygiene
- Help children to respect themselves and their bodies by encouraging and showing them how to eat well
- Teach the importance of balance and moderation versus dangers of 'all or nothing'
- When your child has been physically hurt, attend to them with care and compassion
- Monitor their safety



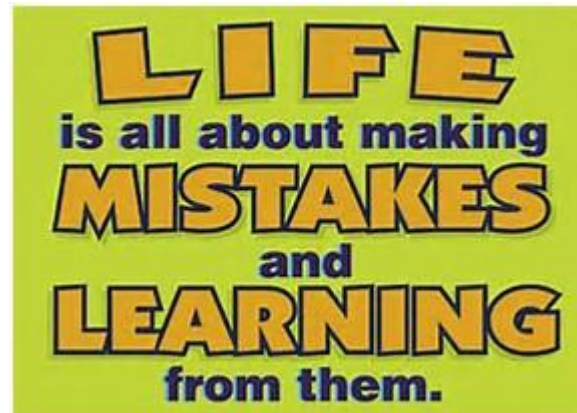
Give Them Your Time

- Participate in your children's lives – engage with their activities, school, sports, special occasions, celebrations, friends
- Include your children in your activities
- Reveal who you are to your children



Encouragement and Support

- Be affirming
- Encourage children to follow their own interests
- Let children disagree with you
- Recognize and acknowledge improvement
- Teach them new skills
- Let your children make mistakes



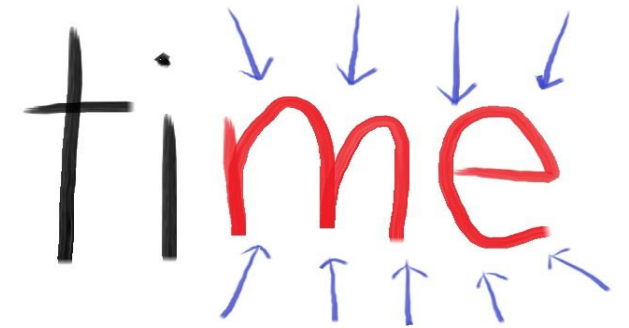
Give Affection

- Express both physical and verbal affection
- Be affectionate with your children when they are physically and emotionally hurt



Care For Yourself

- If you struggle to understand and meet your needs, it is likely that you will struggle to understand and meet your child's needs.
- Give yourself time for you
- Keep yourself healthy
- Maintain your friendships
- Accept love



Provide Discipline

- Use discipline to give instruction, not to punish
- Explain why you are doing what you are doing
- Ensure rules are appropriate to your child's age and development
- Set boundaries and be clear about limits and expectations
- Be consistent



The Power of No

- We all want happy children but indulging them with a constant stream of more 'stuff' may have reverse effect
- Could teach them:
 - To be petulant and manipulative
 - Inflated sense of self and material expectations
 - No understanding of value – easy come, easy go with no effort required from them – aka 'spoilt'
- Children need and deserve our protection, affection, and direction – this includes a healthy dose of No with a side of explanation
- Nurture their resilience – their ability to bounce back – encourage their participation in meeting their own material wants




It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings.



The comfort of consistency

If we, as parents, are inconsistent in what we say and do and keep shifting the goal posts, we run the risk of confusing our kids and confounding their world

BE consistently 
CONSISTENT

Potential Adverse Consequences

Manifest By Teen Years

- 37% of teen girls exhibit 3-plus symptoms of psychological distress, including feeling worthless: Department of Education
- 1:3 teen girls suffer extreme anxiety and depression, up 10% in the last decade: Department of Education
- In the 1960's the average age for the onset of depression was 45, now it's 14: Natasha Devon DOE Mental Health & Schools
- Three kids in every classroom has a diagnosed mental illness: Natasha Devon DOE Mental Health & Schools
- 1:10 will develop an eating disorder by age 25 (boys and girls) Natasha Devon DOE Mental Health & Schools
- Hospitalization from self-harm and eating disorders has doubled since 2013: Natasha Devon DOE Mental Health & Schools
- In some parts of the country rates of childhood depression, anxiety, self-harm and eating disorders has gone up 600%: Natasha Devon DOE Mental Health & Schools
- 49% teen boys would not feel comfortable talking to their dads about their mental and emotional health: Time To Change Organization

