



(UNITED “WE” CAN, WHEN DIVISION IS NOT AN OPTION!)

Parents’ Guide

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INTRODUCTION

This document is offered as a resource to help in the caring role that parents and guardians give to their children. At the end of this guide are quick links for various issues and topics that your child may face ranging from violence to bullying.

We’d all agree that our children matter, but often because of the demands of life, our children may not feel that way. Your role is vital to the health, safety, growth, emotional well-being, and development of your child. Together we can make a difference in their lives, because you matter and so do they. With all the things that divide, let’s come together in partnership to give our children the best that we can. When division is not an option, we must unite! As educators and community leaders, we stand with you in your very important parental role. “Parents are a child’s first and most enduring educators. Parental engagement counts for up to 12% of the differences between different pupil outcomes.”¹

You see, children do not start learning when they go to school, the first few months and early years are vital in developing secure attachments and more. Parental input is crucial during this early phase as it enables the child to develop (or not) the skills to learn. Research shows that from birth until adulthood children need a variety of positive learning experiences provided in a secure and loving environment if they are to achieve their full potential.²

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¹ 2003 Charles Deforges research for the Primary Strategy

² file:///C:/Users/Tom/Downloads/c--apps-suffolklearning-cms-jt_9-11-2012-154950_4.%20Rtb%20Nov12%20Quotes%20and%20research.v1.pdf

SECTION I - PRINCIPLES OF CONNECTION

In short, there are two basic principles to remember when influencing and connecting with your children, they are time and interest.

TIME

Kids spell love – TIME. While many busy parents use the, “quality vs. quantity” equation for spending time with their children, all time is quality time. Spend as much as you can with them, before you know it, they’ll be grown and you’ll never have a chance to get these moments back. Besides, it allows you an even greater positive influence on your child’s life and growth.

Kids spell love – TIME

INTEREST

The key to a child’s heart is to understand their interest and become interested in the same thing whether you like that subject or not. If your daughter is interested in butterflies, become an expert on butterflies with her. If your son loves sports, learn all you can too. There will never be a shortage of things to share and talk about and the energy will be real.

Understanding him

Understand their interest and become interested in the same thing

Most boys want to know if they have what it takes to be a man. Flexing their muscles, riding with no hands, asking mom and dad to watch as they perform their ninja moves or role-playing acts of bravery. Every day in some way, reaffirm to him that he has what it takes to be a real man! See John Eldridge’s work on this subject, “You Have What It Takes”.³

Understanding her

Most young girls dream that she is a princess. The clothes, the makeup, the castle. To be and feel beautiful; to love and be loved. Every day in some way reaffirm that she truly is a princess deserving of your love and protection.

The above is the short version of influence and care. This next section will take this care a little further.

³ https://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=you+have+what+it+takes+john+eldredge&tag=googhydr-20&index=aps&hvadid=177224766209&hvpos=1t1&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=17629064309443422260&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=b&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9009622&hvtargid=kwd-11325101907&ref=pd_sl_3977t6di7i_b

SECTION II - PRICIPLES OF PROTECTION

Let's look at some of the input that you can offer to your own children as a safe-guard in their lives and to set them up for success.

An Ancient Proverb

*"The wise person will allow discretion to guard them and use understanding to watch over them."*⁴

Discretion is: Thinking it through

Before your child goes anywhere or does anything you must think it through. Before you do anything – THINK IT THROUGH! Too often we put our brains in neutral and let other people think for us. WE NEED TO THINK THINGS THROUGH!

Understanding is: Wisdom in action!

Wisdom isn't wisdom until there's an action attached to it. Wisdom comes from experience. Wisdom is what guides our actions. Wisdom says, I've thought it through, and based on all my experience and judgment, this is what I have decided is best. The problem is, many parents know what to do, they think it through, but they have the "*failure to launch syndrome*." They know what to do, they simply don't do it.

Wisdom isn't wisdom until there's an action attached to it. Wisdom comes from experience.

So as a parent or a guardian, our responsibility is to act. You might ask, "*How do we use discretion and understanding with our children?*" We must guide them from our life experiences with wisdom and discretion through a five-step process of C.A.R.E.

A Parent's Responsibility Is To C.A.R.E.

Children do what they see, even at the earliest days their instinct is to imitate what they observe. As parents, guardians, and care-givers, it is imperative that we understand the environments our children are in and seek to create the best ones to protect and advance them. In caring for them we must . . .

"In raising children, we need to continuously keep in mind how we can best create the most favorable environment for their imitative behavior." - Rudolf Steiner, writer/philosopher

⁴ Proverbs 2:11 (paraphrase)

Cautiously guard their relationships

This takes discretion. Remember the proverb that said, “*discretion will guard you?*” Thinking it through is a must in every situation.

Imagine what would happen to you if you got too close to a mother bear and her cubs. She would go into protection mode. WHY? Well, because she doesn’t know you or your intentions. Besides that, it’s an automatic, instinctive response.

Emotional wounds hurt too and last a lifetime.

You would have this same response if someone came near your child with the intent of hurting them. You would spring into protection mode. The problem is that when it comes to hurting your kids, it’s not always so obvious. Emotional wounds hurt too and last a lifetime. Therefore, it is imperative that we know who our children are spending time with, whether it’s a friend, relative, or another adult. Impressions from others are part of the developmental process for our children. They will learn from each of these relationships.

An ancient saying still holds true today:
"Bad company corrupts good character."⁵

To know who your kids are spending time with ask these three questions:

1. Who are the key adults in my child’s life?
2. Who are my child’s best friends?
3. Who are they dating? (for older teen, children)

Teach them to recognize and avoid inappropriate behavior

Excerpt from: *How and When to Talk to Your Kids About Inappropriate Touching*

*Donald McLean was 12 when he was molested by his sister’s favorite teacher, someone his family trusted to be a mentor to Donald. The abuse would continue for three years. During that time, says McLean, who wrote *Unraveling Charlie* (Create Space Publishing) about his experience, “it impacted my behavior and attitude. I hid it from everyone and blamed myself for what happened, as children do. Even though I knew what was happening was wrong, I didn’t know how wrong.”⁶*

The website that the above account came from has some very practical tools in dealing with this subject. As a resource, you can click on this [link](#) to go to NYMETRO parents to read their practical information. The main points with explanation on dealing with inappropriate touching and behavior are clearly listed there.

Bad company corrupts good character

Here’s a quick guide, look for the **Three “C’s”**.

1. **Conversations** (with whom does your child talk to, is it appropriate?)
2. **Contact** (Who touches your child and is it appropriate?)
3. **Communicate** (talk about their day, ask about the people in their life)

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:13 (ESV)

⁶ <http://www.nymetroparents.com/article/tips-on-how-and-when-to-talk-to-your-children-about-sexual-abuse>

So, we've established the need to cautiously guard relationships as they surely impact the thinking and values of our children, but we must also actively look for any tell-tale signs of issues that have or are taking place.

You can help prevent your child from being a statistic

Actively look for warning signs

Most people would love to believe that nothing negative will ever happen to their children. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The facts you're about to read are real, but as an observant and active parent, you can help prevent your child from being a statistic.

"One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old"

National Sexual Violence Resource Center Statistics:⁷

- "One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old"
- "34% of people who sexually abuse a child are family members"
- 12.3% of women were age 10 or younger at the time of their first rape/victimization, and 30% of women **were between the ages of 11 and 17**

These statistics are not to frighten you but to help you be cautious enough to do all you can to protect your child. So, if you notice that your child has suddenly had a change in their personality, say they were happy and friendly, and all of the sudden their mood has shifted, you should investigate why.

Here's what to watch out for:

Possible signs of trouble:

- A person has an unusual interest in your child
- Much time devoted to just your child
- Gifts/special privileges to your child

Warning signals from your child:

- Sudden personality change
- Sudden unwillingness to go to school
- Nightmares or expressed fears that are new

Substance abuse is a common outcome of sexual abuse

Sometimes; bed wetting, or even compulsive behaviors such as showering often or compulsive hand washing may take place. A list of acting out behaviors can be found at this [link](#). It is important to know that often, *"Substance abuse is a common outcome of sexual abuse. In fact, according to the AAETS, specialists in the addiction field (alcohol, drugs and eating disorders) estimate that up to 90 percent of their patients have a known history of some form of abuse."*⁸

⁷ http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_media-packet_statistics-about-sexual-violence_0.pdf

⁸ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/somatic-psychology/201303/trauma-childhood-sexual-abuse>

If you discover that a situation has occurred, your next step is to get help by engaging with the local authorities.

Remember to be your kid's hero

Your kids are going to look up to someone; you want that person to be you.

1. Spend ample amounts of time with them (quantity time is quality time)
2. Take special interest in their interests (become an expert on their areas of interest)

This is the key to winning their heart; take interest in what they are interested in. If they are athletic but you're not, make it your priority to know the sport they like etc.

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you want that person to be you.

Engage with your child's life

Assume responsibility for your child's upbringing. This cannot be delegated. Be involved with their scout meetings, school functions, teacher's meetings, games, and activities. This is time well spent and you will never regret it.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Parental Resources⁹

Quick Links

[Promoting Peace and Acceptance in Crisis](#)

[Promoting Peace and Acceptance in Crisis \(Español\)](#)

[Tips for Parents and Teachers: Talking to Children about Violence](#)

[Tips for Parents and Teachers: Talking to Children about Violence \(Español\)](#)

[Coping with Grief after Community Violence](#)

Additional Resources

[The Bully Project](#)

[Stopbullying.gov](#)

[Webisodes on bullying](#)

⁹ <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/superintendent/Pages/Parent-Resources.aspx>