

THE PLEASURES OF PARENTING

Often we focus on the difficulties of raising our children. We forget about the pleasures children bring us. Remember the warm feelings you get inside when your child learns something new or shares something with you? What could replace your child's hug? Is there anything more precious than your child's smile?

You have the opportunity to teach your children about the world. You can show them how to care about others. You can teach them the values that you believe in. The strength and love of your family can help you get through the ups and downs of life.

Every moment spent together creates a lifetime of memories. Think about the special times throughout the year. Keep a notebook handy to jot down everyday and special events that are too special to be forgotten. Every once in a while, share these memories with your children and recreate the closeness and special feelings of that time. You may be surprised that they remember them too. A funny memory could cheer you up. You could find your family laughing and talking about something that happened ages ago.

The more time you and your family spend together, the more memories you will have to share. Taking time to share the memories creates a family bond.



THERE ARE NO PERFECT PARENTS OR PERFECT CHILDREN



Have realistic expectations for your children. All children develop skills at different ages. Each child is unique and has her own likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, skills, and personality. Comparing children is not fair to them nor a healthy way for them to grow. Get to know your children and appreciate their individuality.

Help your child build self-control. Set realistic rules and consequences and stick to them. Be clear, consistent, and firm and remember, **rules must be reasonable for your child's age**. Be consistent in discipline. **Separate the behavior you dislike from the child** who is misbehaving. For example, "I love you very much but I cannot allow you to hurt your brother."

Have realistic expectations for yourself too. Remember to take care of yourself. Every parent needs encouragement and support. Surround yourself with people who make you feel good – friends, relatives, a Parents Anonymous® group, or a special interest group. Recognize your personal strengths and value. Are you kind, caring, friendly, and patient? Identify your strengths and build on them. Be fair with yourself and remember, we all make mistakes and need to practice patience. Children and adults need a home that is warm, safe, and loving. Children may forget what you say but they will always remember how you make them feel.

Successful parenting begins with realistic expectations for yourself and your family!

If you have concerns about your child's development at any age, contact your local

- Early Intervention Program
- Board of Education
- Preschool Special Education Services
- School Guidance Counselor or Social Worker
- Parents Anonymous® Group
- Family Resource Center
- Child Care Resource and Referral Service
- Pediatrician