

**WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW**  
**ABOUT BEING A PARENT**

1. **YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ADULT IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE**

Parents are a bridge between the past and the future for their children. You will never outgrow your parenting role. You are a parent from the moment your child is born until you die. You provide the continuities in your child's life.

2. **YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER**

Parents are teaching all the time just by being the kinds of people they are. Children are internalizing everything about them. From you, children learn a code of ethics and morality; they learn to respect themselves and others; they learn to love and value learning; and they learn to commit themselves to those things in which they believe.

3. **YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD BETTER THAN ANY PROFESSIONAL**

Parents know their children very well; they are attached to them on a 24-hour-a-day basis. Professionals have knowledge about human growth and development and learning theory. Their knowledge is general; parents' knowledge is specific. In order to grow into competent adulthood, children need the benefit of both the generalized and specialized types of knowledge.

4. **KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR CHILD'S GROWTH**

Parents often make unreasonable demands and have unreasonable expectations in their anxiety to do their best at parenting. Learning what is appropriate at each stage of development will help you set your expectations so children will also aim high, but not be frustrated by the impossible. Appreciating children's successes, rather than focusing on their failures, is the best way to build self-confidence, and self-confidence is the basis for all learning.

5. **CHILDREN LEARN BEST FROM THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM AND CARE ABOUT THEM**

Children want to please the important adults who are in their lives; they want to live up to the expectations set by those adults; most importantly, they know who provides for their needs and who loves them. They are "reading" you all the time and figuring out what you value.

6. **CHILDREN WANT AND NEED LIMITS**

Children know you care about them when you set clear limits for their physical and psychological safety. In a permissive, "anything goes" environment, children get the message that nothing matters and no one cares.

7. **IN PARENTING, EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER**

To be good parents, you have to have been parented yourself, but not necessarily by your natural parents. We can all parent each other; but we learn about being parents by internalizing the feelings of being cared for. When we have feelings of self-worth and self-respect inside us, our children "catch" it from us.

8. **YOU ARE RAISING TOMORROW'S PARENTS**

How you treat and relate to your children will affect the kind of parents they will be when they grow up.

9. **PARENTING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS**

Parenting is a serious business, but it doesn't have to be grim. Enjoy the deep satisfactions of being a parent. Don't be afraid to admit and laugh at your own mistakes with your children. Don't lose your light touch. Remember, you don't have to be perfect even if you are a parent.

10. **RAISING CHILDREN IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS**

In a democratic society, all the people carry responsibility for all the children. Whether you have already had, have not yet had, or will never have children, you have a stake in a child's future; and your contribution to the raising of healthy, productive citizens is important.

11. **LEARNING TO BE A BETTER PARENT IS A NEVER-ENDING JOB**

There are no schools to teach you, there are no prescribed courses. You learn to be a good parent. You enrich your parenting skills by constantly growing with your children and growing as a human being; examining what the experts say and sharing your realizations with others interested in parenting. It's up to you.

**YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ADULT IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE**