

Peaceful Parenting

Basic Principals

Active Listening

Active Listening fosters trust and models respectful communication. Children learn to listen well through the experience of being heard well. It's about listening with interest, with presence, and positive reflection, which invites open and honest two way communication. Give lots of positive messages through your non-verbal cues, face, body, tone of voice. Acknowledging what you hear "oh yes, that makes sense", validating the feelings expressed "you're really sad about me leaving". Listening teaches children how to listen to others, as well as helping them to be more in touch with what they truly think and feel.

Fostering attachment by responding to needs

Overall consistent warm responsiveness to the child's needs (different from wants) fosters secure attachment. Qualities which foster secure attachment are bonding, closeness, warmth, empathy, affection, and generally meeting the child's needs. Aside from all the attention parent's give in the daily tasks, children need quality one on one time and presence that helps the child feel seen, understood and valued. Strong bonding leads to a child feeling looked after, protected, safe, secure and generally feeling good about themselves.

Attunement

Attunement is about tuning in to your child's world. As well as showing that you're engaged in their interests, it involves reading the child's non-verbal communication; body language and tone of voice and showing understanding and empathy for the feelings they're showing verbally and non-verbally. Sharing feelings, sharing sighs, sharing smiles, sharing excitement, sharing play and creativity. Children need to see what we feel as well as hear it in our words; "Oh dear you're upset" needs corresponding empathic facial expressions and body language.

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Supporting emotional expression & release

Accepting and listening to a child's whole range of feelings. Understanding that out of balance behaviour is generally related to painful feelings that need to be resolved through talking, crying, raging, laughing or through play. If they don't get it out, they will act it out!

Expressing limits, boundaries & requests lovingly

We teach our children primarily through our modelling. When we control their behaviour through punishments, threats, rewards or enforced consequences, we are teaching them that this is the way to deal with differences and conflicts with others. Instead you can mediate conflicts amongst siblings non-judgmentally, you can problem solve, you can express your needs "I need reassurance that ... ", hold loving limits and maintain respectful communication while expressing requests and limits or giving feedback. Limits and boundaries are best taught as you teach everything else, with love, care and patience.

Mindfulness of parent's own unresolved childhood feelings

A parent's memory of how they felt as a child in different situations helps them imagine how their child is affected by situations today. Being aware of the negative impacts of unhealthy communication on you when you were a child is your biggest insurance against continuing negative cycles and the most motivator to heal, resolve and learn healthier ways of relating.

Recognition of children's stress & vulnerability to trauma

Parent is committed to minimizing stress for their child based on the understanding that healthy behaviour is incredibly difficult for children when they are stressed, pressured to perform, anxious and insecure. Taking this understanding further, parents can then read extremely negative behaviours as being symptomatic of unresolved stress or trauma.

Behaviour, feelings & needs

An understanding of the dynamic between needs, feelings and behaviours and how we go about meeting the underlying needs before the child can begin to feel better, hence act better.

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