



BRINGING THE LESSONS HOME

for Families and Caregivers

Effective parenting comes from what you do as a parent and understanding why you do it. Jodi Mullen, Ph.D., LMHC, RPT-S, CCPT-S, a therapist, trainer, professor, and most importantly a parent, published a book titled "Raising Freakishly Well-Behaved Kids". In this book she highlights that children have been her teachers; she has learned valuable principles from the relationships she has with her own children and the children she has provided counseling to. In our "Bringing the Lessons Home" section for parents this year we will highlight a few of these principles in each edition. Here are our first three:

1. LET'S PLAY

Play is considered the work of childhood because children develop socially, emotionally cognitively and physically through play. As parents, making time for play time is a struggle because we are often pulled in many different directions. Your child(ren) can help connect you to the value of play. Play allows them to teach you something and feel good about themselves while they do it!

"You will always be your child's favorite toy".
Vicki Lansky

2. CATCH ME BEHAVING

As parents when our children misbehave our discomfort grows and we become self-conscious about our parenting. It is easy to fall into "what are we doing wrong?" Rather, ask ourselves as parents "what are we doing right?" Similarly, when we acknowledge or catch children behaving, they are often pleased, feel proud, and it encourages more of the behavior that we want to see in our children! Take time as a parent to put on your spy goggles and notice all the ways that your children are doing positive things such as:

- Brushing their teeth when asked the first time.
- Said something nice or shared a toy with a friend or sibling.
- Gave you a hug.
- Were silly and got you as the parent to be silly.

3. IF YOU TELL ME WHAT I CAN'T DO, ALSO TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO

Children encounter a lot of "no's" or things that they cannot do during the day. Limits are a crucial component of good parenting! Children need us to tell them "no" to keep them safe. It helps them to understand the expectations. As parents an easy three step model is:

- A** Acknowledge the child's feelings or wishes. For example, "you are excited and want to jump on the furniture".
- C** Communicate the limit. "Our furniture is not for jumping on".
- T** Target an alternative. "You can jump on the floor inside or outside".
Important: use what is okay for you as the parent and keep it simple/brief.

"Call them rules or call them limits, good ones. I believe, have this in common: They serve reasonable purposes; they are practical and within a child's capability; they are consistent; and they are an expression of loving concern".
Fred Rogers