

## General Parenting Tips

Parenting is one of the most life changing and challenging parts of family life. Children provide joy and fulfilment but at times cause their parents a great deal of frustration and even distress. In a changing world, the challenge of general parenting and managing difficult behaviour is receiving more exposure in the media, self-help books and parenting skills programs. Experience and research tells us that effective parenting consists of providing a positive, engaging environment, having realistic expectations, using assertive behaviour management strategies and finally, attending to your own needs – both as parents and individuals. Below are some tips for improving family life. If your child's problems are more severe it is advisable to seek further help.

### *Increase the Positives*

- Affection, quality time and praise, praise, praise!
- Attend to your relationship with your child. For example, take an interest in things that they like and do well. Even if you have had a rough day don't use insults or guilt to get your child to comply. Remember it is the behaviour that is a problem and not the child.
- Have clear, realistic expectations. That is, make sure your child knows what they should be doing instead of focusing on what they shouldn't be doing. It can be hard to know if your expectations are too high or too low. Find out what is developmentally appropriate for your child by speaking to other parents, school or day-care staff or a psychologist.

### *Decrease the Negatives*

- Reduce "accidental rewards". This means not increasing a behaviour you don't want by giving it lots of attention. Accidental rewards for misbehaviour includes sitting down to play with your child when they have been very difficult, long talks about why a behaviour is a problem or asking your child why they misbehaved.
- Use consistent discipline strategies. While this is a very difficult thing to achieve, it is extremely effective. If your child knows that every time they

break a rule there will be a consequence they should learn quite quickly. This can be easier if you have a clear plan in your mind in advance.

- Look after your own needs. Achieving the above is not easy. It is almost impossible if you are highly stressed, over tired and unhappy. Try and have a break from the children to recharge your battery. If you have ongoing problems with your emotions or feel you are not coping it is important to seek help from a professional.

### *Resources for Parents*

*Every Parent* – Matthew Sanders

*Toddler Taming* – Christopher Green

*Understanding ADD* – Christopher Green

*What to Expect the First Year* – Heidi Murkoff, Sandee Hathaway, Arlene Eisenberg

*The Optimistic Child* – Martin Seligman

### *Referral Options*

- Triple P - Community Child Health Service (see Queensland Health, White Pages)
- Riverton Early Parenting Centre - Community Child Health Service (see Queensland Health, White Pages)
- Queensland University Psychology Clinic, St Lucia – PH 3365 6451
- Griffith University Psychology Clinic, Mt Gravatt – PH 3875 3301
- Assure Programs – PH 3369 6788