



How to Get Your Child/Teen to Want to be Good

The most important thing you can do to increase positive behavior in a child is to create closeness and warmth in the relationship. When kids are acting up or misbehaving it is hard to feel close and warm! Here are two tips that have been shown to work:

Special Play Time Younger Children (2 to 10 years old)



Set aside 5 minutes every day to play:

Use Descriptive statements such as: *"You're putting toys in the toy box"*.

Use Praise statements such as: *"You're doing a great job of putting the toys in the box"*.

Use Reflective statements such as: Child: *"I picked up all the toys"* Parent: *"You picked up all the toys"*.

Avoid Critical Statements such as: *"Put them in this way"*; *"You should have picked up the Lego's first"*.

Avoid words like NO – DON'T – STOP – QUIT.

Avoid asking Questions.

Avoid giving Commands.

One on One Time Pre-teens/teens (11 + years old)



Set aside 15-20 minutes 3 times per week to spend time together:

Identify an activity your pre-teen/teen really enjoys (e.g., playing a non-competitive game, going to the mall together, making a recipe, doing art work, etc). Or ask your child what they really enjoy doing and make a point to do it with the pre-teen/teen.

During the activity use descriptive and praise statements such as: *"You have great taste in clothes"*; *"I see you are carefully measuring the flour"*, *"you are really good at...."*.

Encourage more open communication in general during the activity. A really good way to do that is listen attentively and show interest in what they talk about (even if it is not very interesting to you!): *"tell me more about what happened when you and Megan had that argument"*; *"I can hear that your feelings are hurt"*; *"Thanks for explain to me about [Warcraft, Farmville, Wii], I didn't know that"*.

Avoid asking too many questions or giving commands.

Avoid correcting or making critical statements (even if tempted!).

REMEMBER:

Be consistent in routinely spending this special time together, the benefit builds up over time. It is like money in the bank for the hard times, and makes every day life much better.