

# FROM YOUNG TO EXPERIENCED FATHER

»» *Tips for parenting* ««



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# FROM YOUNG TO EXPERIENCED FATHER

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⇒ *Tips for parenting* ⇐

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the guide "From young to experienced father"<sup>1</sup> is to familiarize, in a simple and clear way, young men with the role, responsibility and challenges that fathers are faced with and how to accomplish and overcome all those challenges in an optimal way. Numerous pieces of information and advice in this guide certainly apply to both parents, but they are primarily intended for current and future fathers. Why? A large number of studies both in South-East Europe and around the world show that fathers are not sufficiently involved in the upbringing of their children and a number of accompanying responsibilities. We believe that the traditional norms are one of the main reasons for this.

Traditional upbringing implies shared roles between parents. Usually the social expectations and norms are such that the mother should be more engaged with the house chores and childcare. She is the one that is expected to provide warmth, tenderness, and care. The father is expected to provide existential resources for life. He is the holder of authority, who sets rules and exerts discipline. However, in the present context the traditional roles become unsustainable. Women are far more employed than in the past so it is not realistic to expect them to carry most of family and household responsibilities on their shoulders. It is essential that men are more involved. However, in addition to this reason, even more important reason is the psychological and social need of children to have their fathers more involved in their upbringing. The father may contribute to

the development of a balanced personality of children, who will have the determination, integrity, emotional availability and warmth. Fathers should be the role model for boys how to treat their wife and children in the future, and for girls the role model for emotional partner who would respect and treat them as equal. In practice, it is evident that there have been some changes, there are more and more fathers who take care of their children as much as the mothers. This trend certainly needs to be maintained and further strengthened. The challenge that arises in this process is that many fathers are not quite sure when and how to become more involved in childcare.

Due to this challenge and need the guide "From young to experienced father" was created. The guide includes basic information about the role of fathers, child development, principles of upbringing, relationship and communication between parents and children, what to teach the children and what the most common mistakes made by fathers are. We tried to write this guide in a language that is suited for young people, and that it is illustrated and prepared in an interesting way. We tried to present numerous information and messages in an interesting and concise way so that the final product is not too extensive. We hope that we have succeeded in doing this, and that the guide will fulfill its main purpose and contribute to the greater participation of fathers in upbringing of their children in the best possible way. The development of this guide is one of the activities undertaken within the

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1 - The term 'father' used here and throughout the document refers also to stepfathers and all caregivers

06 | project: "Boys and Men as Allies in Violence Prevention and Gender Transformation in the Western Balkans". The project is implemented by CARE International Balkans, in cooperation with its partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Albania and Kosovo\*, with the support of the Austrian Development Cooperation, the Swiss Government and the OAK Foundation.

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\* "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence."

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# THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IN PARENTING

The role of father in upbringing of children is important not only from the perspective to help mothers, but also from the perspective of a baby. In the early period of their lives babies can sense the difference between mother and father. Since mothers and fathers tend to have a different approach to children, it can have positive reflections on the development of children. A six weeks old baby can clearly

distinguish mother's voice from the father's voice. A baby in a calm state reacts more intensely to the mother's voice, while a baby in an agitated state will usually calm down easier in the father's arms. Mothers often say the same words before feeding the baby, before bathing, before putting the baby to sleep. Fathers are rarely so consistent in their approach to a child, which is good because in that way the baby recognizes that the father is holding him/her. At a slightly older age, the time that mothers spend with their children is often programmed through feeding, changing clothes, bathing or some educational games. The time fathers spend with the child is not as structured and it contains more improvisation and game playing. Fathers are generally playing with their children more "physically" through various sports games and games where there is less talk and more physical activity. This is extremely useful, because such activity helps physical development of the child, and it also helps the development of the brain. All this points to the structural importance of engaging fathers in raising their children. The importance of father's role can be divided into three phases.



## *The role of the father before the childbirth* ←↵

Studies have shown that a large number of men is not included in the activities prior to their partner's childbirth. These activities are not negligible and it is very important for a man to be involved in them and in this way provide support to the mother of his future child. These activities include:

- Support to the partner through joint visits to the gynecologist
- Taking over certain chores that his partner did (e.g. washing, cleaning, etc.)
- Helping the partner, if necessary, to comply with a certain diet or to take certain medicine if she needs to
- In the final stages of pregnancy, prepare the things that the future mother carries with her to the maternity ward
- Prepare the room and the necessary things you will need when mother and baby leave the hospital
- Do not stay out from home during this period, it is not fair!
- And, most importantly, a man needs to be patient, calm and attentive. By doing so he will have a positive influence on the future mother who is particularly sensitive and vulnerable during this period.

## *Role during the childbirth* ←↵

- When your partner tells you that the childbirth is getting closer, there are important things to do: be in the hospital during the childbirth.
- Where it is complicated to be present in the delivery room, a man can wait for his child to be born in the hospital waiting room.



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## The role of fathers after the childbirth ←

After the mother and baby leave the hospital a new phase in your life begins. The first seven days are probably the most stressful. This first period is characterized by excitement about the childbirth, a baby crying and very little sleep for parents. In this period, immediately after the childbirth, pay attention to a few things:

- **Be at home as much as you can.** There are many responsibilities around the newly arrived baby, it is necessary that you are involved as much as possible. If you work, it is best to take a few days off, the law allows you to do so.
- **Participate in the care of the baby, your baby and partner needs you.** Get rid of the stereotypes what father needs to be like. Help during the night to feed the baby, and if your partner is breastfeeding, keep her company and help her in changing baby's clothes and bathing the baby. Participate in changing diapers, it is not so difficult. If your baby cries a lot at night, and he/she is not hungry, you try to calm the baby so mother can rest.



- 10 | → **Help with other household chores.** You will help your partner a lot if you clean the house, go to the store, prepare food, etc.
- **Take care of the guests.** Your partner needs to rest and it is not suitable for her and the baby to have many visits. Try to arrange all visits beforehand, at a time when it suits you.
- **Having a baby is followed by some bureaucratic obligations.** It is necessary, in a formal sense, to give the child a name, to have his/her personal identification number, birth certificate, etc., issued in the municipal/city administration or other institution.
- **Plan that, during the first month after the child is born,** you will need to take him/her to the child counseling center where he/she will be examined by a pediatrician, and receive

the vaccine. You will also take your child to have his/her hips checked by the doctor and you will probably do the usual motor exercises at home with your child.

- **As the child develops and grows so does his/her habits,** abilities and needs. Listen carefully to the advice of pediatrician, especially in terms of introducing new food into the child's diet. It is useful to have a good book about the development of children.
- **Enjoy.** This period brings many obligations and responsibilities, but is unique. You have been given the greatest gift of all and despite all the obligations enjoy your baby and every moment spent with him/her!
- **Read the following pages** of this guide, you will need them!



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# DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

## *Different aspects of the development of children* ←↔

The development of children can be seen through several aspects of development. Most often we distinguish between the following aspects of development:

- Physical growth and development (changes and development of shape, size, height and weight of the body);
- Development of fine and large motor skills (the ability to move, control of certain parts of the body);
- Cognitive development (includes mental activities such as detection, recognition, classification, evaluation of ideas, problem solving, anticipation);
- Social and emotional development (how children feel in relation to themselves and others, how they enter into relationships and communication with other children and people);
- Speech development (adoption of understandable symbols used to communicate with the environment);
- Development of perceptual abilities (use of information obtained through the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell and body position).

Every aspect of development carries with it a number of specific features in different age groups. The changes are particularly intense in the early years. It should be borne in mind that children may develop at a different pace. It is wrong to try to "force" development of certain abilities in child, because this may cause the opposite effect.

Regardless of the activity of a child, it is necessary to take into account the evolving capacities of the child (the activity must not be a burden for a child), the interest of the child (imposed activities are not desirable), the estimated time for the activity. Here are some useful activities for the various aspects of the development of children.

### ***Desirable activities for physical development***

- Desirable various forms of movement.
- In the first year of life a child should crawl correctly, stand up on his/her feet correctly, walk while holding on to appropriate objects, walk with the help of others, sit independently, etc.
- In the second year of life a child should be able to walk independently, in the second half of the year a child should be able to run independently, to run in a circle, to hop on both feet while holding on to something, to climb a few steps with the help of another person (holding for both, and then for one hand).

### ***Desirable activities for the development of senses***

- It is necessary that interesting and harmless objects are in the field of vision of the child.
- Parents should show children objects of different colors.
- It is best not to ask the child to tell what color the ball is, but when you pass a ball to the child say –here is a blue ball.

### ***Health and hygiene activities of a child***

- In the first year, the most important things are regular sleep, position and rest.
- In the second year, a child should be taught how to wipe hands and mouth after eating.
- In the third year, a child should be taught to independently wash his/her hands and to independently eat food.

### *🌀 Social and emotional activities of a child 🌀*

- In the first year, the most important things are regular sleep, position and rest.
- In the second year, a child should be taught how to wipe hands and mouth after eating.
- In the third year, a child should be taught to independently wash his/her hands and to independently eat food.

### *🌀 Activities of intellectual development of a child 🌀*

- For intellectual development, all the games that have discovering, inventive, logical and mathematical character, etc., are positive.
- In the first year, activities of searching for hidden objects are useful.
- In the second year, symbolic games are particularly important.
- In the third year, speech develops intensively and therefore we have to be patient for the children's questions.
- We should take care that the stimulation of development is not brought down to playing video games. Half an hour a day is enough.

### *🌀 Activities for the development of emotional maturity 🌀*

- Do not spoil the children and do all things for them, it can adversely affect their confidence.
- Children should not be overprotected. Such children would then lack the courage, independence and confidence. They will experience their environment as dangerous.
- Do not react in front of children stressfully and in panic because they will begin to react in that way.
- Respect the opinions of children, listen to them.
- Do not insult and humiliate children.

One should try to carry all these activities as spontaneous as possible, through the game and in the period when the child is interested. In fact, research from the University of Cambridge has shown that the free time of children is too filled with school and other planned obligations, and that very little time remains for the free play and interaction with their peers. Children live under strictly defined schedule, with the lack of free game, which could affect their creativity but also the "abnormalities in neurological development."

# BASIC PRINCIPLES OF UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

## *How to teach and bring up children* ←↵

The basic methods of upbringing are: stimulation, habituation, persuasion and prevention.

- The method of stimulation is a method of encouraging the child to act in order to start, persevere and complete a certain activity. It is used when the child shows success but also when the child does not persist in the initiated activity. This method involves understanding of children's needs, encouragement, praise, awards, etc.
- Habituation is based on the repetition and application of certain actions, in order to adopt certain skill or ability with as high level of independence of the child as possible. This is done by showing the action that is taught, gradual exercise, and joint performance of the action.
- Persuasion is used to help the child build the correct values, attitudes and feelings, and develop responsibility. This is achieved through the joint evaluation of activities, argumentative discussions and examples.
- The method of prevention is used in the event that the above mentioned methods are not effective. It includes: request, criticism, control, warning, command, and punishment.



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There are several main upbringing styles.

**The authoritarian style** of upbringing is characterized by a strict and demanding approach of the parents. Parents show a little love and patience, and they require from the child discipline, which is realized with threats and punishments. The consequences are that the child is timid, insecure, distrustful or aggressive.

**Democratic style** includes setting requirements and limits, but the child is also provided with love, warmth, understanding and acceptance. As a method of upbringing, agreement and two-way communication are often used. The consequences are such that the child is responsible, independent and self-reliant.



- 16 | **Indulgent style** is characterized by overprotective attitude of parents who want to indulge their child. Parents emit a lot of warmth and love, but do not make requirements. The consequences are seemingly willing and cheerful child but often irresponsible, spoiled and impulsive child.

Indifferent style of upbringing is characterized by the lack of interest of parents for the needs, issues, dreams and plans of the child. Such a child often changes the mood and can also be prone to some more extreme asocial behaviors.

From all this we see that the democratic style is the most appropriate. In order for the child to become independent and responsible person, it is necessary to provide him/her love, support, understanding, but also to set boundaries and to control his/her behavior.

### *Love and setting "boundaries" ←↔*

There are plenty of tips and rules for the upbringing of children but the supreme principle is to love the child and show it to him/her. Love, hugs and kisses are never redundant. At some point we will try hard teach our child to adopt a variety of other skills and rules of behavior. Some things will not go as planned, it will upset us, we will be angry with the children. It is important to remember that we must not, because of secondary things, disturb the supreme principle, and that is the love between children and parents! Love gives the child self-assurance, confidence, positive self-image. How to convey your love to the children. Here are some tips:

- Make sure that the whole family is together as much as possible during each day - make meals together and eat together, walk, talk, go together to your friends. Gathering of the family is very important, especially if it is accompanied by pleasant joint activities. This gives the child the necessary stability.
- Tell your child every day that you love him/her, hug and kiss him/her, there is no reason to hide it!
- Help children to develop a sense of self-esteem by providing constant support and encouragement. Help them to discover their strength through love, comfort and the time you devote to them.
- Spend time together doing activities in which children enjoy
- If your child is upset or in a bad mood, talk to him/her about his/her feelings.
- Help them develop skills and abilities they choose (e.g. sports, music, etc.).





However, in order not to make spoiled prince or princess of your child, who thinks that the whole world has to revolve around him/her, it is very important that your love for children is accompanied by setting up certain "boundaries". What does that mean? Here are some tips.

- Consistently point out to your child which behaviors are acceptable, and which are not.
- Do not fulfill all the children's wishes, especially if they are unreasonable.
- The fulfillment of all children's wishes will "backfire" to both children and parents. To parents in a way that their children will eventually begin to drive them crazy with unrealistic demands, and to children in a way that it will be more difficult for them to fit into the world of peers.
- Do not let setting boundaries turn into the "dressage" of children and programming of their behavior in every situation.
- The best upbringing is the one followed by love and moderate setting boundaries. Such children become confident, responsible, mature and independent.

# RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

## *Basic rules of good communication with children* ←←

Good communication usually stems from the closeness of adults and children, and the acceptance of children. Through communication make an effort to let your child know that he/she is accepted, through words and deeds.

There are various styles of communicating with children, such as ordering, advising, blackmailing, criticizing, praising, ridiculing, reassuring, checking etc. Each of these styles has its negative side even when it seems that a certain style is unconditionally positive. In fact, every communication becomes negative if it suffocates or condemns children's opinion. All in all, one should try to avoid frequent criticism, judgment, ordering, provoking, ridiculing, exaggerated advising, questioning, interrupting, etc. So, what is the best form of communication???

The most constructive communication is the one that encourages children to say more. Avoid criticism and encourage a child to share his/her feelings, ideas, and attitudes. The way this is done may be non-verbal (e.g. nodding), and through the various encouraging words or phrases (e.g. "What else is there? Tell me something about it? How did you feel? Tell me the whole story? Etc.).

In situations that are in some way conflicting it is recommended to use the model of non-violent communication known as the so-called "I messages". The model "I messages" teaches us how to talk from the perspective of our own and others' needs instead of automatic reactions, which are often full of accusations and orders. There are four components of the model "I messages":



1. Observation and description of the situation as it is, without generalization, accusation...
2. Expressing feelings, how we feel when we notice the previous action.
3. Expressing needs associated with feelings that we have.
4. Communicate request without ordering, accusing, blackmailing, raising voice...

An example of a statement that includes all four components of "I messages": "Marko, when I see two balls of dirty socks under the coffee table and another three next to the TV, it annoys me because I have a need for greater order in rooms that we all share. Would you mind carrying the socks in your room or in the washing machine?" This is not so complicated, but it is important to apply it in practice!

A photograph of a man with short brown hair, wearing a grey and white striped sweater with a green stripe, holding a young child with red hair. The man is kissing the child on the cheek. The child is wearing a blue and green plaid shirt and dark blue pants. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a bright light source, possibly the sun, creating a warm, golden glow.

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It is a very complicated issue how much children should be guided and disciplined, and how much they should be allowed to freely develop, learn and behave. In earlier times, the emphasis was on discipline, while in more recent times the emphasis is on the benefits of a more flexible upbringing. Researches of developmental psychologists that emphasize the importance of warm relations of parents, which will not be filled with strict rules and penalties, for the unhindered development of a child support the idea of a greater freedom. Also, it is questionable to what extent norms and rules that parents want to "put in the heads" of children are at all right. There are very few principles and truths that are absolutely accurate and long-term unchangeable. The third argument against great discipline and rules is that in this way certain affinities, freedom of thought, creativity, talents and authenticity of a child are suffocated. On the

other hand, it is clear that children need certain rules and boundaries. They protect them not to do something life-threatening in the childhood, they bring them a certain order and structure that are usually necessary for the internal stability. With these and many other "for and against" arguments, it is clear that we are on a pretty slippery ground and it is not easy to give some clear advice on this topic. What is a constant and what should be emphasized, is that the love and affection of parents towards their children need to be the supreme principle, and that all other rules are subordinated to them. When disciplining the child it is important not to go to the extreme so that the consequence of this process is not psychologically broken and suffocated personality of the child. Therefore, certain rules and disciplines should exist, but by no means an absolutely obedient child – robot!



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## How to establish certain rules and discipline? ←

First of all, the rules should be set up in several spheres of life.

- **Child safety** (e.g. do not jump from a height, do not touch sources of electricity, do not play with the glass, etc.)
- **Health** (respect eating and sleeping schedule).
- **Hygiene habits** (regular hand washing, teeth brushing, self-dressing, etc.)
- **Learning basic manners** (e.g. greeting people, not interrupting others, thanking for a favor, not swearing, not throwing garbage away, etc.).

It should be noted again that when it comes to the majority of these rules (except for those which protect lives) one does not have to be exclusive. Do not panic if during lunch a child cannot eat food that was prepared for that day but wants something different. By insisting strictly on our rules we will probably only make things worse. So, we should be sufficiently sensitive and feel when we need to be flexible with the rules. Here are some specific tips to keep in mind when disciplining the child.

- Each rule should be clarified to the child through a pleasant communication.
- Rules should be adjusted to the child, so that he/she can understand them.
- The child should be explained the positive sides of a certain rule.
- Avoid messages with ready-made solution, it will be better if the child comes to the conclusion him/herself.
- Adults need to adhere to the rules that they transfer to the children.
- Each discipline and rule should be based on their meaning and value, and not the parents' power.
- Respecting for rules and discipline should be conducted consistently and regularly except perhaps in some specific situations when the child may be sick, tired or sleepy.
- Forget about physical punishment.
- Stick to your words and do what you say.

## 22 | *How and when to praise and criticize a child* ←←

From an early age a child should be taught that everything that is done in life has its consequence that can be positive, negative or both. If we are the "source" of the consequences, we should take into account a few things.

- Any praise or criticism should be substantiated and justified.
- If we praise or criticize too much, our interventions will lose their "power" and they will not cause any effect in children. We should take care not to become too boring with advice.
- Praise and reward have more long-term effect than punishment or criticism.
- Both praise and criticism should be as precise as possible, therefore they should be focused on specific behavior. Avoid sentences like: "You are the worst/ best", "You have no idea", "You will never make it", and so on.
- Each reward and punishment need to be important to the child in order to have the effect.
- Some of desirable rewards could be: preparing treats that a child likes; small gifts (cards, poster, pen, etc.); going to a place your child likes (e.g. playground, park); special privileges (e.g. playing video games), etc.
- Do not forget the power of hugs and kisses!

## *How to deal with "difficult" behaviors of children* ←←

Parenting is not just a "resting on laurels", sometimes it is also "walking on thorns". Every parent is sooner or later faced with some forms of "difficult" behavior of children that are not so easily transformed. There is always a reason for the bad behavior of children, and when we realize the reasons for such behavior it will help us to deal with situations in which children behave inappropriately. These are some of the most common reasons:

- Lack of attention. Children who feel that they do not get enough attention, try to draw attention very often through some forms of antisocial behavior.
- The need for control. We all have a basic need to feel power and control in our lives. Children will sometimes say "no" in order to gain control, or will do the opposite of what we told them, again for the same reason.
- Unclear boundaries. If children do not know what is (un)allowed, many will test the boundaries by doing some activities that are unacceptable for adults.
- Poor family relations. Children are very sensitive to everything that happens around them. If the parents often quarrel and argue in front of children, the children will become tense and they may express this feeling in a variety of maladjusted ways.
- Physical discomfort. Children can behave in an antisocial way if they are exposed to hunger, physical effort, crowd, noise, etc.

These are some of the causes that can produce a variety of "difficult", antisocial and unacceptable behaviors of children like pronounced stubbornness, hyperactivity, rage and anger, uncontrolled crying or fear, swearing, aggression and violence, theft, nail biting, and technological dependence. In each situation one should carefully consider what has led to this behavior of the child. In addition to that, here are some tips on how to react in such situations.

### *Severe stubbornness and intrusiveness*

These children are characterized by pronounced disobedience, the desire to dominate in every situation and to have it their way. Although they appear dominant, they often lack self-confidence. Since they are accustomed to get everything they want, they experience every little lack of something very emotionally and as a great loss or defeat. Tips for dealing with such children are:

- Provide family atmosphere where everyone naturally and openly express their weaknesses,
- Monitor the child's behavior and to his/her every normal request respond with courtesy and a certain prize.
- Do not compete with your child and do not get into his/her game of commanding;
- Do not demonstrate the commanding attitude in front of a child.

Hyperactivity occurs more and more in children. It is associated with metabolic disorders, and attention deficit syndrome. It is characterized by an inability to concentrate, impatience, constant movement and restlessness, occasional attacks of rage during a failure, short interest in toys, etc. Tips for dealing with hyperactivity are:

- Give children often small and understandable tasks;
- Have a workplan for each day and a clear structure of what is done and when;
- Play games that require concentration, such as building blocks;
- Do not offer your child a lot of toys at the same time. Remove them from the worktable;
- Read stories to the child because it calms him/her down, especially at bedtime;
- Consume energy through physical activity and sports;
- Show closeness to the child whenever possible;

### *Rage and anger*

- Remain calm, beating and shouting will not help;
- Talk to your child, ask him/her to explain what made him/her so angry. Show that you care about his/her feelings. If he/she does not want to talk, do not insist, try again later when he/she calms down.
- If your child hits you, take him/her firmly (but not too strong) by the hand and say, "You must not hit me!"
- Take your child to a safe place where he/she cannot hurt him/herself, the best is to take him/her home;
- Permissiveness will only lead to new outbursts of rage, and that is certainly not desirable;
- Not paying special attention can be a successful tool in these situations, especially with older children;
- With younger children, promise that you will comply with the request but only if they ask nicely;
- Consistently stand behind your decisions;
- Teach your child how to express his/her rage in a nondestructive way (e.g. to draw on paper with the red felt-tip pen, to run etc.)

- Set a good example, do not express your rage in front of children because in that way they learn to react in rage.

### *Violent behavior of children*

Violent behavior of children can be encouraged by many factors such as physical punishment by parents, indifference and lack of love, too much freedom without limits, alcoholism in the family, excessive exposure to violent content in the media, peer influence, etc. Tips in case of frequent violence of children are as follows:

- Allow the child to take out aggression through some physical activity, sports, etc;
- Avoid violent content in the media;
- Reduce aggression in the family;
- Talk often with the child and explain to him/her (you can also do this through the so-called role play) how a problem can be solved without aggression and how to react in a non-violent way. Encourage him/her to put him/herself in the role of a child/person who was a victim of his/her violent behavior.
- Always develop a close relationship with your child.

### *Theft*

When children steal, they usually steal toys or candies, usually from other children in the kindergarten, playroom or other places where children gather. They usually do this because they do not have the things they like. If they are younger, they often do not see this as a bad thing. If the theft occurs frequently, it can be a symptom of the sense of rejection thus drawing attention to themselves. In that case, punishments would be completely wrong method for solving this problem. The best prevention is the upbringing filled with love, trust and honest relationship. Some other tips are:

- When a theft occurs for the first time do not react in an extreme and violent way;
- Allow the child to meet his/her needs in a regular way;
- Talk with your child about the feelings of others, the injured party;
- What is stolen, should be returned;

## 26 | *Nail biting*

Nail biting is a habit that is mainly caused by certain stress or tension. Adults often cannot recognize the situation that can cause stress and feelings of anxiety in a child, and therefore it is very difficult to identify the causes of nail biting. Try to identify the time, places and activities usually associated with nail biting.

- It is wrong to criticize and punish a child for nail biting.
- Talk with your child about this habit and try to identify the causes of tension. Explain how this is also bad for health because various bacteria hide underneath nailtips.
- Try to go step by step. Make an agreement with your child about small rewards that you will give him/her if he/she does not bite nails one day, two days, three days... and so on.
- Offer the alternative. Try with chewing gum, candies or something similar that can give a child the necessary oral stimulation when he/she feels the tension.

## *Swearing*

- For children younger than six, simple and short approach is the best: "Don't you ever swear!" Older children, who are able to understand more complex explanations, it is necessary to explain why swearing is wrong.
- Ask your child if he/she understands what those words mean. If the answer is "no", explain that this word is offensive, that it affects others, and that it is not acceptable.
- Talk to your child and find new, non-offensive words that he/she can tell when feeling upset or angry.
- If none of the above does not help, define the consequences for every subsequent swearing.
- Correct yourself and others, it will affect the children to stop swearing sooner.



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### *Uncontrolled whining and crying*

Here we are talking about crying and whining that is not the result of a real pain or problem, but more a child's whim. It is important to correctly distinguish justified cry from false whining. You need to be aware of the fact that every child sometimes whines, cries, and yells. The child will whine even more if parents give in to the child's demands. It is important that parents show determination but without rage, preaching or nervousness.

- At the first sign of whining immediately say, "Stop, I will not listen to such voices." The moment the whining stops, react positively to the normal tone of a child and in that way you will encourage the cessation of children's whims.
- Show your child a nice way to ask for something.
- Tell your child that he/she will never get what he/she wants if he/she similarly whines or cries for no reason.
- If the child still continues to cry there must be accurately determined consequences of this behavior. The same goes for swearing, hitting, spitting, replying, etc. It is best for the consequence to follow immediately after the unacceptable behavior because then it has the greatest effect.

Children often have different fears, such as fear of the dark, other children, unknown space, noise, animals, failure, etc. Fear can be developed through a harmless game in which the children scare each other by different things and phenomena.

- Talk with your child about the thing that has upset him/her, when the fear began, what the child thinks is the worst thing that might happen. Point out that the sources of fear are in fact harmless natural phenomena, such as darkness, insects, etc.
- Do not use the method of "throwing into the fire", which could create even worse effect, i.e. panic fear or phobia.
- Draw together the thing that the child is afraid of. If those are insects, draw together a bug that the child is very afraid of and do not forget to congratulate your child when he/she finishes the drawing. Then touch it together, so that the child realizes that nothing has happened. Little by little, and in a few days the child will be ready to touch a real bug.
- Read together about the thing the child is afraid of. If these are insects, read about them. Be patient if there is no immediate positive shift.

### *🌀 Dependence of children on the technology and media 🌀*

On average, children spend 35-40 hours a week in front of the television, computer, telephone/tablet, which isolates them in a specific way from their families and they are also exposed to the contents of pornography, violence and senseless reality TV shows. TV and video games are bad parents and nannies, so it is necessary to reduce their consumption.

- Make sure to know what your child is watching, reading or listening.
- Set rules for using these types of media (time, place, content...).
- Try to explain to your child which media contents are harmful and why.
- Encourage your child to enjoy the "healthier" forms of entertainment such as walking, drawing, playing with building blocks, etc.
- By your example, show your child that he/she needs to be less attached to the contents of the media.

# WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN?

There are some moral and human values and qualities that are positive for all people and are valid for life. By that we mean:

- honesty and integrity;
- altruism (helping others);
- diligence and responsibility;
- showing and understanding emotions;
- selflessness;
- independence;
- patience;
- perseverance;
- pride;
- kindness;
- openness to change;
- setting and achieving goals, etc.

In addition to these universal values there are many lessons that we can teach our children. Below are a number of lessons that can be useful reading material during free time or before bedtime. You can read these messages together with children and talk about their meaning.

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## *Tips to fathers for everyday situations* ←↔

- *Spend enough time with your child, especially when he/she is very young.*
- *Over time, allow the child to be more independent and responsible.*
- *Teach the child to return the thing he/she borrows!*
- *Help the child to understand that sometimes it is normal to be weaker or less successful than others.*
- *Television is the worst parent and a nanny in the world!*
- *Teach the child not to harm other people.*
- *Teach the child to share things with other children.*
- *Teach the child to look after his/her belongings.*



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- *Prepare the child that there are bad people in the world.*
- *Teach the child to respect the authority but not to be a slave or servant.*
- *Help him/her with homework.*
- *Teach the child to try new things.*
- *Eat together whenever possible.*
- *Go together to sport events.*
- *Teach the child to handle money wisely.*
- *Do not gossip about mother together with the child.*
- *Teach the child to be tolerant to different people.*
- *Make your child laugh, the laughter is multiple healthy and beneficial.*
- *Hug and kiss the child whenever you can!*
- *Let the child crawl, he/she will learn to walk sooner!*
- *Research shows that children think that fathers are better in telling bedtime stories – show and prove it!*
- *Excess weight is not healthy, do not go exaggerate with feeding!*
- *Do not get drunk in front of the child, he/she will think that it is the way it should be!*
- *Allow your son to cry.*
- *Do not transfer your unfulfilled dreams to your child!*
- *Do not plan your child's free time to the smallest detail. Allow the child to do what he/she likes and wants.*
- *Answer honestly to your child's questions, and if you do not know the answer tell him/her that you will ask around and answer later.*

- *Active parents – active children; lazy parents – lazy children.*
- *If a parent protects the child against all challenges during his/her childhood, the child will face these challenges in the adulthood!*
- *Free play best encourages child's development!*
- *Plant a tree or a plant with your child.*
- *Teach your child to love and respect animals.*
- *Take a walk with your child in the dark, suggest him/her to walk a part of the road a few steps ahead of you.*
- *Help your child to enjoy the beauty of the early morning sun or the moonlight.*
- *Encourage your child to learn to sometimes enjoy the silence.*
- *Ask the child before bedtime what was his/her day like, what he/she did during the day, what was nice to him/her and what wasn't. This will help him/her to get to know him/herself and to grow spiritually.*
- *Suggest your child to write a diary.*
- *Swim together, it is useful for the development of the child.*
- *Allow your child to engage in some sports.*
- *Encourage your child to try new food, including the food that is eaten more in some other countries.*
- *Teach your child to help others, but also not to brag about it loudly.*
- *Teaches your child to give help to the poor or sick – call together a humanitarian number.*



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- *Buy your child a piggy bank and encourage him/her to collect and save the money.*
- *Help your child to understand how much basic food costs.*
- *Give your child sometimes the money to pay groceries in the store him/herself.*
- *Allow your child to choose fresh fruits and vegetables in the grocery store or market.*
- *When the time comes, try to explain your child what is love, sex and what is the purpose of genital organs. Do not make this a "taboo" subject, approaches it as any other need that a person has.*
- *Set a time when your child will go to sleep.*
- *Teach your child when and how to call police or ambulance.*
- *Teach your child never to start or participate in a fight.*



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- *Teach your child not to harass other children psychologically and physically.*
- *Teach your child to try to protect other child being bullied or beaten if he/she can do that.*
- *Respect your child's drawings, hang some of them in the house or in the office – he/she will appreciate it!*
- *An unhappy child is often tired or hungry. Pay attention...*
- *Teach five-year-old about the harmfulness of alcohol and drugs.*

- *Eat together in the family, whenever possible.*
- *Let your children cook with you, it is useful and fun skill that they will surely need.*
- *Show your child how to tidy up and fold his/her clothes.*
- *Teach your child to tidy up his/her toys always after playing with them.*
- *Teach your child how to call you on the phone, and then answer his/her calls. Forever.*
- *As your child grows, give him/her greater responsibilities.*
- *Reward your child whenever it makes sense.*
- *Do not tolerate your child's outbursts of anger, other people around him/her will also not tolerate it in the future! Teach him/her how to express his/her discontent in a constructive way.*
- *Yell at your child and you will get a yell!*
- *Teach your child not to give up on the goal at the first obstacle.*
- *Do not interfere in your child's fights, leave it to him/her unless it is a serious abuse.*
- *Encourage your child to play outdoors whenever possible.*
- *You should learn that you cannot teach him/her everything that you have planned.*
- *Explain him/her that there are people of different skin colors and that all people are equal.*
- *Even if you can, do not buy your child everything he/she wants.*
- *Violence of an adult against a child affects that the child can easily become violent too!*
- *Teach your child how to find the way home.*

- *Teach your child not to be afraid to try new things.*
- *If the sport that your child practices is more important to you than to him/her, something is wrong there!*
- *Prepare your child that defeats are an integral part of life.*
- *Teach your child to behave with dignity both when winning and losing something!*
- *If you are a family of believers, pray together with your child!*
- *When your child is asking for something, sometimes give it to him/her after a while. It is important to learn to be patient.*
- *Never criticize the child's mother before him/her!*
- *Teach the child to set goals and to plan steps to achieve those goals. For example, learning how to ride a bike can be one of those goals that is learned in stages.*
- *Teaches the child to estimate him/herself when to put on the clean clothes, and when to put the dirty clothes in the laundry basket.*
- *Talk to your child about his/her and your own dreams.*
- *Encourage your child to read books. This may direct the child in positive direction.*
- *Repeat often to your child that you love him/her. This provides him/her feeling of safety and confidence.*
- *Let the child spend time with the broader family.*
- *Teach the child how to constructively express his/her rage or aggression.*
- *Teach the child that people are different and that they do not have to think and behave like he/she does.*
- *Do not criticize your child in front of his/her friends.*



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- *Teach your child not to be late by your own example.*
- *Never drive a small child in the front seat.*
- *Babies and young children must be safely seated and fastened in the child car seat during the drive.*
- *Tell your child how important it is to go to school and be a good student.*
- *Encourage your child not to consume alcohol and drugs, although this may be happening around him/her. That does not mean that he/she is weak, but that he/she is brave and has his/her own character.*
- *Advise your child not to socialize with peers who drink or take drugs.*
- *Teach him/her the most important life values, and those are definitely not toys, clothes, cars or other things!*
- *Teach your boy that it is normal for men to work in the kitchen, clean the house or take care of children.*
- *Encourage your child to participate in school charity or voluntary actions. In that way he/she learns what it means to be an active citizen.*

- *Teaches the child that every act has its consequences.*
- *Allow the child to feel the consequences of his/her behavior, positive or negative. The consequences are the best teachers.*
- *Teach your child to be patient, polite and tolerant. If you do not teach him/her now, you will regret it later.*
- *Encourage your child to defend his/her rights and beliefs even if others think differently.*
- *If the child made a mistake, do not justify and defend him/her. It will help him/her to be more responsible, but also to cope with the pressure.*
- *Teach your child that the trust is like a rope. When it breaks, it can be tied but the knot still remains.*
- *Do not promise your child something that you cannot fulfill.*
- *Do not threaten your child with something that you will not do.*
- *Understand that you cannot be everything to your child!*
- *Teach your child to finish the work he/she has started.*
- *Teach your child to apologize when he/she does something wrong.*
- *If you go on a trip, call your child on the phone, he/she misses you!*
- *Teaches him/her that it is not a problem if he/she fails to do something, but if he/she stops trying!*
- *Teach your child how to use simple household tools, hammer, pliers, nails, etc.*
- *Teaches your child that dreams can come true with great faith, dedicated work and sacrifice!*
- *When the child grows up, allow him/her to go away, both physically and mentally!*



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# THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES OF YOUNG FATHERS

## ❧ *Passive role of father* ❧

Even today there are fathers who believe, in accordance with some traditional norms, that mothers should raise their children and fathers should provide for their existence and when they return home they watch TV or read newspapers. This is probably one of the big-

gest nonsense ever due to which everybody suffers, fathers, children and mothers. So, do not be a slave of these stereotypes. Both parents should equally bring up children, take your feet off the footstool and get involved!



## 40 | *Lack of contact and conversation in the family*

An increasingly common problems of modern society are haste and race for the acquisition of material goods. One of the consequences is that the family members all less together. Studies have shown that smaller amount of time the family spend together directly correlates with higher levels of antisocial behavior in children. Therefore, children need contact and possibly of better quality and more fulfilling. No money can compensate that!

## *Misunderstanding and criticizing the child*

It is often difficult for many parents to understand one simple thing, that the child is – a child! Parents often expect that a five-year-old never spills, falls, ask pointless question, etc. When this happens they react nervously, with criticizing, accusing and insulting the children. To avoid this it is necessary that the parent is first of all aware of his/her unrealistic expectations. In order to convey this in practice, it is necessary that the parent works on him/herself, to occasionally look at him/herself, and to analyze his/her attitudes and behavior. It is best if this self-analysis is done systematically, e.g. two times a day, in this way you will keep yourself "on a short leash".

## *Excessive parental control*

This mistake is usually done by parents with their first or only child. They try to ensure that nothing harmful happens to the child. They overprotect the child, they do many things that the child should do him/herself, and they raise the child "under a glass bell." The result is that the child becomes insecure, dependent, conceited and immature. The intention of the parents was positive, but sometimes children have to learn from their own mistakes.

## *Lack of consequences*

This mistake is most often done by parents who have more children, or who get their first child later in life. Sometimes they are just too tired to carry punishment into effect when children "mess up". If this happens too often the children (child) will think that they can do whatever they want. In this way the child will not learn how to take responsibility



It is wrong to raise boys with messages that they have to be brave, dominant, not to show emotions, and so on. We think that by doing so we will protect them from unpleasant situations, and in fact we often prevent them from developing emotional intelligence. Boys should not only be taught to protect the family, but also to nurture the family from inside, through communication, closeness and sharing emotions. Also, it is a mistake to exclusively emphasize that girls need to be gentle, beautiful, reserved, and at the same time not emphasize that they need to be smart, brave, etc. They should learn that they are no less valuable than men. Gender stereotyped messages can become a great burden during the life. Namely, the children who adopt and internalize these messages try to live them through during their lives which often complicates interpersonal relationships, especially with a partner. Boys and young men who are expected to be "alpha" males are especially at risk. In case that they do not achieve these expectations, which is very possible, such men become insecure and disappointed in themselves.



Parents who have been impatiently waiting for the birth of their child often forget about everything that is happening outside of the relationship with the child. They are fully dedicated to the child, neglecting other spheres of life. This may result in the poorer quality of the relationship with a partner and friends. Also, a complete focus on the child can lead over time to the "suffocation of the child" because the child is oversaturated with the relationship with his/her parents. So, love your child but do not forget your partner and friends! Or even better, love your child and partner but also do not forget about yourself! Do not let that the whole world around you dies with the birth of your child! Find the balance!



# FINAL THOUGHTS

Parenting is one of the most important role one can have in lifetime. It is especially intensive and important in the period when the children are young. We should make the most of this period. We should not let our children grow up without us noticing that because of some other

obligations. One day we will find ourselves regretting this. There are many tips on how to be a good parent, but if something needs to be emphasized it is that dedicated parenting requires time. Being active and engaged from early childhood has important impact on the development of your child. . However, if we are parents" in a hurry, passing by" there will be one mistake happening after the other. We should find a balance between professional and family life. No money can compensate for missed growing up of your children! It is very important that we spend quality time together with our children and that during this period we are relaxed, patient, and positive. They need us.



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## Internet source:



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