

According To Harvard Psychologists: Parents Who Raise “Good” Kids Do These 5 Things

By **Simon Segal** - Feb 11, 2017



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Times have changed greatly and with new times come new habits, sets of behavior and attitudes that seem very different from the ones we were used to when we were kids.

Today’s generations are all geared up with the newest technology that seems to distract them from the need to go out and play, socialize in the ways we used to or just spend time having fun.

All these changes have brought a great challenge to parents who, if you ask a kid, weren't fortunate enough to have the benefits of today's modern technology.

The challenges vary in many ways, but the main thing is that today's parents raise their children way more differently than they were raised and the outcome of those parents' care is the greatest challenge.

Will my kid learn to be a complete person, the one who pushes forward and a person with good manners, who can bond and communicate with others freely and openly?

Every parent asks the same questions: Am I missing something? Am I doing everything right? Will my child succeed in life?

Psychologists at Harvard University have thought of the same questions and have found that there are several elements that are still very important and basic for every kid's childhood. The key to upbringing a well-adjusted child in these changing times is not as complicated as you may think.

THESE ARE THE 5 SECRETS TO RAISING A GOOD KID, ACCORDING TO HARVARD PSYCHOLOGISTS

1. SPENDING QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN

It's not enough just to be physically around your kid – you need to be with them completely. This means that no Xbox console or new iPhone can replace the bonding that the child truly needs. By communicating with them openly, listening carefully and doing the things they like together, your child will not only love you more, but will also learn how to be a considerate and caring person, and remember their childhood a positive experience.

This is the foundation of it all. Your kid would very much prefer (above everything else) having a real person to talk to and to share ideas and experiences with, even if they may not seem aware of it.

Ask them how their day was, listen carefully and discuss the dilemmas they may have in their head – be careful not to 'dogmatize' lessons from your experiences though, they need to experience these things through their own perspective. We'll talk about this later in this article.

See what their favorite things are and try to learn from them how to play the games they like – they would enjoy sharing their 'fun' with you!

Read them a book before bed (or do it together during the day if they are in the mood for it). Just be around them completely and acknowledge their emotions.

Practically speaking:

- Devote some time of your day to play their favorite games with them;
- Read them a bedtime story and enjoy the whole story with them;
- Ask them questions about their day, include questions like:
 - What was the best part of your day? The hardest part?*
 - What's something nice someone did for you today? What's something nice you did?*
 - What's something you learned today – in school or outside school?*

2. LET YOUR KIDS SEE A STRONG MORAL ROLE MODEL AND MENTOR IN YOU

Children learn the most from their surroundings especially at younger age. What you do is what they will become. This is why you should always pay close attention to your manners and actions and be ready to admit faults and mistakes. Show your child that you care and that you are ready to accept your faults and work on them.

The result you wish to see in your child comes from the effort you put into yourself on this one. Practice fairness, honesty and care for yourself. This picture will teach your kid to do the same habits. The key to all this is to talk these things through with your child.

Acknowledging your mistakes, especially those that involve your kid in them, and speak openly about these things.

The aim is to show your child good manners, humility, and honesty. With that they will feel a lot more comforted and encouraged to look to a positive outcome in their problems.

Your child will look up to you only if you earn their trust and respect. Achieving this is showing your child that you are as human as you can be, and that comes with faults too.

Practically speaking:

- Admit your mistakes, apologize and show that you wish to make up for them and plan to avoid it next time.
- Tell your child how you plan to avoid that mistake and what you learned from it.
- Make time for yourself and re-energize yourself during that time. You will need that energy to be more attentive to and caring with others.

3. **TEACH YOUR CHILD TO CARE FOR OTHERS AND SET HIGH ETHICAL EXPECTATIONS**

Your child needs to socialize and bond with others in the right way. Caring for others' happiness and avoiding selfishness can bring a lot of benefit to your child's future.

As the findings from Harvard say, "It's very important that children hear from their parents and caretakers that caring about others is a top priority and that it is just as important as their own happiness.

Even though most parents and caretakers say that their children being caring is a top priority, often children aren't hearing that message."

This comes with holding your children to high ethical expectations. Be ready to honor their commitments. Teach them to do the right thing even when it's hard and be a role model for this. It's simple: you need to justify whatever you say to them with your actions.

Responsibilities and obligations are something you always need to remind your child of. They come in every shape even from early age: chores, school responsibilities, manners, friends, and promises.

Be sure to remind them that they are not alone and that others have expectations from them that they need to be ready to fulfill, because they can.

Practically speaking:

- Change the message you send them on a daily basis from “The most important thing is that you are happy” to “The most important thing is that *you’re kind* and you’re happy.”
- Encourage your kid to ‘work it out’ before deciding whether they should quit a sports team, band or a friendship. Ask them to consider the consequences their action may have on the others and encourage them to work the problem out before abandoning it.

4. ENCOURAGE KIDS TO PRACTICE APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

A child that’s not spoiled is a child that acknowledges the roles of others in their life in a healthy way. This acknowledgment comes with appreciation for the people who contribute to their lives.

Gratitude is a two way road with wonderful effects. People who practice gratitude on a regular basis are more likely to be helpful, generous, compassionate and forgiving. They are also more likely to be happy and healthy.

Let their habit start from learning from your actions. Be ready to show gratitude for something nice they do for you – but be careful!

Showing a lot of gratitude for things they are supposed to do will spoil them! As the Harvard psychologists say, “real responsibilities.”

“Expect children to routinely help, for example, with household chores and siblings, and only praise uncommon acts of kindness. When these kinds of routine actions are simply expected and not rewarded, they’re more likely to become ingrained in every day actions.”

Practically speaking:

- **Encourage your child** to be grateful on a regular basis. Be ready to receive gratitude for your extraordinary acts of kindness and generosity towards them.
- **Encourage** to express appreciation towards family members, teachers, or others who contribute to their lives.
- Be grateful.

5. TEACH THEM TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE

A common fact is that children empathize with and care about a small circle of families and friends. This is a very normal thing, of course, but the real challenge is to teach kids to start thinking about people outside that circle.

This larger circle could include a new kid in class, other people who work in his/her school, a person who doesn't speak your language or anyone who lives in a distant country. Children need to know how their thoughts and actions can impact a community.

As the study shows, "It is important that children learn to zoom in, listening closely and attending to those in their immediate circle, and to zoom out, taking in the big picture and considering the range of people they interact with every day."

Practically speaking:

- **Encourage your child** to consider the perspectives and feelings of others, especially those who may be vulnerable. Give them simple ideas for taking action, such as comforting a kid who was teased or reaching out to the new kid in class.
- **Discuss** engaging topics about some people's hardships, like different experiences of children in other countries or communities.

Childhood is the period of life when most of our personality is shaped. That's why you should start paying attention to their development, the best way you possibly can – by helping them understand the main things that make them complete persons.

SHARING IS CARING!

Source:

Making Caring Common Project – Harvard University

<http://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/parenting-resources-raising-caring-ethical-children/raising-caring-children>

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