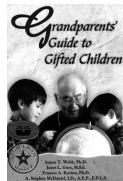


Parenting Successful Children:

Relationships and Discipline



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Success Is More than just Financial Success

Parenting, these days, is just more difficult because of:

- Fractured families
- Lack of extended family and neighborhood support
- Increased mobility and lack of community
- Faster pace that is seemingly more urgent
- Information explosion handicaps relationships
- Disturbing role models
- "Unthinkable" acts are no longer unthinkable
- Peers and society are stronger influences than parents

The current social and educational climate is not always helpful

- Schools often focus on basic minimal levels of competence.
- Much ignorance, misinformation, and bias still exists about talented, able learners.
- Parents of bright children are often criticized as exaggerating or being pushy.
- Parents of gifted children have few resources for information.
- Though research indicates that parents are extremely important, they seldom are included by schools.

Key Tasks for Parenting Successful Children

- Develop the relationship and belongingness within the family.
- Nurture resilience and the development of values.
- Accept and appreciate the child's uniqueness.
- Help the child to like himself.
- Teach the child self-motivation, self-management, and self-discipline.

Strategies for Relationships and Discipline

- Be aware of what you model
 - We too often model poor self-discipline and relationship skills
 - We often model yelling, lack of acceptance of others, poor problem-solving
 - We say things to our children we would not say to another adult ("killer statements")
 - We openly compare our kids with others
 - Avoid referential speaking; sarcasm; ridicule; gossip

Strategies for Relationships and Discipline

- Value the relationship; avoid barriers to communication
 - Barriers say, "This computer or TV show is more important to me than you" and "I'm not available"
 - Use special time; special place; special events (quiet vs. noise)
 - ❖ Trips
 - ❖ Treehouse times, walks, bike rides
 - ❖ Fishing or camping
 - ❖ Going out for breakfast

Strategies for Relationships and Discipline

- Set limits, but avoid power struggles
- Give choices wherever possible (Freedom within limits; the "V" of love)
- Avoid "shooing flies" or getting "sucked into" issues

Strategies for Parenting Successful Children

- Set the fewest limits needed, but enforce those that are set
 - Be realistic and consistent (difficult in blended families)
 - Check signals with your teammates (family huddle)
 - Try not to overreact ("doomsday limits")
 - Particularly avoid inconsistent punishment
- Use "natural consequences" wherever possible
 - It can be difficult to do, but...
 - Allows you to be sympathetic & supportive
 - "The school of experience is a hard one, but..."

Strategies for Relationships and Discipline

- "Take the sail out of the wind" (It's better than the alternative!)
- Remember that discipline is not the same as punishment
 - Punishment only tells you what not to do
 - Punishment harms the relationship
- Don't over-control and don't get over-involved
 - When do you push? How do you know when to step back?
 - Don't value the child only for achieving and producing results.

Strategies for Relationships and Discipline

- Expect competence and focus on success
 - Children live up, or down, to our expectations
 - Create success experiences, but be like a good sports coach
 - Use "I admire"
 - Catch them doing something right
 - Avoid the "7 A's, 1 B" phenomenon
 - Start with *their* areas of interest; then branch to yours
 - Use anticipatory praise

Strategies for Relationships and Discipline

- Model tradition-breaking and how one can resist peer pressures
- Model and reinforce communication, self-management, independence, and resilience

Overview

- Parents must separate their desires from those of their children; children must live their own lives.
- But *Cradles of Eminence* suggests that parents should be quite involved in their children's lives.

Lessons From People Who Became Eminent

From *Cradles of Eminence: Childhoods of More Than 700 Famous Men and Women* (Goertzel, Goertzel, Goertzel, & Hansen, 2003)



- Homes usually were full of books and stimulating conversation.



People Who Became Eminent

Findings from *Cradles of Eminence* (continued)



- Their families valued learning, and the children loved learning.
- As children, most of them disliked school and schoolteachers.

People Who Became Eminent

Findings from *Cradles of Eminence* (continued)



- These children learned to think and express themselves clearly.
- All had learned to be persistent in pursuing their own visions and goals.
- Many had difficult childhoods (which may have been a spark)
 - Poverty
 - Broken homes
 - Physical handicaps
 - Parental dissatisfaction
 - Controlling or rejecting parents

People Who Became Eminent

Findings from *Cradles of Eminence* (continued)



- Their parents held strong opinions about controversial subjects.
- Their parents, particularly mothers, were highly involved in the lives of their children, even dominating.
- The parents often were pressured by others to have their children conform to mediocrity.

Overview – (continued)

The goals for our children (see *A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children; Smart Girls; Smart Boys; and The Shelter of Each Other*) should be that they will have:

- The capacity to work and to love
- An ability to set their own priorities, goals, and directions
- A tolerance for frustration; tolerance of ambiguity; future mindedness
- Achieved a sense of values for humankind, including honesty and courage
- Resilience and the ability to relate to others in a give and take way
- Discovered their learning passions and have a commitment to explore them

Overview – (continued)

- Remember the importance of the parent-child relationship.
- Remember that there is a long time between when the seed is planted and when the tree bears fruit.
- Remember that parents must take care of themselves. When your battery is run down, you have nothing left to give.

Recommended Readings

- *Children: The Challenge* (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1991).
- *Cradles of Eminence: Childhoods of More Than 700 Famous Men and Women* (Goertzel, Goertzel, Goertzel, & Hansen, 2003).
- *How to Behave So Your Children Will, Too* (Severe, 2003).
- *How to Parent So Children Will Learn*. (Rimm, 2008).
- *Keys to Parenting a Gifted Child*, 3rd ed. (Rimm, 2007).
- *The Optimistic Child* (Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995).

Recommended Readings

- *A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children* (Webb, Gore, Amend, & DeVries, 2007).
- *The Resilience Factor* (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).
- *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families* (Pipher, 1995).
- *Siblings without Rivalry* (Fabert & Mazlish, 1998).
- *Smart Boys: Talent, Manhood, and the Search for Meaning* (Kerr & Cohn, 2001).
- *Smart Girls: A New Psychology of Girls, Women, and Giftedness*. (Kerr, 1997).
