

## RESPECT



Parents Use Your Power  
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Respect is an attribute that is important to all of us. Dictionary.com defines respect as “a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.” It’s a quality we would like to have shown to us by others. Respect is achieved “as a result of our abilities, qualities or achievements.” It’s not a result of who we are. We need to earn it.

When we show respect, we often receive respect in return. Most of us have a memory of a time we felt disrespected. Those memories are usually accompanied by a sense of sadness or hurt. In contrast, when we feel respected, they are able to recognize that we have value. This allows us to become more productive, contributing members of our families, work groups and communities. Teaching our children to give respect—and receive it—will help them to recognize their value and find success in all areas of their lives.

Music, movies, video games and television shows often lead us to believe that disrespect by adolescents is an ordinary and expected developmental stage that all children go through. That is simply not true! It is true that during adolescence our children begin to explore their independence and begin to “test” their limits. But it does not mean that they should be given the freedom to treat others badly or disrespectfully.

Children aren’t born with the ability to respect others. It is our job, as parents, to model and teach respect so that our children will thrive. Parents *who treat* their children with respect, will *earn* the respect of their children. That doesn’t mean giving in to their every whim. By respectfully creating safe boundaries and rules for our children, we are able to show them how much we value them.

Children watch their parents to learn how to conduct themselves. Our actions, along with our instruction, are the most effective way to teach our children to respect others. When they learn to respect others, they will receive respect from others and find more success. Use the following Parenting Power Tips to help you guide your children toward a more respectful future:

### Parenting Power Tips

- ⇒ **Respect your children.** It is sometimes necessary for parents to discipline or correct inappropriate behaviors in their children. Find ways to do this that show your child that you disapprove of the behaviors and not her as a person.
- ⇒ **Respect the other important adults in your child’s life.** When children witness the adults in their lives treating each other with respect, even when they disagree, the standard of respect is set.
- ⇒ **Be consistent.** Consistency offers stability and security for our children. This assurance builds trust.
- ⇒ **Follow through.** If you spell out consequences for certain behaviors and don’t follow through, your credibility, along with your child’s respect, is lost.
- ⇒ **Live with integrity.** They are learning from your actions. Are you displaying the qualities (personal work ethic, generosity, sharing your time and talents with others, speaking positively about others, seeking outside help and support if you need it) that you want your children to emulate?
- ⇒ **Make family time a priority.** Show your children that they are the most important part of your life. Be proactive about family time...and then be respectful of that time. Don’t allow phones, computers or other distractions to take your attention away from family time.
- ⇒ **Don’t be your child’s friend.** Your child needs you to love them enough to not be concerned with whether they “like” you. Love and accountability show your respect for your child’s future.
- ⇒ **Tell the truth....always.** Trust and respect go hand in hand. If your child senses you are not being truthful, they will lose trust and their respect for you is sure to follow.
- ⇒ **Don’t do for your children what they can do for themselves.** Respect them enough to allow them to do the things they can...even if it’s not exactly how you would do it. Show them that you trust them to complete their tasks (chores, homework, practice) and that you are available to help if they need you.
- ⇒ **Don’t talk down to your children.** Use age appropriate language as you converse with your adolescent child and expect the same from them. Their communication skills will flourish and your relationship will be strengthened.
- ⇒ **Clarify limits and talk about problems when things are calm.** When you face a situation in which your child may be showing disrespect to you or someone else, that may not be the best time to have the conversation. Wait until you both calm down and discuss why the behavior was disrespectful and then listen to what your child has to say.
- ⇒ **Seek help when you are facing difficulties beyond your ability.** Sometimes our children are struggling with issues that we cannot handle on our own. When this happens, seek professional help. Seeking positive solutions early will teach your child to ask for help when life becomes too difficult for them to handle on their own.

### FINAL THOUGHTS....

- ⇒ **Don’t take it personally!** It really isn’t about you. It’s about your child learning to navigate life, become independent and grow to be a contributing member of society. Your job is to deal with your child’s behavior as calmly and objectively as possible and guide them toward more acceptable behaviors.
- ⇒ **Switch roles with your child (for a few hours).** Use [this month’s PowerTalk](#), to switch roles with your child. It will give both of you an opportunity to see the world through the other’s eyes...even if it’s just for a few hours. Then take some time to talk about things you learned about life in the other person’s shoes.

### January Prevention Principle

Developmental research shows that having one or more caring adults in a child’s life increases the likelihood that they will flourish, and become productive adults themselves. In many cases, these caring adults are the child’s parents, but other relatives, neighbors, friends of parents, teachers, coaches, religious leaders, and others can play this role.