Five positive parenting techniques to help your child thrive
What’s inside

This booklet presents five parenting skills that are based on the philosophy of positive parenting. Researchers have found that using these skills makes a large impact on children’s development and well-being.

1. **Positive parenting**
   Part 1 describes positive parenting and highlights how it can make a difference for children now and over the long-term.

2. **PRIDE skills**
   Part 2 presents the five positive parenting skills: Praise, Reflection, Imitation, Description and Enjoyment (PRIDE skills). Here you’ll find an overview, examples, and the benefits of each skill.

3. **Putting it all together**
   Part 3 is about using PRIDE skills to achieve certain goals for your child. This includes promoting behaviors you’d like to see more of and lessening behaviors you don’t like.

4. **Playtime**
   Part 4 focuses on playtime and two ways to make playtime extra special.
Positive Parenting

What is positive parenting and why is it powerful?
Positive parenting is about showing children love, warmth and kindness.

It’s about guiding children to act the way you want by encouraging and teaching them.

It’s about helping children thrive by sending the powerful message: You are loved, you are good, you matter.
Research reveals the power of positive parenting

Positive parenting sets children up for success
Research shows that positive parenting helps children do better in school, have fewer behavioral problems, and stronger mental health.¹

Positive parenting helps the teenage brain
Neuroscientists discovered that positive parenting contributes to better functioning in the brain regions associated with emotions and cognition during the teen years.²

Positive parenting is linked to a happy and healthy adulthood
Harvard scientists found that positive parenting has long-term benefits, including better relationships, mental health, and well-being during adulthood.³
PRIDE Skills

Five ways to provide positive parenting
Parenting with PRIDE

The PRIDE skills are five positive parenting techniques that can easily be used in everyday life. The skills have been shown in studies to be a successful way to support children's development.

Tip
As with all parenting advice, experts recommend using the skills in a way that feels right for you and your family.
That was a cool strategy! Nice thinking!
PRAISE is a positive statement that expresses approval.

You made her so happy by sharing your Play-Doh. I’m proud of you.

1. Praise makes children feel good
   What we tell children becomes their inner voice and has the potential to build up or tear down. Praise builds children up by strengthening self-esteem and self-concept.

2. Praise teaches children
   Praise gives guidance about your standards of behavior. When a behavior is rewarded, children learn how you want them to behave. Each time you praise that behavior, your child will be reminded of your expectations.

3. Praise changes behavior
   When a behavior is praised, children will continue on with this behavior.
WAYS TO PRAISE

Thank you for listening to Mom that it's time to clean up.

I love seeing you help little sis with her homework.

You made that nice picture for Tio! I love it.

Thank you for listening to Mom that it's time to clean up.
Tip 1: Label your praise
Be specific with your praise to teach your child what she did correctly. For example, instead of saying, “Good job,” try adding an explanation such as, “Good job waiting patiently while I was on the phone.” Your child won’t have to guess what you like.

Tip 2: Praise the baby steps
Praise doesn’t have to be reserved for “big” behaviors. Praise for small accomplishments can motivate your child when working towards a larger goal. For example, if you want your child to get ready for bed independently, positive feedback for small steps such as brushing teeth and picking out pajamas can keep him encouraged.

Tip 3: Praise achievement and effort
Focus your praise on effort and hard work, rather than just the end product. For instance, after a soccer game, praise your child for winning the game and trying her hardest.

Tip 4: Praise with your words and body
Adding smiles, a rub on the back, enthusiasm, a hug, a kiss or a high five can make praise feel extra special.
Such a pretty butterfly!

Pretty!
REFLECTION
involves repeating back a child’s words and elaborating on what the child said.

Reflections show you are listening
Reflections let your child know you are paying attention. They communicate the message: ‘I hear you and I get you.’

Reflections promote back-and-forth conversation
When a child’s statements are reflected, it rewards the child for speaking. This encourages children to start conversations and share their thoughts more frequently. Reflections are more powerful than questions to get a child talking.

Reflections help language development
Reflections are a great tool to improve children’s speech since they offer an opportunity to subtly correct grammatical mistakes. For instance, if a child says “I ranned home,” a parent can reflect “Wow, you ran home!”

Did you know?
Back-and-forth conversation with your child strengthens the language center of the brain.

That’s big!
That is a big green block!
WAYS TO REFLECT

**Tip:** try replacing acknowledgements such as “Uh huh” and “I see” with reflections.

I didn’t like it when he took my ball!

It made you upset when Zack took your ball. I can understand that.

I’m gonna sing it like you! Chicky ricky na na na!

Chicky ricky na na na!

He broke the jar when it dropped.

He broke it!

He didn’t like it when he took my ball!
IMITATION
DO WHAT THEY DO
IMITATION involves playing in a similar way as your child or making similar gestures.

1. Imitation makes children feel important
   An adult imitating a child’s actions is very flattering. Imitation sends the message: ‘What you are doing is interesting and important, and I want to do it too.’

2. Imitation allows you to get on the child’s level
   Imitation is a good way to join in the child’s play if you are unsure of how to do so. Children are the play experts and by imitating what they are doing, they will teach you how to play.

3. Imitation helps with social skills
   When an adult imitates a child, the child is more likely to imitate the adult. Imitating each other is a great way to practice back-and-forth social exchanges.
WAYS TO IMITATE

That looks yummy! I’m gonna try that too!

You’re holding your baby so sweetly. I’m going to rock my baby doll just like you.
You’re drawing an orange smiley face.
DESCRIPTION

involves describing what your child is doing, much like a sportscaster giving a play-by-play narration of a game.

1. **Descriptions show you are paying attention**
   Descriptions let your child know they have your undivided attention and you are interested in what they are doing. This is a big self-esteem boost!

2. **Descriptions increase attention span**
   Descriptions help children focus and spend more time on a task. It’s a great tool to use during homework.

3. **Descriptions teach young children**
   Descriptions help young children learn new words and concepts such as shapes, sizes, numbers and colors.

You’re stacking the square blocks on top of the rectangular block.
WAYS TO DESCRIBE

You’re showing Baby Ren your squishy ball. You’re teaching her all about it!

This is my squishy ball, Baby Ren.

You’re adding those two numbers together. You figured it out!

You’re crusin’. You’re flyin’ behind dad. You just jumped over a bump!
ENJOYMENT
SHOW WARMTH AND ENTHUSIASM
ENJOYMENT means expressing warmth and positivity with your words and actions while you play and interact with your child.

1. Enjoyment strengthens the parent-child bond
   Adding warmth and excitement to the interaction lets your child know you care about them and enjoy spending time together.

2. Enjoyment models positivity
   Children pick up on and mimic the emotions of others. When you are cheerful, your child will be more likely to act positively.

Showing enjoyment with your body
- Smile
- Make eye contact
- Hug and kiss your child
- Put your arm around your child
- Rub your child’s back

Showing enjoyment with your voice
- Let your child know how much you enjoy being with them
- Talk in a warm and animated voice
- Laugh together

I like going to the game with you, son.
WAYS TO SHOW ENJOYMENT

I love you, sweetie.

It’s so fun making cookies with my little baker!

Yeah!!

I love you, sweetie.
Putting it All Together

Promoting good behaviors and targeting inappropriate behaviors with PRIDE skills
Promoting good behaviors with PRIDE skills

PRIDE skills can be used to teach social skills, prepare children for school, and help them learn to manage behaviors and emotions. To promote healthy development with PRIDE skills, watch for moments where your child displays a good behavior. Every time you notice a good behavior you’d like to see more of, shower your child with PRIDE skills. The more you point out these good behaviors, the more they will blossom and grow.

See the next page for examples of good behaviors.
Good behaviors to notice

Social skills and manners
- Being kind
- Being a good sport
- Compromising
- Doing things for others
- Helping
- Making eye contact
- Saying please and thank you
- Sharing
- Showing empathy
- Taking turns
- Using nice words

School and learning skills
- Concentrating
- Creative thinking
- Flexible thinking
- Focusing and staying on task
- Persisting
- Problem-solving
- Thinking things through
- Working hard
- Working independently

Self-control skills
- Being careful and gentle
- Being safe
- Staying calm
- Calmly expressing feelings
- Waiting patiently

Listening and obeying skills
- Accepting no for an answer
- Asking permission
- Doing things right away
- Following directions
- Listening the first time

Good behaviors to notice

- Can I please have a pickle?
  - Yes, you can. Thank you for asking so nicely.

- I appreciate you petting Spunky very gently just like Mom asked.
Targeting inappropriate behaviors with PRIDE skills

PRIDE skills can help decrease unwanted behaviors. This is done by “catching” your child doing something good that is opposite of an inappropriate behavior. For instance, want your child to stop running ahead at the grocery store? Praise him for staying next to you.

Almost all unwanted behaviors have an opposite good behavior. When you compliment your child for displaying a good behavior, it helps him learn what to do rather than what not to do, and increases the likelihood he’ll repeat that good behavior.

See the next page for examples of opposite good behaviors to “catch.”

To decrease an inappropriate behavior...

“Catch” the opposite good behavior...

Tip
Be on the lookout for good behaviors, even if they are brief, and “catch” them right away.

Thank you for getting ready for school!
To decrease these...  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Countermeasures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acting aggressively</td>
<td>Being careful and gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping hands to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making safe choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting impulsively</td>
<td>Being patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking things through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobeying</td>
<td>Cooperating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting with siblings</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using kind words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrupting</td>
<td>Letting others talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saying excuse me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Catch” these...  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Countermeasures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lying</td>
<td>Being honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telling the truth right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picky eating</td>
<td>Being brave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trying new foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking rudely</td>
<td>Saying nice things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using polite words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing tantrums</td>
<td>Calmly expressing feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calming down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whining</td>
<td>Having a positive attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking with a big boy/girl voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using words to express needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for being truthful and letting mom know.
Playtime

Taking the time to play
Taking the time to play

Playtime is easily forgotten in the hustle and bustle of daily life. Distraction-free playtime offers a chance to pause, breathe, and connect with your child. Parenting experts say that as little as five minutes of daily playtime can strengthen the parent-child bond.\(^5\)

2 tips to make playtime special

Tip 1: Play with PRIDE
PRIDE skills add goodness and magic to playtime. They turn playtime into *special* playtime. The more PRIDE skills used, the better!

Tip 2: Let your child lead the way
Since children rarely have the opportunity to be in charge, letting your child lead can make playtime feel extra special. Here are two ways to follow your child’s lead:

**Did you know?**
Play is an important part of children’s social, emotional and cognitive development.\(^6\)

Go with the flow by letting your child choose what you play with and how you play (as long as it’s safe).

Reduce commands and questions such as, “*Say choo choo!*” and, “What will his name be?”. 

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\(^5\) Parenting experts

\(^6\) Importance of play in children's development
A final note

Do what feels right for your family
You know your child best, so use the skills in a way that feels right. It’s all about encouraging values and behaviors that are personally important to you.

Give yourself praise
Parenting can be hard so remember to go easy on yourself. Showing yourself love is important just as you’d show your child love. Give yourself praise from time-to-time for doing your best.

For more parenting resources visit www.First5LA.org


**General References**


Troutman, B. (2016). *IoWA-PCIT, integration of working models of attachment into parent-child interaction therapy*. Unpublished manuscript, Carver College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, University of Iowa.