

THE Formula for Raising a Successful CHILD

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Parents have been raising their little people for thousands of years so doesn't it seem as if we should have this whole parenting thing figured out by now? However, as parents we all have moments when we aren't sure if what we are doing is right and we know, for sure, we make many mistakes during the journey. Even with thousands of years of experience and millions of people who have done this parenting thing, we are always looking for ideas and support in helping us do better. We are all afraid that if we mess this thing up, we could very well cause irreparable damage to our children...no pressure, right???

The good news is that there actually is a lot of scientific, solid information about what children need and how they can succeed. Our parenting predecessors, scientists and researchers have determined many theories and facts that can raise the odds of coming out of this parenting journey a success!

What exactly does a successful parent look like? Well, measuring the outcomes of an adult helps give researchers information and data with regards to how he or she was raised by their parents. Through this type of data collection, collected over decades and decades, gives parents today such great information on what they can do to help guide our children to eventually be successful adults!

What skills and traits LEAD to success?

What skills and traits lead to success? Mathematician and economist, James Heckman asked this question back in the 1950's and followed up by wanting to know how those traits develop in childhood and what can parents do help children develop those skills that lead to success.

Although cognitive abilities, such as one's IQ score, seemed to initially be the determining factor for success, research and data suggests something very different. In fact, students from various levels of economic status with the same IQs varied dramatically in their successes. Eventually, Heckman came to the conclusion that it was actually a child's character traits that more accurately predicted levels of success later in life.

These traits were defined but not limited to:

- A child's ability to persist in unrewarding tasks
- Delay gratification
- Follow through
- Ability to think ahead before acting
- Flexibility (ability to adapt)

It has been proven that important traits like these can be developed in children and must be a priority for parents and caregivers. Considering the findings that these character traits have more of a determination on success, we owe it to our children to make sure we are cognizant and intentional in teaching them. But how can we impart these skills on our own little humans?

Imitation: Children determine their ethics and moral values often by what is modeled versus what is told to them. Parents need to ensure that from the beginning, they are modeling the traits they want their children to embody.

Punishing vs Disciplining: Punishment is punitive while discipline teaches a child and is related to the behavior. Discipline will be a more effective way of teaching longer-term traits that will be necessary for a successful life. If you are frightening your child into obedience, you may be contributing to a mindset of complying through fear vs making decisions based on strong values. The two are very different and can yield different long-term ramifications.

Bad choices vs bad child: Remember your child is learning right from wrong and how to make good choices. You may not like a choice your child made but he is not “bad” and it is important to distinguish your disappointment in their choice versus your disappointment in him as a person.

Setting Limits: At any age, a child needs to respect the limits you set. Gaining respect as a parent is something that effectively happens when you are fair, consistent and clear. Being too permissive can be as devastating as being too much of a dictator.



Teachable Moments: When you see an opportunity for educating your child on a character trait, take advantage of it as soon as possible. A teachable moment is just that, a moment...and one that can be missed if not caught in time.

Control Your Reactions: How do you react to situations when you need to be flexible? What about when you have to persist to complete a task? Are you able to delay gratification or do you need it NOW? Your responses in these situations will often be passed on to your child without realizing it. Be reflective in your own practices in order to be effective as a parent.

Remember it takes time to develop a good moral sense grounded in character but you will start to see small moments of success during certain situations...and you will know you are on the right track!

Carrie Lupoli is an educational and parenting consultant. She owns and operates educational and parenting centers in both Singapore and in the United States. A spokesperson for Mattel Fisher Price in South East Asia, Carrie speaks regularly to parents about the importance of meaningful engagement with children through play. She also serves as the “Chief Mum” for a family of parenting websites (www.mumcentre.com). Carrie and her husband are raising two elementary age fashionistas, Grace and Ellie, and a rambunctious puppy named Raleigh.

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