



# Peer2Peer Lines Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

Parenting 101

February 2012

## Inside this issue:

Parenting 101

Parenting the Strong Willed

Child ..... 1

Giving kids Feedback . 1

Parenting Teenagers... 2

Personal Perspective .....2

Parenting with Self Care.....3

Parenting the Unmotivated

Child.....3

Communicating with

Your kids ..... 4

Program Highlights.....4

## Parenting the Strong Willed Child

Learning the appropriate methods of parenting is a difficult, but parenting a strong willed child can pose as a challenging task. However, there are some tactics that can be employed by parents to handle a strong willed child.

One of these strategies suggested by parenting experts is for parents/caregivers to not always engage in arguments with the child. Pick and choose your battles; if a child is simply provoking a fight for no particular reason and pushing buttons, a parent is advised to sidestep those conflicts.

Professionals also say for parents not to demand from their children, but rather offer suggestions and a sufficient explanation of why they should do the specified task. For example, do not just tell them they need to put on a jacket before they play outside. Instead, set an example by wearing your coat and state, "it's up to you if you would like to wear your jacket, but you may catch a cold if you don't."

Most, importantly, listen to your child. This is the key to truly understanding why your child is behaving the way they are. Maybe there is some underlying issue you are unaware of or maybe they are acting out for attention. Whatever the case, giving them the simple reassurance that you hear what they say can make a significant difference.

Following these steps can appease their rebellious behavior and significantly improve your relationship with your child. Parenting the strong willed child can be very stressful on adults, but seeking help and learning new methods of dealing with them is already a demonstration of good parenting skills and a testament to how much you care for your child.

Source: <http://www.ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/positive-discipline/Parenting-Strong-Willed-Child>

## Giving Kids Feedback

What you say to your child after a game or school performance is critical to helping them process their productively. Giving children feedback is not only important but it's essential. Children benefit from hearing feedback from their parents, teachers, coaches, etc. Unfortunately, sometimes even with the best intentions our feedback is not motivating to the child.

Scientific studies show how you can motivate your child with feedback by following these rules.

**Rule #1:** Keep it real, when things go wrong. When your child makes a mistake, you need to tell him/her regardless if may cause anxiety, disappointment or embarrassment so he/her can figure out what to do differently next time.

**Rule # 2:** Fight self-doubt, when things go wrong. It is important for children to believe that success is within reach regardless of the mistakes made in the past. To achieve this be specific. Let them know what needs improvement, and what can be done to improve. Emphasize actions that they have the power to change such as the effort that he/she put into practicing, or the studying. Avoid praising effort when it did not pay off. Studies show that after a failure being complimented for "effort" can make kids feel stupid and leave them feeling like they cannot improve. If effort is not the problem help them figure out what is.

**Rule # 3:** Avoid praising ability, when things go right. Children don't need to hear how smart they are to keep motivated. If being successful means that a child is "smart" then they are likely to conclude that they aren't smart when having a harder time.

Sources:

<http://grow.mindsetworks.com/cms/the-art-and-science-of-giving-kids-feedback>

Are you looking for resources and support for yourself, your child, or your clients?

Call the Peer2Peer Lines to speak with someone who has life experience in the behavioral health system.

Monday - Friday  
12:00pm - 6:00pm  
Toll Free - Confidential  
English - Spanish  
Other Languages

### Contact Us:

Family Supportline:  
1-877-470-LINE (5463)

Youth Talkline:  
1-877-450-LINE (5463)



# Parenting Teenagers

Your chatterbox son now answers your questions with a "yes" or "no." Your charming daughter won't go to the store with you at all anymore. They must be teenagers. Don't despair. It is natural and important for kids to break away from their parents at this age. This emotional separation allows them to become well-adjusted adults. Yet these must be among the most difficult years for any parent. To help with parenting tips we turned to three national experts:

## Parenting Tips

1. Give kids some leeway. Giving teens a chance to establish their own identity and giving them more independence is essential to helping them establish their own place in the world.
2. Choose your battles wisely. Doing themselves harm or doing something that could be permanent (like a tattoo), those things matter. Purple hair, a messy room -- those *don't* matter.
3. Decide rules and discipline in advance. If it is a two-parent family, it is important for parents to have their own discussion so they can come to some kind of agreement. Whether you ban them from driving for a month, ground them for a week, cut back on their allowance or Internet use, set it in advance. If the kid says it isn't fair, then agree on what is fair punishment. Then, follow through with the consequences.
4. Talk to teens about risks. Whether it is drugs, driving, or sex your kids need to know the worst that could happen.
5. Keep the door open. Don't interrogate, but act interested. Share a few tidbits about your own day; ask about theirs. How was the concert? How was the date? How was your day?
6. Let kids feel guilty. Too much is made about self-esteem. But people *should* feel bad if they have hurt someone or done something wrong. Kids need to feel bad sometimes. Guilt is a healthy emotion.
7. Be a role model. Your actions, even more than your words, are critical in helping teens adopt good moral and ethical standards. If they have a good role model from early on, they will be less likely to make bad decisions in their rebellious teen years.

Sources:

David Elkind, PhD, *The Hurried Child and All Grown Up and No Place to Go*; Amy Bobrow, PhD, *Child Study Center* New York University School of Medicine, Manhattan. Nadine Kaslow, PhD, Emory University, Atlanta.

## For Resources and Support

If you are a teen or young adult, call the Youth Talkline:  
1-877-450-LINE (5463)

If you are a family member or caregiver of a youth, call the Family Supportline:  
1-877-470-LINE (5463)

Professionals can call either line for resources

Monday - Friday  
12:00pm – 6:00pm  
Toll Free - Confidential  
English - Spanish-  
Other Languages

If you are experiencing a crisis, please call the Access & Crisis Line  
1-800-479-3339



### Home Office:

9465 Farnham Street,  
San Diego, CA 92123  
P (858) 573-2600  
F (858) 573-2602

[mhsinc.org](http://mhsinc.org)

## Personal Perspective

### *A personal viewpoint from a Family Supportline Specialist*

Growing up my mother was always sick. I had to change my sister's diapers, feed her, help her with homework, and take care of her when she was sick. When my mother passed away my sister was 10 years old and I was 19. Now, I had to see after this child. It was difficult to say the least.

My father was always at work and when he wasn't he was still actively in his alcoholism. I had to register my sister for school, do parent teacher conferences, book fairs, see her off to "6<sup>th</sup> Grade Camp," make dinner, etc. I didn't want this child to feel a lacking in her life as bright and as promising as her future seemed. Eventually it took a turn in an uneasy direction. She never made it easy on me in her early teen years. She was very strong willed. What made it tough for me was when she would say "you're not my parent," but I was all she had in that role. She was unmotivated, depressed, sometimes even disruptive and angry. I had no real parenting training or guidance. I tried to be her best friend, I tried to be her disciplinarian, and sometimes I tried both. Of all the different techniques I tried, what had been most effective for us was when I started sharing my own experiences openly and explaining things to her when she was open to it. I always kept it honest. Nobody likes to be kept in the dark. Remember children, teens, youth are no different. She started to hear what she could relate to. She was no longer being talked down to. She mattered. It always worked when my mother did it to me. Allow your child to really be heard when they are reaching out to you for support or guidance. Try not to bombard them with lectures and they will learn in their own time.



# Parenting with Self Care

Parents often ask what rules are important to raise kids. It seems that the most important rules to raise children are for us, not our children.

The most important parenting commitment: Be your child's advocate and don't give up on them. Every child deserves at least one person who is 100% on their side. The most important parenting skill is to manage yourself, take care of yourself. The more you care for yourself with compassion, the more love and compassion you'll have for your child.

\*Kids need a safe place to express feelings while you "listen." If you want to raise a child who can manage their behavior, they first have to manage the emotions that drive that behavior.

\*See it from your child's perspective and expect age appropriate behavior. Don't expect perfection from your kids or yourself and keep your priorities straight. Your child is taking shape before your very eyes. They are still developing and will grow out of most of their inappropriate behavior.

\*Don't take it personally. This isn't about you, it's about your child, who's an immature human doing his/her best to learn and grow with your support. Cultivate a sense of humor. This will also help you avoid power struggles. No one wins a power struggle. Don't insist on being right.

\*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Misbehavior comes from basic needs that aren't met. Meet their needs for sleep, nutrition, chill-out time, cuddling, connection, fun and safety. Let kids know in advance the behavior you expect. Children want to be successful. Your child is your best teacher about what he or she needs. Listen more than you talk. Listen with your heart. Be willing to change and grow. Enjoy your child and embrace change. What worked yesterday may not work tomorrow. Your parenting strategies need to evolve as your kids do.

\*Stay connected and never withdraw your love, even for a moment. The deepest reason kids cooperate is that they love you and want to please you. Above all, safeguard your relationship with your child. That is your only leverage to have any influence on your child and is what your child needs most, and let's face it that closeness is what makes parenting worth it.

Source:

[http://www.ahaparenting.com/\\_blog/Parenting\\_Blog/post/10\\_Rules\\_to\\_Raise\\_Terrific\\_Kids/](http://www.ahaparenting.com/_blog/Parenting_Blog/post/10_Rules_to_Raise_Terrific_Kids/)

## For Resources and Support

If you are a teen or young adult, call the Youth Talkline:  
1-877-450-LINE (5463)

If you are a family member or caregiver of a youth, call the Family Supportline:  
1-877-470-LINE (5463)

Professionals can call either line for resources

Monday - Friday  
12:00pm – 6:00pm  
Toll Free - Confidential  
English - Spanish-  
Other Languages

If you are experiencing a crisis, please call the Access & Crisis Line  
1-800-479-3339



**Home Office:**  
9465 Farnham Street,  
San Diego, CA 92123  
P (858) 573-2600  
F (858) 573-2602  
**mhsinc.org**

## Parenting the Unmotivated Child

When you think of an unmotivated teen, what comes to mind: resistance, rebellious, control? Although these things may seem like they correspond with being unmotivated, they do in fact show the teen is motivated, just not in a positive way. When parenting teens there can be a power struggle which can lead to them giving resistance to what you are asking, or what is expected of them. Here are some things parents can do to try and work with teen rather than fight with them.

Using "I" statements, if your teen is arguing with you daily about getting ready for school or doing their homework, try not to get frustrated. Ask them using an "I" statement, such as "I would like you to do your homework when you get home from school" instead of "Do your homework after school". If they still do not comply with what you ask then there should be consequences. Consequences vary from teen to teen, what could seem harsh for one teen could be a walk in the park for another.

Ultimately it is up to what fits your family dynamic the best. If methods that you've been trying have not been effective you may want to bring in outside help. There are plenty of options when it comes to getting help which can include therapists and counselors who specialize in teens, or a life coaches who can help them create schedules, and make sure they are following through with their responsibilities.

Sources: <http://www.empoweringparents.com/child-motivation.php#>

<http://www.empoweringparents.com/child-motivation.php#>

<http://www.about-underachieving-teens.com/AUT/inspiring-the-unmotivated-or-underachieving-teen.htm>



# Communicating with Your Kids

Usually children spend more time with parents than any other adult; therefore, parents are able to help build children's communication skills by demonstrating effective ways to communicate with them. Some ways to help you communicate with your child are:

\*Avoid dead-end questions: Asking questions that require yes or no answers will make for a short conversation. Rather than asking "Did you have a good day at school?" you might want to ask "How do you like your classes this semester?" or "What are you doing to keep up with all the school work?" The goal is to find creative ways to ask questions that will start up a conversation.

\*Extend conversation: Respond to your child's statement by asking a question that restates or uses similar wording. An example might be when your child tells you "I like all my classes, except for math class, it sucks." You might want to ask "So why do you think math class sucks?" By asking a question that restates or uses similar wording, you are helping to strengthen confidence in their conversation and verbal skills while reassuring them that their ideas are heard and valued.

\*Share your thoughts: This is the opportunity where you can share what you are thinking, but also get your child involved with a question. "Since you are having difficulty with math class, perhaps tutoring might be helpful. What do you think about that?"

\*Observe signs: When the child begins to look away, give joking responses, asks you to keep repeating the question or comment several times because they are not paying attention, it is probably a good time to end the conversation.

\*Reflect feelings: In order to be a good listener, it is helpful to put yourself in the other person's shoes and emphasize that you are trying to understand the other person's thoughts and feelings. You might reflect a child's feelings by commenting, "It sounds to me that you are frustrated with your math teacher."

\*Help clarify and relate experience: Try to make your child's feelings clear by stating them in your own words. This helps them expand their vocabulary by getting a deeper understanding of words and inner thoughts.

Source: <http://www.allprodad.com/top10/parenting/10-essential-tips-for-great-communication-with-your-kids/>

## About Peer2Peer Lines

Our confidential service offers information, support and referrals to children and teens, and to caregivers and family members of at-risk youth. The Youth Talkline is answered by youth and young adults who have real-life experience as recipients of behavioral health services. The Family Supportline is answered by caregivers of a behavioral health service recipient. Peer line specialists work with callers to get help through community resources, programs and partners within each region of San Diego. The service is free, anonymous, and confidential. Callers can talk with English- or Spanish-speaking peer-line specialists.

Live Well, San Diego!



### Home Office:

9465 Farnham Street,  
San Diego, CA 92123

P (858) 573-2600

F (858) 573-2602

[mhsinc.org](http://mhsinc.org)

## Program Highlights

### Grossmont Adult School Parent Education (East)

Description: Provides education, parenting infant, parenting the toddler, parenting sibling & 2 year olds and preschoolers, effective parenting techniques, parenting the adolescent, and teaches anger management techniques.

### Harmonium Inc. (North Central)

Description: Provides general parenting education for parents of children ages 2 to 12 years, using the Parent Education Group curriculum. Weekly topics available

### Silent Voices (South)

Description: Provides a class for pregnant women or women with infants. Parenting classes include: pregnancy, motherhood, relationships, and goals for the future.

### SAY San Diego (Central)

Description: Provides a program for families with children pre-kinder under age 6 years that focuses on parent/child activities, parent to parent support, and information about child development.

## Mental Health Systems

was founded in 1978 to provide mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation in an innovative and cost-effective manner. The delivery of our services conforms to our core values: Innovation, Dignity, Integrity, Hope, Action and Excellence. Our mission is to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities impacted by substance abuse and behavioral health disorders. As we do so, we utilize new and creative treatment strategies while respecting time-proven methods of intervention.

Copies of this newsletter and past issues can be downloaded at <https://www.mhsinc.org/peer2peer>