

The Parenting Contract For Raising Caring, Confident, Capable Children

Ten things I will try to do at home to teach my children social and emotional skills and give them greater strength, wisdom and resilience in dealing with life's pressures. I promise to:

Focus on strengths. When my children bring home a test, I will first praise what they did well and then I will talk about what can be improved. I will not just criticize things that were wrong.

Follow up with fair consequences for misbehavior. Sometimes parents/caregivers demand unfair consequences in anger. "Because of what you did, no television for a month." (*It's not a surprise that the TV is turned back on in one to two days.*) I will set fair consequences and consistently carry them out.

Ask my children how they feel. When I do, I'm sending the message that their feelings matter and that I care.

Find ways to stay calm when angry. I know it's normal to get angry or irritated, but I shouldn't lose control. Instead, I will take a few deep breaths, or just stop talking, or leave the room. I will encourage family discussion about what we all can do to stay calm.

Avoid humiliating or mocking my child. Unfair criticism and sarcasm can make children feel bad about themselves. They can lose confidence, which can cause problems with schoolwork, illness and getting along with friends. It also weakens our mutual bond of trust. I will try to give my children room to make mistakes when they're learning new skills.

Be willing to apologize. If I miscommunicate. I will apologize and calmly explain what I really meant. Being a good role model means teaching that it's possible to work through problems with consideration and respect for others.

Give my children choices and respect their wishes. When my children have a chance to make choices, they learn how to solve problems. Letting my children make decisions teach them that their ideas and feelings matter.

Ask questions that help my children solve problems on their own. When my children have a problem, I will NOT step in and take over. Instead I will try to ask good questions and encourage them to find their own appropriate solutions.

Read books and stories together. Reading aloud is a way to share something enjoyable and learn how other people deal with common issues like making or losing friends or handling conflicts.

Encourage sharing and helping. There are many ways my family can do this, such as preparing food in a homeless shelter or going on a fund-raising walk/run or helping elderly neighbors or needy families. My children will learn that they can make a difference in the lives of others.

Parent or Caregiver Signature

Parent or Caregiver Signature

Date

**We encourage you to read and sign this contract and then post it on your refrigerator or kitchen bulletin board as reminder of your commitment to raising caring, confident, capable children.*