

Unit Sixteen

**TAKING CARE OF
OTHERS:**

**Parenting
Wisely**

UNIT SIXTEEN:

TAKING CARE OF OTHERS: PARENTING WISELY

Suggestions for the Instructor

Pg. 16-24 – 16-55 -- How Can You Tell if You Are Ready to Raise a Child?

On this handout, students are asked to reflect on what people need to have in place in order to prepare to handle the responsibilities of raising a family. Ask them to read the questions on the handout, which are designed to help them decide if and when they are ready to have a family. Tell them that whether one is a man or a woman, one should be able to answer *yes* to all of these questions. Use the handout to discuss the importance of practicing safe sex and waiting until one is ready to raise a child.

Pg. 16-26 – 16-27 -- “Tips from a Father in Prison”

Read aloud the suggestions written by Michael Carlin, a father in jail. As you read, discuss whether students agree or disagree with the suggestions the author makes, whether they have tried any of these strategies, or whether they would like to try them in the future. Follow the reading with the handout **Parenting While Incarcerated: Questions for Reflection**.

Pg. 26-18 – 16-29 -- Parenting While Incarcerated: Questions for Reflection

After reading the handout **Tips from a Father in Prison**, ask students to reflect in writing on questions about parenting while incarcerated and preparing for parenting upon release. Ask them to draw on the advice given in **Tips from a Father in Prison** if necessary. Ask volunteers to share what they have written with the class.

Pg. 16-30 -- “Parents in Prison: A Focus on Children”

Copy the article “Parents in Prison: A Special Report; As Inmate Population Grows, So Does a Focus on Children” by Fox Butterfield.

www.nytimes.com/1999/04/07/us/parents-prison-special-report-inmate-population-grows-so-does-focus-children.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm

Read the article aloud with the students and encourage them to relate the information in the article to their own experiences as parents in prison or as children of incarcerated parents. Use the following questions to develop comprehension skills and to foster group discussion:

(continued)

1. What do experts say is the factor that puts children at greatest risk for incarceration?
Having a parent behind bars is the factor that puts children at greatest risk for incarceration.
2. What does Lawrence Sherman mean by the term “the multiplier effect?”
 - **The emphasis on imprisonment to fight crime may be helping to create the next generation of criminals. If you increase the number of people arrested and sent to prison, you may actually be creating another problem by modeling imprisonment to their children.**
3. What percent of the juveniles in custody have a parent or close relative in prison?
Fifty percent of the juveniles in custody have a parent or close relative in prison.
4. What are some of the reasons children with a parent in prison are more likely to get in trouble?
 - **Most of these children grow up in families troubled by poverty, abuse, neglect and drug use.**
 - **Separation from a parent is a well-documented problem for children.**
 - **Children who see a parent arrested and handcuffed, and who are frisked by guards during a prison visit, become contemptuous toward law enforcement.**
 - **Children with a father behind bars make a hero of him; they may idealize him.**
5. When a person is arrested, does anyone in the system ask if he or she has children?
 - **No -- in most cities, when the police make an arrest, when a judge passes sentence, or when an inmate enters jail and prison, no one asks whether the offender has children -- or, if they happen to ask, does anything with the information.**
6. Why might inmates be evasive when prison authorities do ask about their children?
 - **They might be evasive out of shame or fear of losing custody or government benefits.**
7. What are two different opinions about whether children should visit their parents in prison?
 - **Juliana Perez, a social worker who directs a parenting program in the county jail in San Antonio, says contact between incarcerated parents and their children is essential. In addition to helping the children, Ms. Perez said, "if the system doesn't allow bonding, we destroy whatever chance we have of changing the offenders' behavior."**
 - **Judge Kathleen Richie of the Juvenile Court in Baton Rouge, La., disagrees. "The more these kids are exposed to prison by visiting, the more they get used to it, and prison loses its stigma," Judge Richie said.**

(continued)

8. Which of these two opinions do you agree with most? Why?
Opinions will vary. Ask students to support their opinions with reasons and examples.
9. In what ways does Hector Millan think prison destroys families?
- He can't tuck his children into bed at night.
 - He can't be there to comfort them when they scrape their knees.
 - He can't help them when they have problems at school.
10. What does Millan mean when he says "the damage done is irreparable"? Do you agree or disagree?
- He means there is no way to fix the bad things that have come from having a parent in prison.
 - Opinions will vary. Ask students to support their opinions with reasons and examples.
11. What are some of the lessons imparted by the Sing Sing parenting program?
- Prisoners should stay in touch with their children.
 - Prisoners should not make false promises about when they will be released.
 - Prisoners should acknowledge the pain they have caused their children, who are also victims of their crimes.
12. Why does Dean Hairston say, "A visit to a prison is a very emotionally difficult experience?"
- Visiting prisons, which often are in rural areas, can be time-consuming and costly.
 - When visitors arrive they can be kept outside in the cold or rain for hours.
 - They can be subjected to humiliating searches.
 - There isn't time or space for normal family arguments.
 - The kids tend to act out afterward.
 - The wives or girlfriends can be resentful.
13. In your experience, are any of these consequences true of prison visits?
Opinions will vary. Ask students to support their opinions with reasons and examples.
14. What, in your opinion, can a parent in prison do to maintain a healthy relationship with his or her children?
Opinions will vary. Ask students to support their opinions with reasons and examples.

Pg. 16-31 – 16-32 -- Write a Letter to Your Child

Encourage students to take time while they are incarcerated to stay in touch with their child or children. Tell them that writing letters to their children will demonstrate how much they care about them and how much they are interested in their being successful in school. Tell them they can be positive role models even while incarcerated.

Ask students to read the sample letters to a child in elementary school and a child in high school. Review some of the key elements of the letters.

Ask students to write drafts of letters to their children. If they do not have children of their own, they may want to write to a niece or nephew, younger brother or sister, or to a child they may have in the future.

After students write drafts, review the letters with them and edit for spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Have students copy the revised and edited letters onto lined paper, and then, if possible, arrange to mail the letters.

Page 16-33 – 16-34 -- Why It's Important to Talk with Your Baby

Adapted from <http://talkwithyourbaby.org/why/>

In this handout, students read that talking is important for building a baby's brain. Ask them to read the article alone, in small groups, or as a class, in order to answer the questions that follow.

Answers:

1. Did the information in this article influence your opinion about whether it's important to talk with your baby? Why or why not?
Answers will vary. Ask students to support their answers with evidence from the article.
2. What are at least three reasons the article gives to support the main idea that it's important for parents and caregivers to talk with babies?
 - **In the first three years of life, your baby's brain triples in size. It also becomes much more complex – and this doesn't just happen without outside help.**
 - **The brain develops as your baby interacts with the world.**
 - **Research has shown that lots of talking with children in the first three years of life builds structures in the brain that will be needed later to support reading and thinking skills.**
 - **Research has shown that children from talkative families may have heard 30 million more words directed to them by age three than children from less-talkative families.**
 - **And the same research study showed that the more words the children had heard by age three, the better they did on tests of cognitive development.**

- Children from talkative families did better on reading readiness tests in the third grade because their brains got more stimulation during that important period of brain growth.
 - Learning to read greatly depends on having and hearing a big vocabulary; lots of talking by parents and other adults, especially when combined with reading, is wonderful for building vocabulary.
 - Lots of talk from loving adults also builds healthy relationships and social skills.
3. What are some specific things that parents and caregivers can do to increase babies' language development?
- talk with babies a lot, even before they can understand or answer
 - imitate facial expressions and sounds
 - tell stories
 - ask the baby questions
 - sing
 - talk about pictures in books
 - tell the baby how terrific he or she is

Page 16-35 – 16-36 -- Ten Tips to Make Reading Fun for Your Child

Adapted from Laura Strom | Editor-in-Chief of Newmark Learning

<http://www.rd.com/advice/parenting/10-tips-to-make-reading-fun-for-your-child/>

In this handout, students learn that reading to their child is one of the best things they you can do for his or her education. They learn ten tips to get the most out of reading time. Ask them to read the article alone, in small groups, or as a class, in order to answer the questions that follow.

Answers:

1. What is the central theme of the article?

Simply reading to your child is one of the best things you can do for his or her education.

2. In your own words, what are some of the reasons the article says parents should read to their children?

The students should write the following reasons in their own words:

- Reading helps them hear language in new and different ways.
- Reading gives them a sense of story.
- Reading leads to better performance in reading, writing, listening, and other school subjects.
- Reading creates a bond between the reader and the child, so that there is a special memory association between reading and a happy experience.
- Reading turns many children into life-long readers and life-long learners.

3. Why do you think children might enjoy some of the tips suggested above?

Answers will vary, but might include:

- **Children love a pleasant routine.**
- **Children look forward to this special time.**
- **It can be a cozy time.**
- **Choosing what book to read can keep the child's interest, and makes the child feel important.**
- **Visiting a library regularly makes choosing books easy and fun.**
- **The child might enjoy hearing you read in various voices.**
- **The child might enjoy the pictures because they will help him or her understand and connect to the book.**
- **The child might enjoy talking about the story.**
- **The child might enjoy, after you read the book, talking about the story and what happened.**
- **The child might enjoy it if the caregiver points out hard words to see if they can figure out what they mean by looking at the surrounding words and pictures.**
- **The child might enjoy trying to make connections between something in the story and his or her life.**

4. Pick a children's book and read it to a classmate, using some of the tips above, then reverse roles. Talk about the experience. How do you think these tips help involve the reader and the listener?

Answers will vary. Ask students to be specific about how these tips might help the reader and the listener as they describe the experience.

Pg. 16-37 - 16-38 -- Helping Children Succeed in School

For children to be successful in school -- to enjoy learning, get good grades, gain important skills, and graduate from high school-- they need their parents and guardians to be involved. Tell students that, even while they are incarcerated, there are things they can do to help their children feel good about themselves, learn a lot, and stay in school.

Ask them to check off those items on the checklist which they already do and which ones they need to do more, then have them indicate what help they might need to guide their children in this way. Ask them to reflect on and discuss which of these strategies can be done while incarcerated.

Pg. 16-39 -- Good Nutrition is Important for Children!

www.choosemyplate.gov

The USDA has produced one page information sheets about providing children with good nutrition that can be printed for use in the classroom. Print, copy and distribute these handouts from the Ten Tips Nutrition Education Series:

- [Choose MyPlate](#)
- [Kid-Friendly Veggies and Fruits](#)
- [Be a Healthy Role Model for Children](#)
- [Cut Back on Your Kid's Sweet Treats](#)
- [Focus on Fruits](#)
- [Make Half Your Grains Whole](#)
- [Got Your Dairy Today?](#)
- [With Protein Foods, Variety is Key](#)
- [Build a Healthy Meal](#)
- [Liven Up Your Meals With Vegetables and Fruits](#)

Pg. 16-40 – 16-41 -- Everyday Activities to Promote Learning

Learning is part of everyday life. Ask students to think about things they can do or say to help children learn their alphabet, their letter sounds, word meanings, colors, numbers, math facts, etc. In small groups, have them brainstorm activities they can do at home with their children after they are released, as well as activities they can do by phone or mail while incarcerated, to promote learning.

Pg. 16-42 -- Car or Bus Activities

After students have brainstormed everyday car or bus activities which they can do with children to promote learning, share these lists with them. Discuss with the class why these activities promote learning. Ask them to compare these lists with their own and add any they think would be easy and fun to do when they are released and are spending time with their children.

Pg. 16-43 -- Clothing and Laundry Activities

After students have brainstormed everyday clothing and laundry activities which they can do with children to promote learning, share these lists with them. Discuss with the class why these activities promote learning. Ask them to compare these lists with their own and add any they think would be easy and fun to do when they are released and are spending time with their children.

Pg. 16-44 -- Supermarket and Food Activities

After students have brainstormed everyday supermarket /shopping activities and food/cooking activities which they can do with children to promote learning, share these lists with them. Discuss with the class why these activities promote learning. Ask them to compare these lists with their own and add any others they think would be easy and fun to do when they are released and are spending time with their children.

Pg. 16-45 - 16-46 -- Reflections: Disciplining Kids

Tell students it is important for people to reflect on their own experiences as children before they decide how to discipline their own kids. On this handout, students are encouraged to be honest as they reflect on how they were disciplined, what they think was effective, what they would have changed. Encourage volunteers to share their reflections on the questions with the class.

Pg. 16-47 - 16-48 -- Words of Wisdom: Protecting the Children

Ask volunteers to take turns reading the quotes aloud. Ask students to pick a quote that interests them and to write about it, reflecting on:

- what they think the speaker means
- whether they agree and why or why not
- how the quote is or is not relevant to their lives
- specific examples from their lives or the lives of others which highlight its meaning

Ask students to share their reflections with the class.

Pg. 16-49 -- Family Violence HURTS Children

Read this handout aloud with students in order to stress the have serious long term effects family violence has on children.

Remind them that children who witness domestic violence may get physically hurt as well as emotionally hurt. Read aloud the emotional effects on children who witness abuse, the physical / health effects on children who witness abuse, and the beliefs of children of violence.

Pg. 16-50 – 16-53 -- Stop Beating Black Children

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/opinion/sunday/stop-beating-black-children.html>

Stop Beating Black Children: Vocabulary -- Prior to reading the article below, ask students to study the words and phrases below before you read the article *Stop Beating Black Children*. Discuss their meaning as a class and ask students to write down definitions as you discuss them. Then have students read the article, individually or aloud as a class, and as they read, use the context to help them find the definitions of any words or phrases they're still unsure of. If they still need assistance, encourage them to consult a dictionary to find the meaning.

Stop Beating Black Children article -- In this handout, students are asked to read an opinion column which argues that African American parents should not beat their children and that the legacy of slavery and oppression is perpetuated through violence against children.

Answers:

1. What were the author's experiences of being beaten as a child? How do you think the author's experiences influenced her views and values about childrearing?

- **She was frequently beaten naked with a switch for childhood misbehaviors like getting dirty, mouthing off, rolling her eyes, or telling lies.**
- **The beatings left long, red welts against the skin of her butt, back, arms and legs. If she tried to shield her head and face, her adoptive mother grabbed one of her arms, raised it over her head and whipped her as she bucked in a circle.**
- **When the beating was over, her adoptive mother said, "Stop that crying, or I'll give you something to cry about."**
- **By the time she was 12, she was in the state foster care system.**
- **The beatings may have influenced her views in many ways, including: she would know how it feels, she might think it hurts children more than helps, she might want to raise her own kids differently.**

2. What did the author do as an adult that further influenced her views and values about childrearing?

- **She spent years in therapy.**
- **She studied the history of corporal punishment.**
- **She wrote her doctoral dissertation about the Jim Crow oppression that trapped black children at every developmental milestone.**
- **She gained a better understanding of why her adoptive mother punished her the way she did.**

3. “My adoptive mother, and generations of black parents like her, honestly believed that whupping children was a pillar of responsible black parenting.” What does the author mean by this statement? From your experience, do you agree or disagree?

The author means that many black parents feel that beating their children is a very important aspect of being a good parent. Opinions will vary about whether or not students agree; ask them to support their opinions with reasons and examples.

4. What does the author believe is “one of the saddest untold stories in American history?” What evidence does she give to support her belief in this “untold story?”

The author believes that “one of the saddest untold stories in American history” is that black American slaves, who endured the trauma of their own beatings, inherited their oppressors’ violence and, for centuries, passed down these parenting beliefs.

Evidence she cites to support this belief:

- **There is no evidence that African ancestors of slaves used ritualistic physical punishment.**
- **Children were viewed as sacred and purer than adults.**
- **Children were sometimes viewed as reincarnated ancestors or gods.**
- **The idea of “beating the devil” out of a child comes from a European idea that children are “born in sin.”**

5. Find a statement in the article that summarizes the author’s main idea (thesis) and copy it here.

Any of the following statements summarize the author’s thesis:

- **“We have to stop hurting our children to protect them.”**
- **“We need to stop teaching children that obedience is their greatest virtue.”**
- **“The violence that black children experience from trigger-happy cops, in the streets of cities like Baltimore and Chicago, in schools and at home is all interconnected. It is all strange and bitter fruit from the same tree.”**

6. Would you say that you agree, disagree, or are unsure about the author’s thesis? Whether you agree or disagree, give reasons to support your opinion. If you are unsure, state what other questions you have or what information you would need to help you form an opinion.

Answers will vary. Use this question as an opportunity to encourage students to support their opinion with specific examples from the text. If they are unsure, have them state specifically what other questions they have what other information they would need to help them form an opinion.

Pg. 16-54 -- “You Can Have Authority with Your Children -- Without Hitting Them”

Excerpted from <http://hcz.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ALI-Baby-College.pdf>

Distribute the excerpt spoken by a student in “Baby College,” a program for parents participating in the Harlem Children’s Zone. Ask a volunteer to read the statement aloud. As they read it, ask students to think about the examples the speaker gives for what she used to think about how to discipline children, and what she believes now that she has taken the course.

Answers:

1. What was the speaker’s experience with discipline when she was growing up in her neighborhood? Be specific.
She got hit with a belt when she misbehaved at home, and got hit with a ruler when she acted up in school.
2. How did those experiences influence her beliefs about childrearing?
As a result of these experiences, she thought people who didn’t beat their kids were being too sensitive. She thought that a beating worked for her and that it taught her a lesson.
3. How did the classes she took at Baby College influence and alter her views?
 - **She learned why it might be better to call a time out than to yell at a child.**
 - **She learned about bad effects that can result from hitting a child.**
 - **It affected how she thinks about her daughter.**
 - **It helped her see that her daughter doesn’t want to disappoint her, and that’s the reason she listens to her.**
4. Identify some of the techniques the speaker now uses to discipline her children.
 - **She never raises her voice to her.**
 - **She talks to her about right and wrong.**
 - **She talks to her about studying in school and behaving.**

Pg. 16-55 – 16-56 – “What Would Mother Wit Do? Episode #1 – The Switch”

<http://sparethekids.com/mother-wit-comics/> Reprinted with permission of the author.

Remind students that sometimes it can be very hard to figure out how to discipline children when they are behaving in ways we do not like. We want to teach them to do the right thing, but we need tools and advice! If the only way we know how to discipline, teach, or punish children is to hit them, it can be challenging to try alternative methods.

Distribute the handout “What Would Mother Wit Do? Episode #1 – The Switch,” along with the first episode of “Mother Wit” comics. Ask students to read it aloud, as if in a

play, volunteers reading each character's part. As they read, ask them to think about what the caregiver in the story planned to do at first to teach her child a lesson, and what changed her mind and convinced her to "switch" her methods of disciplining him. Answers will vary about how students feel about her decision. Encourage them to be honest but also to be open to thinking about discipline in a new way.

Answers:

1. What behavior did the child exhibit that upset his caregiver?
 - **He stole a candy bar. She didn't want him to be beat up or locked up by the cops.**
2. When the caregiver told the child to go get a switch, what did he do instead? Why?
 - **He brought her a rock because he couldn't get a switch.**
3. What "switch" occurred in the caregiver's mind after the child came back? How do you feel about her decision?
 - **She realized that her son thought she was going to hurt him or kill him. She decided she didn't want him to be afraid of her. Answers will vary about how students feel about her decision.**

Pg. 16-57 - 16-64 - "What Would Mother Wit Do?" (Episodes 2-6, 8)

<http://sparethekids.com/mother-wit-comics/> Reprinted with permission of the author.

Distribute a separate handout "What Would Mother Wit Do?" along with each episode of the "Mother Wit" comics. (Episodes 2-6, 8.) Ask students to read the episode aloud, as if in a play, volunteers reading each character's part. After each story, think about what the caregivers in the story want to teach their kids and what strategies Mother Wit suggested they use. Then encourage them to reflect on what the challenges and benefits might be of using this method and what support they might need to try the method in their own lives, with the children in their care.

Episode #2: "Don't Hit Mommy"

Answers:

1. What is the child doing that the caregiver wants the child to stop?
 - **He refuses to get off the swing, then he hits his mother.**
2. What does the caregiver want the child to learn? (What's the goal of the punishment?)
 - **She wants him to learn he can't hit her or anybody else.**
3. What does Mother Wit suggest the caregiver do instead? Break the strategy into steps:
 1. **Hold him and don't let him wriggle free.**
 2. **Look him in the eyes and talk to him in a gentle voice.**
 3. **Be firm and tell him, "I know you're mad right now, but don't hit mommy. It hurts when you hit mommy."**
 4. **Tell him, "If you don't settle down, we can't come back to the park."**

4. What do you think the challenges might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- **It would be hard not to hit him because you'd be so angry.**
- **It's embarrassing when kids act out in front of other parents, and if you don't hit him they might think you're weak.**
- **It might be hard to remember what to say.**
- **He might be too strong and would wiggle away and run away.**

5. What do you think the benefits might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

- **He would learn that hitting is not okay.**
- **He would learn that it's okay to be angry, but not to hit.**
- **He would learn there are consequences for hitting.**
- **He would learn to trust that his mother will protect him and teach him how to behave.**

6. What support do you think you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care?

- **People who understand and don't get upset with you for trying an alternative method.**
- **Parenting classes.**
- **Support groups for parents who want to raise their kids non-violently.**
- **Friends who use alternative parenting methods.**

Episode #3: "The Hot Stove"

Answers:

1. What is the child doing that the caregiver wants the child to stop?

She is about to touch a hot stove.

2. What does the caregiver want the child to learn? (What's the goal of the punishment?)

He wants her to learn not to touch the stove.

3. What does Mother Wit suggest the caregiver do instead? Break the strategy into steps:

1. **When the stove is on, get on the floor with her and play.**
2. **Get closer to the stove till you feel the heat.**
3. **Say, "Uh-oh, hot!"**
4. **Put your hand close to the stove and say, "Ouch! Hot!"**

4. What do you think the challenges might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- **It would be hard not to hit him because you'd be so afraid.**
- **It might be hard to remember not to hit her.**
- **It takes time and planning to teach a child, rather than just react.**

5. What do you think the benefits might be of using this alternative to physical violence?
 - **The child would learn to fear the stove, not the caregiver.**
 - **The child would learn how to not get burned.**
 - **The child would learn without the parent yelling and hitting.**
6. What support do you think you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care?
 - **People who understand and don't get upset with you for trying an alternative method.**
 - **Parenting classes.**
 - **Support groups for parents who want to raise their kids non-violently.**
 - **Friends who use alternative parenting methods.**

Episode #4: "I Don't Want to Hug Uncle Pookey"

Answers:

1. What is the child doing that the caregiver wants the child to stop?
They think the child is being "disrespectful" because she says she doesn't want to be hugged.
2. What does the caregiver want the child to learn? (What's the goal of the punishment?)
They want her to be respectful.
3. What does Mother Wit suggest the caregiver do instead? Break the strategy into steps:
 1. **Tell the adult that the child is at an age where she is learning to set boundaries.**
 2. **Tell the child to say, "I don't really feel like hugging right now. How about I give you a high five or a fist bump instead?"**
 3. **Remember that it's not good to force a child to touch or be touched by anyone.**
4. What do you think the challenges might be of using this alternative to physical violence?
Answers will vary, but may include:
 - **It's embarrassing if you think a child is being disrespectful.**
 - **It might be hard to remember what to say.**
5. What do you think the benefits might be of using this alternative to physical violence?
 - **It can help improve her self-esteem.**
 - **It teaches her to trust her own instincts and claim ownership over her own body and personal space.**
6. What support do you think you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care?
 - **People who understand and don't get upset with you for trying an alternative method.**
 - **Parenting classes.**

- Support groups for parents who want to raise their kids non-violently.
- Friends who use alternative parenting methods.

Episode #5: "Don't Bite Mommy"

Answers:

1. What is the child doing that the caregiver wants the child to stop?
He is biting her.
2. What does the caregiver want the child to learn? (What's the goal of the punishment?)
She wants him to learn not to bite because it hurts and it's wrong.
3. What does Mother Wit suggest the caregiver do instead? Break the strategy into steps:
 1. **Grab your hand, bring it close to your face, and tell him that it hurts.**
 2. **Show him the bite mark on your hand and say firmly, "We don't bite. Biting hurts."**
 3. **Let him know you don't approve of this kind of behavior.**
4. What do you think the challenges might be of using this alternative to physical violence?
Answers will vary, but may include:
 - **It would be hard not to bite him because you'd be so angry.**
 - **It's embarrassing when kids bite you in front of other parents, and if you don't bite him back they might think you're weak.**
 - **It might be hard to remember what to say.**
5. What do you think the benefits might be of using this alternative to physical violence?
 - **He would learn that biting is wrong and all violence is wrong.**
 - **He would learn to trust that his mother will protect him and teach him how to behave.**
6. What support do you think you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care?
 - **People who understand and don't get upset with you for trying an alternative method.**
 - **Parenting classes.**
 - **Support groups for parents who want to raise their kids non-violently.**
 - **Friends who use alternative parenting methods.**

Episode #6: "Parenting in the Pew"

Answers:

1. What is the child doing that the caregiver wants the child to stop?
He is playing in the pew.
2. What does the caregiver want the child to learn? (What's the goal of the punishment?)
She wants him to learn to sit still and stop playing in church.

3. What does Mother Wit suggest the caregiver do instead? Break the strategy into steps:

1. **Bring toys or coloring books to keep them busy.**
2. **Pack a snack or juice box.**
3. **Wake them extra early on Sunday morning, that way they can take a nap in church.**

4. What do you think the challenges might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- **It would be hard not to hit him because you'd be so angry.**
- **It's embarrassing when kids act out in front of other parents, and if you don't hit him they might think you're weak.**
- **It might be hard to remember what to get ready before church.**

5. What do you think the benefits might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

Church will not be a place of fear. It will be a positive experience, so when they get older they can learn to participate in meaningful ways.

6. What support do you think you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care?

- **People who understand and don't get upset with you for trying an alternative method.**
- **Parenting classes.**
- **Support groups for parents who want to raise their kids non-violently.**
- **Friends who use alternative parenting methods.**

Episode #8: "I'll Slap the Black Off You!"

Answers:

1. What is the child doing that the caregiver wants the child to stop?

The kids are running wild and acting crazy.

2. What does the caregiver want the child to learn? (What's the goal of the punishment?)

She wants them to stop running wild in the grocery store.

3. What does Mother Wit suggest the caregiver do instead? Break the strategy into steps:

1. **Don't tell him you'll "slap the black off him" because it could scare him.**
2. **Set rules to be obeyed before you get to the store.**
 1. **Tell them, "We're going shopping. There'll be no running. No touching things. No temper tantrums. No begging. No sweets."**
 2. **Give them a snack.**
 3. **Have them help shop by telling them to look for something specific.**
 4. **Set rules. Be consistent. Include them in the shopping.**

4. What do you think the challenges might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- It would be hard not to hit them because you'd be so stressed.
- It's embarrassing when kids act out in front of other parents, and if you don't hit him they might think you're weak.
- It might be hard to remember all the steps as you get ready to go shopping.

5. What do you think the benefits might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

If you make it fun, include them in the shopping, and teach them how to behave, shopping will be less stressful.

6. What support do you think you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care?

- People who understand and don't get upset with you for trying an alternative method.
- Parenting classes.
- Support groups for parents who want to raise their kids non-violently.
- Friends who use alternative parenting methods.

Pg. 16-65 -- Teach Your Children Well

In this handout, students are reminded that parents are a child's first teachers. Ask students to fill in the blanks with words from the column on the right. Then ask students to think of examples from their own experience that illustrate the statement.

Answers:

1. Parents should use phrases like "please" and "thank you" in order to teach children manners.
2. If parents read with children, children will learn to love books.
3. Parents who listen to children demonstrate to them that their thoughts and feelings matter.
4. If parents laugh with their children, children will learn the importance of having a good sense of humor.
5. Parents can teach children how to solve problems if they give them a chance to think of alternatives and work out conflicts.
6. Parents who praise children when they do something right help children to develop a positive sense of self.
7. Parents show patience when they don't rush children and encourage them to take their time to do things well.
8. Parents are continually giving children examples of how to act and in that way are the most important role models children have.

Pg. 16-66 – 16-67 -- Disciplining Children: What Works

On this handout, students learn about strategies for handling children’s challenging behavior. They read about the benefits of telling children what they can do (as opposed to what they can’t), using distraction, using positive recognition, and thinking about consequences in advance.

Pg. 16-68 – 16-69 -- “How to Discipline Your Child without Spanking”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVFt7Ahs8gw

Watch this video in class. Review the six steps outlined in the film.

After viewing the film, review the key points made by the film which are outlined on the handout:

1. Establish clear rules. Set boundaries and be consistent.
2. Use distraction before children misbehave.
3. Don’t give feedback to tantrums.
4. Use time out.
5. “Catch them being good.”
6. Don’t spank, hit, whip or beat your child.

Then ask students to work together to answer the questions addressed by the film and the handout.

Answers:

1. Why is it important that rules be consistent and clear?

It helps the child understand what is expected.

2. What is an example of “distraction” that might be used to get a child to do the right thing?

Answers may vary, but should include examples in which children are encouraged to do something positive instead of the negative behavior the parent wants to stop.

3. What is the difference between “negative” and “positive” reinforcement?

Negative reinforcement is doing something children don’t like (like yelling or screaming) and positive reinforcement is doing something children do like (like cuddling or comforting.) Both kinds of behaviors can serve as reinforcement if they are used to give attention to behaviors parents don’t like.

4. Why is it important to “catch a child being good”?

Children will be more likely to do more of that behavior to get positive reinforcement.

5. What are three possible unexpected consequences of spanking, beating or hitting children?

- **When children are hit, they learn that hitting is okay.**
- **Children may not be able to tell the difference between hitting for discipline and hitting animals, other children, or future partners when they are angry.**
- **It is easy to lose control when you are hitting.**

Pg. 16-70 -- “Children Learn What They Live”

Copy the poem, “Children Learn What They Live,” by Dorothy Law Nolte, and share it with the class. www.empowermentresources.com/info2/childrenlearn.html

Ask students to read the classic poem aloud. Discuss the meaning of each line with the group, asking whether they agree or disagree. Ask them to reflect on their own experiences as a parent and as a child to evaluate the truth of each line. Use this poem in together with “Taking Care of Children: Advice Poems by Parents in Jail” in preparation for students writing their own poems about parenting.

Pg. 16-71 -- “A Song for Mama” by Boyz II Men

www.youtube.com/watch?v=tap90z44VVR8
www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/boyziimen/asongformama.html

If possible, have students watch the video and read the lyrics to the song “A Song for Mama” by Boyz II Men, then answer the questions below. Ask them to answer the questions on the handout and have volunteers share their responses with the class.

Answers:

1. Write three sentences in which you describe how the singer feels about his mother, in your own words.

Answers will vary.

2. A **metaphor** is a type of figurative language in which one thing is said to be another in order to show a comparison. (“I am a rock.”) What metaphors does the singer use to describe his mama? What metaphor does he use to tell when she was there for him?

- **You always will be the girl in my life**
- **You’re the queen of my heart**
- **You were there to love and care for me / When skies were grey**

3. A **simile** is a type of figurative language in which one thing is compared to another, using “like” or “as.” What similes does the singer use to describe his mother’s love for him and his love for her?

- **Your love is like / Tears from the stars**
- **Lovin’ you is like food to my soul**

4. What were some of the thoughts and feelings you had when you watched the video or read the lyrics? **Answers will vary.**

Pg. 16-72 - 16-76 -- Taking Care of Children:

Advice Poems by Parents in Jail

Ask students to read aloud **Taking Care of Children: Advice Poems by Parents in Jail**. Discuss the meaning of each poem, asking whether they agree or disagree. Ask them to reflect on their own experiences as a parent and as a child to evaluate the message in each poem. Use these poems together with **Children Learn What They Live** in preparation for students writing their own poems about parenting.

Pg. 16-77 -- Taking Care of Children: Write an Advice Poem

After reading the handouts **Children Learn What They Live** as well as **Taking Care of Children: Advice Poems by Parents in Jail**, ask students to write a poem in which they give advice about how to care for children. Tell them to think about what children need to grow up healthy and self-confident. Ask them to give advice on how parents should take care of their needs. Tell them their poems may rhyme or not, be an acrostic or not. (An acrostic poem is a poem in which the first letters of each line combine to spell a word.) Encourage students to use metaphors or similes to communicate their ideas. Ask volunteers to share their poems with the class.

Pg. 16-78 - 16-79 -- Teach Somebody Something

Tell students there are many opportunities in life to give back by teaching somebody something. Ask students to read the essay "Teach Somebody Something," then reflect on what they, too, have to offer. Ask them to write a five paragraph essay in which they describe a skill or understanding they have that they can use to teach others.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES -- Little Children, Big Challenges: Tips from Sesame Street for Parents and Caregivers

Sesame Street has developed an online toolkit called *Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration*. It is an educational outreach initiative for families with children (ages 3 – 8) who are coping with a parent’s incarceration. The resources provide talking points and tools to help families manage the changes resulting from this situation and to find comfort in one another.

Teachers may want to print some of the activities to use in the classroom with incarcerated parents.

www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/incarceration#2

www.sesamestreet.org/cms_services/services?action=download&uid=24467219-1a98-4240-9fc3-cc738714e819

Unit Sixteen

TAKING CARE OF OTHERS: Parenting Wisely

Student Activities

How Can You Tell if You Are Ready to Raise a Child?

How do you *know* if you're ready to *raise a child*? The most important and rewarding work in the world is also the hardest! There is more to raising children than having a baby! If you don't have children yet, read the questions below to help you decide if and when you are ready to have a family. If you have kids now, ask yourself if you are ready to have another. Whether you are a man or a woman, before you decide to have a child, you should be able to answer *yes* to all of these questions.



*If you can't answer yes yet, don't do it!
Practice safe sex and wait till you are ready.*

	Are you mature? Are you an adult? Are you able to make independent decisions and take excellent care of yourself? Are you able to live independently?
	Are you willing to put a child's needs before your own? Are you ready to make painful or difficult sacrifices for a child, in the middle of the night, if the child has special needs, and when you or the child is sick?
	Do you have unflagging support? Do you have a parent or a spouse or a partner who is willing to be with you through all of it -- the hard times as well as the fun times -- for at least the next eighteen years?
	Do you make enough money right now to be able to pay medical expenses, provide a quality living environment, and pay for baby supplies, clothes and food? Do you know how you will support yourself for the next twenty years? Do you have a job? Do you have a career? Do you feel financially secure right now?
	Have you taken care of any "unfinished business" that could interfere with caring for a child? For example, are you free of problems with drugs or alcohol, anger, depression or abuse that could seriously affect your ability to "give your all" to your child, and could interfere with your ability to keep the child in your custody?
	Do you know how you will provide childcare? Have you thought about who will care for the child if and when you have to work? Do you make enough money right now to pay for childcare?

	Do you have knowledge about and experience with babies and children? Have you spent time watching good parents care for their kids? Have you taken parenting courses or read books about parenting? Have you gotten advice about childrearing from parents you admire and respect? Do you have people you can go to for advice when you need it?
	Are you prepared to deal with the unexpected? Do you know what you would do if you had triplets, if you had a child with special needs, or if the person you expect to help you raise the child can no longer assist you?
	Do you have clear and strong values about parenting? Do you know what you believe? Do you know what kind of an environment you want your child raised in, what you want to teach your child, and who you want your child to spend time with to teach positive values?
	Are you ready and willing and excited about living with and taking care of a child every day -- doing whatever needs to be done -- for at least the next eighteen years?
	Have you met your own needs? Have you gotten your education and learned the skills you need, knowing that you may have to put off education or training that is important to you in order to take care of a child?
	Are you willing to live crime-free so you will be there full time for your child and will be able to be a positive role model for your child for the rest of your life?

Why do you think it's important to think carefully and plan thoroughly before having a child?

What do you think the consequences might be of not thinking carefully and planning thoroughly before having a child?

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/love-family-heart-belly-pregnant-3549737/>



▼ *Tips from a Father in Prison*

▼ *Michael Carlin*

As a father in prison, I have experienced many different emotional highs and lows in trying to reattach to my son who is now a man with a family of his own. In my particular case, it was most difficult getting past the negative things my son was told about me during our separation.

This is a common experience for incarcerated fathers. For years I had many questions about my son and how he was managing without a father.

How had our separation made him feel about me being in prison? What exactly had he been told about me, and how could he eventually overcome any negative images or preconceived notions about me based upon what he was told?

Was he angry? Was he worried about it? How did he think I felt about him? Most importantly, who did his father's incarceration make him in his own eyes? So many questions.

The following is a list of suggestions that you can try in maintaining the attachment to your children from inside a prison.

- (1) **Even if your relationship with the mother of your children is over**, you need to establish and maintain a positive relationship with her. For the sake of your children try to find ways to connect with her respectfully.
- (2) **Don't expect big changes right away** from your family members. Take your time.
- (3) **Find out about policies** regarding how you can connect with your child-visitation, letters, telephone calls, audio tapes, etc. Ask your prison chaplain, counselor or other staff.
- (4) **Develop a plan and follow it** on how often you will connect with your child.
- (5) **When explaining to your children** why you are not living with them, be honest but respect their ability to understand it according to their age.
- (6) **When telling your children how important they are to you**, do not be surprised if they do not respond the way you want them to. Children are often angry that you did something wrong that prevents you from being with them.
- (7) **To establish and maintain your family relationships** be ready to make amends and apologize to them.
- (8) **Find ways to support your children** emotionally, financially, and spiritually as much as possible.
- (9) **Your family/children need to be able to rely on you** if you say you will call or write regularly, so be consistent in your approach and your contact schedule.
- (10) **Be realistic about goals and expectations.** Don't expect too much, too soon from them.
- (11) **Remember family celebrations, special occasions and cultural events.** If you have hobby crafts at prison make gifts or draw pictures and make them into a coloring book.
- (12) **If at all possible, purchase small items for your children** through commissary or mail order catalogs.
- (13) **Use your time constructively.** Get your GED, take Parenting Classes, Anger Management, Adult Continuing Education Classes, anything that betters yourself.

(14) **Some prisons allow you to purchase and make video or audio tapes.** Use these to tell stories, share memories, bedtime stories, etc. Have your children listen to it when they miss you.

(15) **Before your release date, clear up any legal problems** that may be pending: driving record, credit problem, child support, etc.

(16) **Your children might not know how to say exactly what they are feeling and thinking,** so be patient with them.

(17) **Make a realistic plan** and follow through, no matter how bad things get, when re-connecting with your children after you are released from jail.

(18) **While you are still in prison, research programs that might help you reach your goals once released.** Seek out programs about parenting, housing, jobs, legal problems, credit problems, etc.

(19) **Work with other prison fathers** trying to connect with their children from inside prison.

(20) **Get some counseling** from the appropriate staff (psychologist, Chaplain, case manager, correctional counselor).

(21) **Think about how you want to be a parent and your future as a dad** and make decisions about that future. Look at your own relationship with your Dad to see what was learned, good and bad.

Think about how you want to be a parent and your future as a dad and make decisions about that future. Look at your own relationship with your Dad to see what was learned, good and bad.

(22) **Go to the prison library,** take the time to read what you can to try to learn being a better Dad. Try to read as much as you can about father/child relationships.

(23) **Check out some of the other resources** in the Incarcerated Fathers Library.

Michael Carlin was selected as the recipient of the first Fellowship of the Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents in 1996. He has served 14 years of consecutive sentences to state and federal prison for bank robbery and escape. •

Incarcerated Fathers Library pamphlets may be downloaded without charge from the Family and Corrections Network (FCN) web site, www.fcnetwork.org. Duplication is permitted and encouraged, so long as the materials are not altered or sold.

A printed set of the ten pamphlets can be ordered for \$6.00, shipping included, from FCN at the address below. Ask for *FCN REPORT #31 - The Incarcerated Fathers Library*. Sorry, FCN is not budgeted to mail free copies.

The Incarcerated Fathers Library was made possible with the generous support of the Snowden Fund of the Tides Foundation. Many thanks to Michael Carlin and Joel Argentino for their valued work on this project.

Send comments to The Incarcerated Fathers Library at FCN, 32 Oak Grove Road, Palmyra, VA 22963, 434/589-3036, 434/589-6520 Fax, fcn@fcnetwork.org.

Copyright Family and Corrections Network, 2002.

Parenting While Incarcerated

Questions for Reflection

- 1.** Do you have children in your life whom you care about and who care about you? What are their names and ages?

- 2.** For the sake of your children, or for the children you may have in the future, why do you think it is important that you stay out of jail or prison after you are released?

- 3.** Are you in touch with your children now? How do you communicate with them?

- 4.** Have you talked with them honestly about your incarceration?

Parenting While Incarcerated, continued

5. Have you apologized to them?

6. Are you parenting them from jail? How?

7. How can you prepare yourself to parent them after your release?

8. What positive steps do you plan to take to help your children (or the children in your life who are influenced by you) to do well in school, get good jobs and stay out of jail?

“Parents in Prison: A Focus on Children”

www.nytimes.com/1999/04/07/us/parents-prison-special-report-inmate-population-grows-so-does-focus-children.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm

Read the article “Parents in Prison: A Special Report; As Inmate Population Grows, So Does a Focus on Children.” As you read, compare the information in the article to your own experiences as a parent in prison or as a child of incarcerated parents. Use the following questions to develop your comprehension skills. Discuss your answers with the class.

1. What do experts say is the factor that puts children at greatest risk for incarceration?
2. What does Lawrence Sherman mean by the term “the multiplier effect?”
3. What percent of the juveniles in custody have a parent or close relative in prison?
4. What are some of the reasons children with a parent in prison are more likely to get in trouble?
5. When a person is arrested, does anyone in the system ask if he or she has children?
6. Why might inmates be evasive when prison authorities do ask about their children?
7. What are two different opinions about whether children should visit their parents in prison?
8. Which of these two opinions do you agree with most? Why?
9. In what ways does Hector Millan think prison destroys families?
10. What does he mean when he says “the damage done is irreparable”? Do you agree or disagree?
11. What are some of the lessons imparted by the Sing Sing parenting program?
12. Why does Dean Hairston say, “A visit to a prison is a very emotionally difficult experience?”
13. In your experience, are any of these consequences true of prison visits?
14. What, in your opinion, can a parent in prison do to maintain a healthy relationship with his or her children?

Write a Letter to Your Child

Take time while you are incarcerated to stay in touch with your child or children. Writing letters to your kids demonstrates how much you care about them, and how interested you are in them being successful in school. You can continue to be a positive role model from jail.



Here is a sample letter you might write a child in elementary school:

Dear Brandon,

July 7, 2012

How are you? I am thinking of you often and want you to know how much I love you and care about you.

How is school? Do you like your teacher? Have you made friends with some of the other kids in your class? What have you been learning about in school? What books are you reading? Tell me about them. Please write back to tell me all about school because I am very interested in how it is going for you.

I believe in you. You are very smart and I know you will do well.

I'm also in school. I'm taking a class to get my high school diploma and I am proud of myself because I am using my time wisely. I'm learning a lot.

I can't wait to hear from you!

Love, Dad



Here is a sample letter you might write a child in high school:

Dear Marissa,

June 4, 2013

How are you? I am thinking of you and hoping that everything is going well for you in school. I know that high school can be challenging and I know it is harder for you not to have me in your life in person to encourage you. But I want you to know that even though I am incarcerated, I am here for you. I believe in you. Please write to me and tell me about your classes, your teachers, your friends and what you are reading and learning.

You are very smart and capable and I know you will do well in school. Remember to go to school every day on time, do all your homework and ask your teachers for help if you need it. I expect you to graduate from high school. Remember, I am very proud of you!

I am also in school. I am taking a class to get my high school diploma and I am proud of myself because I am learning a lot and loving it.

I can't wait to hear from you!

Love, Mom

Why It's Important to Talk with Your Baby

Adapted from <http://talkwithyourbaby.org/why/>

Talking is important for building your baby's brain. In the first three years of life, your baby's brain triples in size. It also becomes much more complex – and this doesn't just happen without outside help. The brain develops as your baby interacts



with the world – seeing what will happen if the baby fusses, giggles, blows bubbles, snuggles up to mom, dad, or grandparents, says “mama” or “dada,” or throws the cereal on the floor. Research has shown that lots of talking with children in the first three years of life builds structures in the brain that will be needed later to support reading and thinking skills.

Some families are talkative. The parents, grandparents, and other caregivers talk with babies a lot, even before the baby can understand or answer. They imitate facial expressions and sounds, tell stories, ask the baby questions, sing, talk about pictures in books, and tell the baby how terrific he or she is. Other families don't talk much with their babies. The parents may not understand how important it is to talk with very young children, or they may not have grown up with that experience, or they may be busy and have other things on their minds.

Research has shown that children from talkative families may have heard 30 million more words directed to them by age three than children from less-talkative families! And the same research study showed that the more words the children had heard by age three, the better they did on tests of cognitive development.

Those same children from talkative families also did better on reading readiness tests in the third grade. Why? One reason may be that their brains got more stimulation during that important period of brain growth. Learning to read greatly depends on having and hearing a big vocabulary; lots of talking by parents and other adults, especially when combined with reading, is wonderful for building vocabulary.

Of course, it's not only your baby's brain that we care about! Lots of talk from loving adults also builds healthy relationships and social skills. It's the relationship that matters – your baby can't learn language, or much else, from a television set.



You are your baby's first and best teacher in matters of building trust, dealing with emotional and physical needs, and interacting with others in positive ways. All of these skills are important for your child's later success in school and beyond.

So... TALK WITH YOUR BABY, a lot, during the brain's formative first three years, and set your child on a path to lifelong learning. *Your baby has a lot to learn from you, and a lot to teach you.*

1. Did the information in this article influence your opinion about whether it's important to talk with your baby? Why or why not?

2. What are at least three reasons the article gives to support the main idea that it's important for parents and caregivers to talk with babies?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. What are some specific things that parents and caregivers can do to increase babies' language development?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Ten Tips to Make Reading Fun for Your Child

Adapted from Laura Strom | Editor-in-Chief of Newmark Learning
<http://www.rd.com/advice/parenting/10-tips-to-make-reading-fun-for-your-child/>

Did you know that simply reading to your child is one of the best things you can do for his or her education? Reading aloud to children does the following:

- *Helps them hear language in new and different ways.*
- *Gives them a sense of story.*
- *Leads to better performance in reading, writing, listening, and other school subjects, according to researchers.*
- *Creates a bond between the reader and the child, facilitating a special memory association between reading and a happy experience.*
- *Turns many children into life-long readers. And a life-long reader is a life-long learner!*



Ten tips to get the most out of your reading time

1 Read every day, even if you only have a few minutes. This models that daily reading is an important part of each day. Children also love a pleasant routine. They will look forward to this special time.

2 Create a cozy place to read together. It can be a special chair, or even a pile of pillows.

3 Let your child help you choose what book to read. This will help you keep the child's interest, and it makes him feel important. Visiting a library regularly makes choosing books easy and fun.

4 Talk about the cover. Have your child guess what the book is about. Who are the characters? What is the title? Who is the author? Have you read books by this author before? Have you seen this illustrator before?

5 Change your voice to go with the characters and the action. Make sure you don't read too quickly, too. You don't want to sound like you're rushing to finish.

6 Show the pictures as you read. Not only do the pictures help a child understand and connect to the book, the illustrations often add humor and whimsy to fiction.

7 After you read the book, talk about the story. Go back and look at the pictures again and talk about what happened. Point out any hard words to see if your child can figure out what they mean by looking at the surrounding words and pictures.

8 Try to make connections to something in the story and your life or the child's life.

9 Be sure to prompt your child to critique the book. Ask questions such as, *What did you like? What did you dislike? What made you laugh? What did you learn?*

10 Vary the genres that you read. Mix fiction and nonfiction. A child's future favorite book might be in a genre he or she has not yet experienced!

1. What is the central theme of the article?
2. In your own words, what are some of the reasons the article says parents should read to their children?
3. Why do you think children might enjoy some of the tips suggested above?
4. Pick a children's book and read it to a classmate, using some of the tips above, then reverse roles. Talk about the experience. How do you think these tips help involve the reader and the listener?

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/read-for-reading-1710011/>

Helping Children Succeed in School

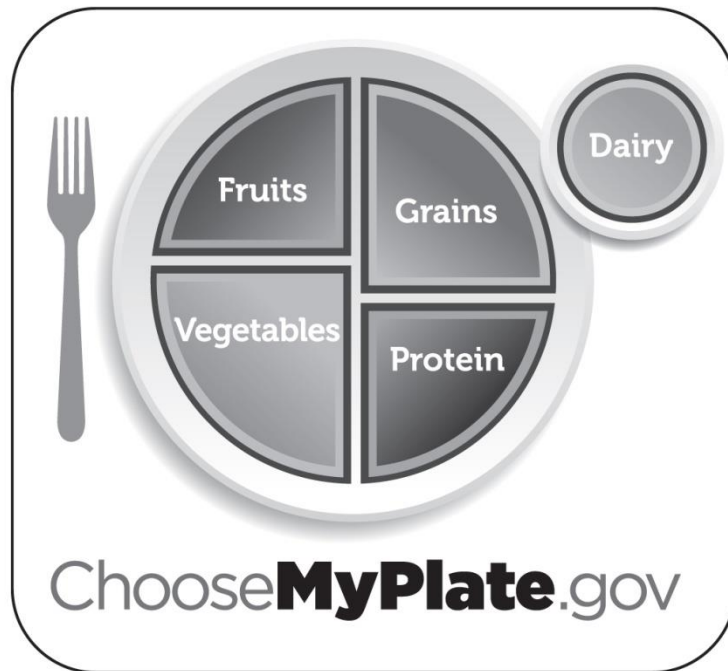
For children to be successful in school -- to enjoy learning, get good grades, gain important skills, and graduate from high school and -- they need their parents and guardians to be involved. There are a lot of things you can do to help your children feel good about themselves as students, learn a lot, and stay in school. Ask yourself which of the following things you already do, which you need to do more and what help you might need to guide your children in this way. Can you begin any of these strategies while incarcerated?

<i>Do you / did you:</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Some times</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Help I might need</i>
make sure your child eats breakfast every day?					
make sure your child gets enough rest?					
make sure your child is in school every day?					
make sure your child is on time to school?					
read to your child every day?					
count with your child every day?					
identify letters and words in signs?					
have children's books at home?					
take your child to the library once a week?					
listen to your child?					
ask your child about her day at school?					
ask your child about subjects he is interested in?					
provide a quiet place to read and do homework?					

<i>Do you / did you::</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Some times</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Help I might need</i>
have paper, pencils, markers and crayons available?					
have a dictionary for your child to use?					
model for your child by reading books yourself?					
let your child know how much you value education?					
have a safe place for your child to keep his or her schoolwork?					
know your child's teacher?					
go to parent-teacher conferences?					
attend your child's performances and sports events?					
write notes or call the school when your child is absent?					
write notes to the teacher when special things (good or bad) affect your child or your family?					
volunteer at your child's school when you can?					

Good Nutrition is Important for Children!

www.choosemyplate.gov



The USDA has produced one page information sheets for use at home and in the classroom. Read these tips from the Ten Tips Nutrition Education Series for suggestions on providing good nutrition to children.

- [Choose MyPlate](#)
- [Add More Vegetables to Your Day](#)
- [Focus on Fruits](#)
- [Make Half Your Grains Whole](#)
- [Got Your Dairy Today?](#)
- [With Protein Foods, Variety is Key](#)
- [Build a Healthy Meal](#)
- [Healthy Eating for Vegetarians](#)
- [Smart Shopping for Veggies and Fruits](#)
- [Liven Up Your Meals With Vegetables and Fruits](#)
- [Kid-Friendly Veggies and Fruits](#)
- [Be a Healthy Role Model for Children](#)
- [Cut Back on Your Kid's Sweet Treats](#)
- [Salt and Sodium](#)

Laundry Activities to Promote Learning

--

Supermarket / Shopping Activities to Promote Learning

--

Food / Cooking Activities to Promote Learning

--

Car and Bus Activities

- Find letters/colors/letter sounds in signs as you drive.
- Use the time to drill spelling words or multiplication facts.
- Check out “books on tape” from the public library. Discuss the books. Ask comprehension questions.
- Play “I Spy”. Describe something that you see. Kids ask yes or no questions to guess.
- Play the alphabet category game. Pick a category like animals. Everyone names an animal that starts with A, then everyone names an animal that starts with B, continue through Z. Give hints (not the name) when needed. Younger children can name any word; older children can name book characters, famous people, math words, etc.
- Play geography. Name a city, state, river, etc. The next person names a geographic place that starts with the last letter of the word before it. You can play with different categories other than geographic places.
- Keep a running list of license tags from different states. This works well on a long trip.
- Keep track of the types of Florida license tags you see. (FAMU, FSU, UF, manatee, education, etc.) Older children can graph the tags, figure out what fraction was FAMU, what decimal was manatee etc.
- List the kinds of cars you see. Graph or do fractions and percents.
- Look for letters on signs around you. Find them in alphabetical order.
- Try to find all the numbers from 1-100 on signs as you drive.



Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/bus-vehicle-travel-transportation-1297050/>

Clothing Activities

- Talk about colors and patterns on the clothes. "Let's put on your shirt with blue stripes."
- Talk about matching outfits. "This shirt has blue and green in it. Let's put on the blue shorts so it will match."
- Talk about numbers. "You have two arms. First put one arm through. Now put the second arm through."
- Talk about body parts. "Let's put the shirt over your head. Now your arms, one, two." "I've got your foot. How many toes do you have on this foot? One, two, three, four, five."
- While dressing, talk about senses. "You have eyes to see with."
- Label your child's drawers so s/he can put the clothes away. Use pictures and words.
- Let your child pick out the clothes s/he wants to wear the night before.

Laundry Activities

- Have your child help sort laundry.
- Talk about size. "Mommy's shirt is big. Johnny's shirt is small."
- Talk about color. "Give me the red shorts."
- Talk about material. "Feel the towel. It's rough. It is terry cloth."
- Talk about seasons. "It's getting colder so we are wearing long sleeve shirts now."
- Talk about fractions. "First we fold the towel in half, then we fold it in thirds."
- Have your child match the socks.
- Have your child put all his shorts in one pile and shirts in another.



Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/sheets-towels-blankets-linen-clean-72155/>

Supermarket / Shopping Activities

- Plan a weekly menu with your kids. Talk about food groups. Include your children in the decision making process.
- Let older children help find items on your shopping list.
- Talk about colors on cans, shapes of boxes, etc.
- Play the ABC game, looking for letters on food items.
- Match pictures to words.
- Let children choose healthy snacks for their lunches.
- Have your child try a new fruit or vegetable each time at the store.



Food / Cooking Activities

- Talk about food groups.
- Talk about where food comes from. (ex. Milk comes from cows.)
- Plant a garden or grow seeds in pots.
- Have your children help you measure as you cook.
- Talk about color and size.
- Talk about fractions. Cut a sandwich in half, thirds, or sixths. Grilled cheese and peanut butter & jelly cut well.
- Compare and contrast two different foods. How are an apple and an orange alike? How are they different?
- Have children do a survey of who likes what vegetable. What fraction, decimal, percent like what? Do a graph.
- Plan weekly menus with your child. Talk about food groups.
- Keep a food diary for each person in the family. Did each person get at least some foods from each food group? The right amounts?
- Have your child help you pack their school lunch.

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/food-scribble-sketch-drawing-1104167/>

Reflections: Disciplining Kids

It is important to think about how you were raised before you decide how to discipline your kids. Be honest. Take time to reflect on how you were disciplined, what you think was effective, what you would have changed. By reflecting on your own childhood experiences, you can make important decisions about how you want to raise your own kids. By raising your kids thoughtfully and consciously, you can teach them valuable lessons and establish good, close, respectful, loving relationships with them. You don't have to repeat the mistakes of the past. You can change history.

1. What methods did your caretakers use to discipline you?

2. What do you think these methods taught you about how to act?

3. What were the feelings and thoughts you had as a child when you were disciplined?

Reflections: Disciplining Kids, cont.

4. What did your caretakers do that you want to repeat with your own kids? What helped you and formed you in positive ways? What did they do that helped you feel capable and self-confident?

5. What did your caretakers do that hurt you or harmed you or gave you negative messages? What did they do that you wish they hadn't done? Why? What do you want to do differently?

6. What values do you want to teach your kids and how do you want to teach those values?

Words of Wisdom: Protecting the Children

**The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved,
and rejection is the hell he fears.**

**I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection.
And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime
in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt --
and there is the story of mankind.**

John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

*If we are ever to turn toward a kindlier society and a safer world,
a revulsion against the physical punishment of children
would be a good place to start.*

Dr. Benjamin Spock

**There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul
than the way in which it treats its children.**

Nelson Mandela

*There never was a time when a major social problem was solved by beating a child.
And there never will be such a time... For centuries adults have injured children
and have lied about it, and other adults have heard those lies
and then merely turned away.*

Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop

**Proper education has to begin at home. . . . We don't need another federal
commission to study the problem. . . . What we need now is parents
sitting down with children, overseeing homework,
sending children off to school in the morning,
well fed, rested, and ready to learn.**

Bill Cosby

Family Violence HURTS Children

If you are in an abusive relationship and have children, they are being impacted by the violence. Even if you think children aren't aware, they are – they see, feel, and hear abuse. Family violence can have serious long term effects on children.

Children who witness domestic violence may get physically hurt as well as emotionally hurt. Over half of men who abuse women will also abuse children who live in the same home.

What are the emotional effects on children who witness abuse?

- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Fear
- Anger / bullying behavior
- Nervousness
- Guilt
- Lack of trust in others
- Fewer friends

What are the physical / health effects on children who witness abuse?

- Headaches
- Sleeping problems
- Nightmares
- Acting out with violence
- Eating problems
- School problems
- Bedwetting
- Alcohol / drug use

Children who grow up witnessing violence may believe that:

- Abuse is normal
- Adults can't be trusted
- Men and women are not equal
- It's okay to abuse someone if you are angry
- Children's needs are not important
- The ones you love will hurt you
- Home is not a safe place



<https://pixabay.com/en/punch-fist-hand-strength-isolated-316605/>

If you are an abuser, your children are witnessing violence which will harm them. Leave them so they will be safe and seek help immediately.

If you are being abused, your children are witnessing violence which will harm them. Leave the abuser so your children will be safe and seek help immediately.

Adapted from First Step, produced by the Florida Department of Health,
Sexual Violence Prevention Program (850)245-4455
Florida Domestic Violence hotline (800) 500-1119
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence www.fcadv.org

Stop Beating Black Children: *Vocabulary*

Study the words and phrases below before you read the article Stop Beating Black Children. Discuss their meaning as a class and write down definitions if you know them. Then read the article, and as you read, use the context to help you find the definitions of any words or phrases you're still unsure of. If you still need assistance, use a dictionary to help you find the meaning.

1. thicket of shrubbery that girdled the front porch _____

2. corporal punishment _____

3. attribute their successes _____

4. prerequisite for success _____

5. doctoral dissertation _____

6. well-orchestrated matrix _____

7. Jim Crow oppression _____

8. developmental milestone _____

9. reincarnated ancestors _____

10. brutality cascaded across other cultures _____

11. colonialism _____

12. religious indoctrination _____

13. endured the trauma _____

14. within bounds _____

15. consistently _____

16. significantly _____

17. maltreatment _____

18. malicious _____

19. erodes our children's humanity _____

20. co-signs the slave master's logic _____

21. comply _____

22. systemic racial devastation _____

23. strange and bitter fruit from the same tree _____

24. devaluation of our children _____

25. antidote _____

“Stop Beating Black Children”

By STACEY PATTON, MARCH 10, 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/opinion/sunday/stop-beating-black-children.html>

Stacey Patton (@DrStaceyPatton) is an assistant professor of multimedia journalism at Morgan State University and the author of the forthcoming “[Spare the Kids: Why Whipping Children Won’t Save Black America](#),” from which this essay was adapted.

Reflections

Read the article “Stop Beating Black Children” by Stacey Patton. After you read it, reflect on the author’s argument by answering the following questions:

1. What were the author’s experiences of being beaten as a child? How do you think the author’s experiences influenced her views and values about childrearing?

2. What did the author do as an adult that further influenced her views and values about childrearing?

3. “My adoptive mother, and generations of black parents like her, honestly believed that whipping children was a pillar of responsible black parenting.” What does the author mean by this statement? From your experience, do you agree or disagree?

4. What does the author believe is “one of the saddest untold stories in American history?” What evidence does she give to support her belief in this “untold story?”

5. Find a statement in the article that summarizes the author’s main idea (thesis) and copy it here.

6. Would you say that you agree, disagree, or are unsure about the author’s thesis? If you agree or disagree, give reasons to support your opinion. If you are unsure, state what other information you would need to help you form an opinion.

“You Can Have Authority with Your Children -- Without Hitting Them”

Excerpted from <http://hcz.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ALI-Baby-College.pdf>

The following words were spoken by a student in “Baby College,” a program for parents participating in the Harlem Children’s Zone. As you read it, think about the examples she gives for what she used to think about how to discipline children, and what she believes now that she has taken the course.

I thought I knew what was best for a boy growing up in this neighborhood. I thought you had to be tough because this neighborhood can be tough. When I was growing up, discipline meant a beating. I got the belt when I misbehaved at home, and the ruler when I acted up in school. I thought that’s what you needed to do with boys. I would hear people talk about how you shouldn’t yell or scream at children, let alone hit them, and I’d think to myself, they’re just being too sensitive – a beating worked for me, it taught me a lesson.

Then at Baby College they explained some things to us: why it might be better to call a time out than to yell at a child, what bad effects can result from hitting a child. They didn’t preach, they just talked about the facts and let us think and talk it out ourselves.

And I started to think about my daughter. I never even raise my voice to her. I talk to her about right and wrong, about studying in school and behaving. I can see that she doesn’t want to disappoint me, and that’s the reason she listens to me. And then I thought, it can be the same with my boy. You can have authority with your children without ever hitting them. Now I pray to God I never have to raise a hand to either of my children.”

1. What was the speaker’s experience with discipline when she was growing up in her neighborhood? Be specific.
2. How did those experiences influence her beliefs about childrearing?
3. How did the classes she took at Baby College influence and alter her views?
4. Identify some of the techniques the speaker now uses to discipline her children.

What Would Mother Wit Do?

<http://sparethekids.com/mother-wit-comics/>

Reprinted with permission of the author, Dr. Stacey Patton

Sometimes it can be very hard to figure out how to discipline children when they are behaving in ways we do not like. We want to teach them to do the right thing, but we need tools and advice! If the only way we know how to discipline, teach, or punish children is to hit them, it can be challenging to try alternative methods.

Read the first episode of "Mother Wit" comics. As you read, think about what the caregiver in the story planned to do at first to teach her child a lesson, and what changed her mind and convinced her to "switch" her methods of disciplining him.

Episode #1 - The Switch

1. What behavior did the child exhibit that upset his caregiver? _____

2. When the caregiver told the child to go get a switch, what did he do instead? Why?

3. What "switch" occurred in the caregiver's mind after the child came back? How do you feel about her decision?

EPISODE 1: THE SWITCH



MOTHER WIT

STACEY PATTON: WRITER
AUBREY HARDING: ARTIST

Motherwit comics reprinted with permission of Dr. Stacey Patton
<http://sparethekids.com/mother-wit-comics/>

What Would Mother Wit Do?

<http://sparethekids.com/mother-wit-comics/>

Reprinted with permission of the author, Dr. Stacey Patton

Read the following episodes of "Mother Wit" comics. After each story, think about what the caregivers in the story want to teach their kids and what strategies Mother Wit suggested they use. Then reflect on what the challenges and benefits might be of using this method and what support you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care.

Episode # _____ **Title** _____

1. What is the child doing that the caregiver wants the child to stop? _____

2. What does the caregiver want the child to learn? (What's the goal of the punishment?)

3. What does Mother Wit suggest the caregiver do instead? Break the strategy into steps:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

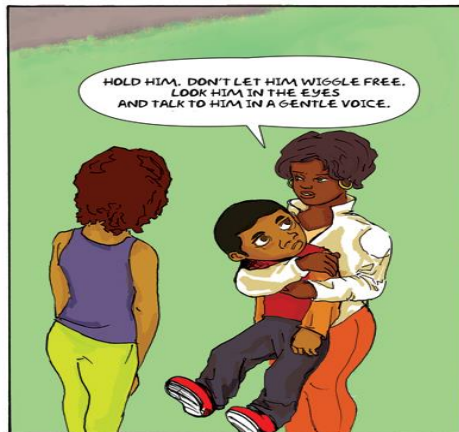
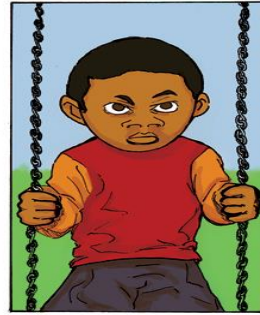
What Would Mother Wit Do?, cont.

4. What do you think the challenges might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

5. What do you think the benefits might be of using this alternative to physical violence?

6. What support do you think you might need to try the method in your own life, with children in your care?

EPISODE 2: "DON'T HIT MOMMY!"

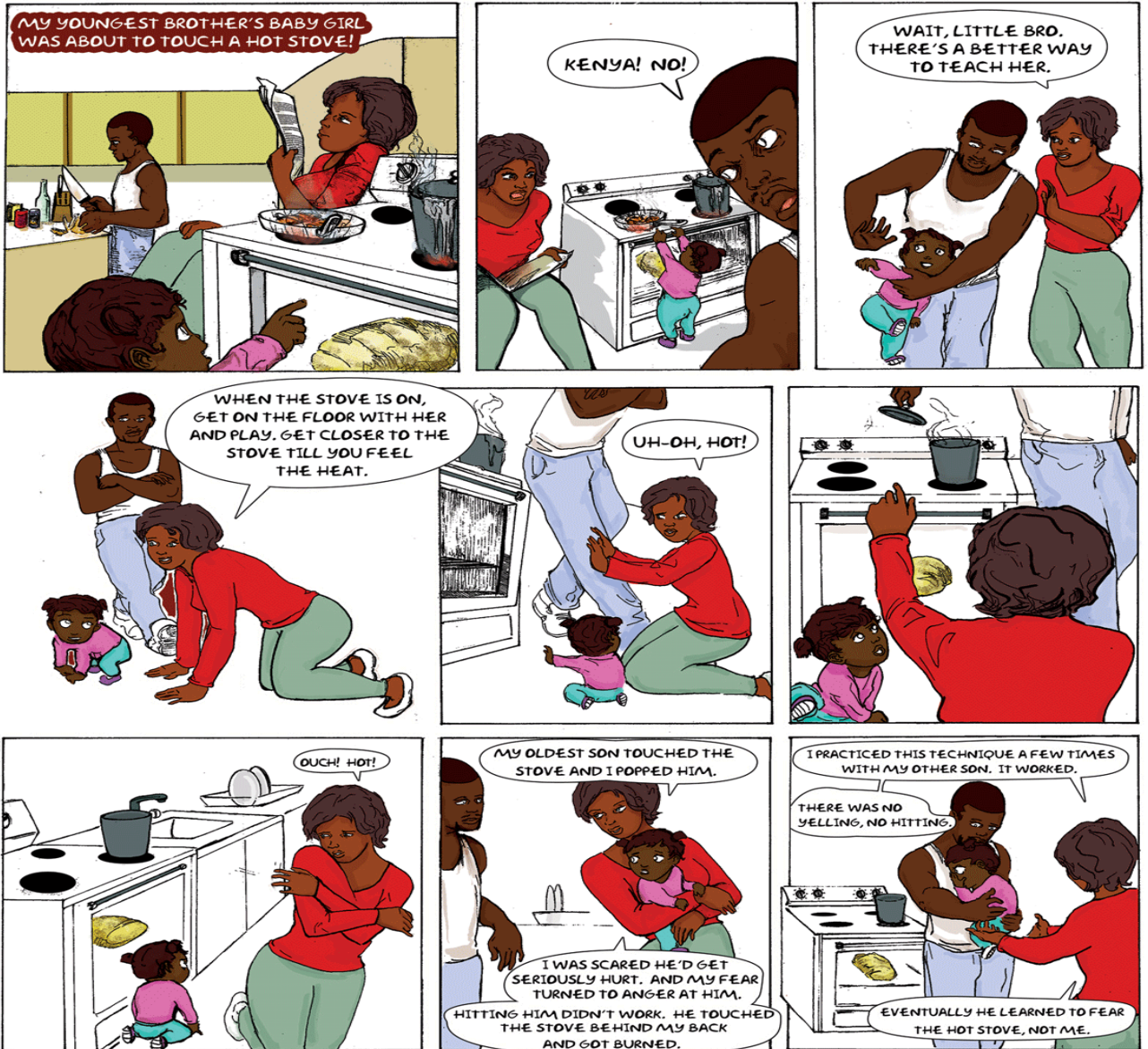


WWW.SPARETHEKIDS.COM

MOTHER WIT

STACEY PATTON: WRITER
AUBREY HARDING: ARTIST

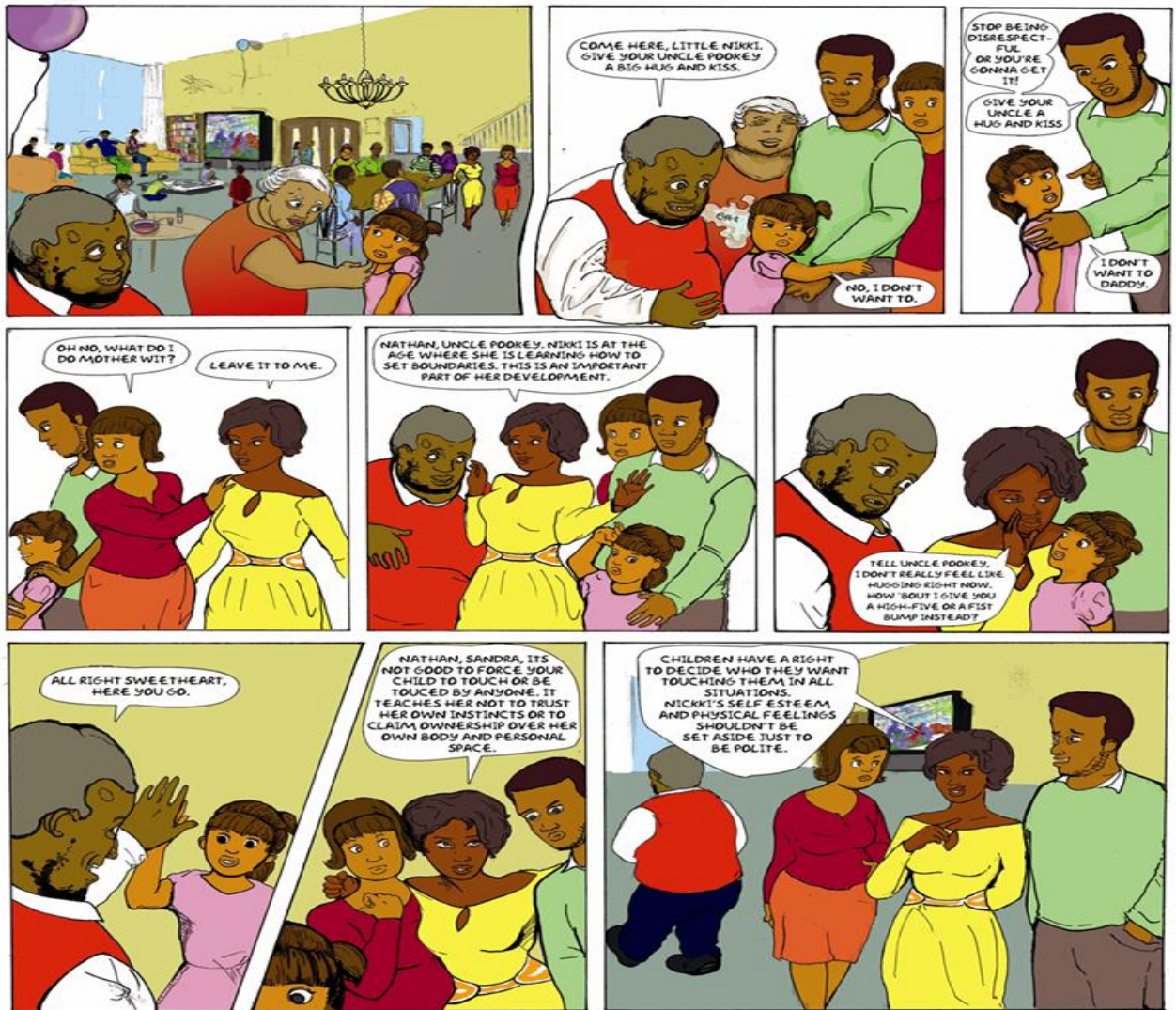
EPISODE 3: THE HOT STOVE



MOTHER WIT

STACEY PATTON: WRITER
AUBREY HARDING: ARTIST

EPISODE 4: "I DON'T WANT TO HUG UNCLE POOKEY"



WWW.SPARETHEKIDS.COM

MOTHER WIT

STACEY PATTON: WRITER
AUBREY HARDING: ARTIST

EPISODE 5: DON'T BITE MOMMY



WWW.SPARETHEKIDS.COM

MOTHER WIT

STACEY PATTON: WRITER
AUBREY HARDING: ARTIST

EPISODE 6: PARENTING IN THE PEW



WWW.SPARETHEKIDS.COM

MOTHER WIT

STACEY PATTON: WRITER
AUBREY HARDING: ARTIST

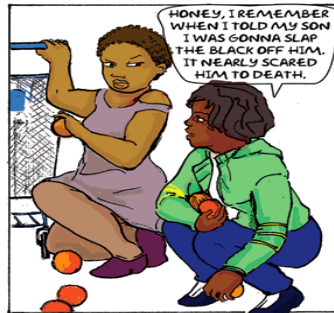
EPISODE 8: "I'LL SLAP THE BLACK OFF YOU!"



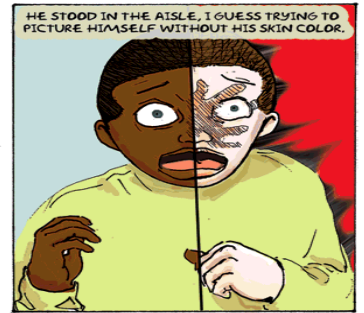
GET DOWN! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MINDS?



STOP RUNNING AND ACTIN' CRAZY BEFORE I SLAP THE BLACK OFF YOU!



HONEY, I REMEMBER WHEN I TOLD MY SON I WAS GONNA SLAP THE BLACK OFF HIM. IT NEARLY SCARED HIM TO DEATH.



HE STOOD IN THE AISLE, I GUESS TRYING TO PICTURE HIMSELF WITHOUT HIS SKIN COLOR.



OH MOTHER WIT, WHAT DO I DO TO STOP THEM FROM RUNNING WILD WHILE I'M TRYING TO SHOP?



FIRST, YOU MUST SET RULES TO BE OBEYED BEFORE YOU EVEN GET TO THE STORE. TELL THEM "WE ARE GOING SHOPPING."

THERE'LL BE NO RUNNING. NO TOUCHING THINGS. NO TEMPER TANTRUMS. NO BEGGING FOR SWEETS.



HUNGER CAUSES TANTRUMS. GIVE THEM A SNACK FROM HOME OR FROM THE STORE AND PAY AT THE END OF THE TRIP. HAVE THEM HELP SHOP BY TELLING THEM TO LOOK FOR SPECIFIC GROCERIES.

GIVE REWARDS FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR AND NO REWARDS FOR ACTING OUT.

BYE MOTHER WIT. PEACE OUT. LATER!



REMEMBER, SET RULES, BE CONSISTENT. INCLUDE THEM IN THE SHOPPING. MAKE IT FUN AND SHOPPING WILL BE LESS STRESSFUL.

THANKS MOTHER WIT.

MOTHER WIT

WWW.SPARETHEKIDS.COM

STACEY PATTON: WRITER
AUBREY HARDING: ARTIST

Teach Your Children Well

Parents are a child's first teachers. The influence of parents on children is profound! Be very careful about the messages you give your children, not just with what you SAY, but what you DO!!! Fill in the blanks with words from the column on the right. Then give an example from your own experience of a time you did this or witnessed it. .

Statement	Word list
1. Parents should use phrases like "please" and "thank you" in order to teach children_____. <i>Example:</i>	listen
2. If parents _____ with children, children will learn to love books. <i>Example:</i>	solve problems
3. Parents who _____ to children demonstrate to them that their thoughts and feelings matter. <i>Example:</i>	role models
4. If parents _____ with their children, children will learn the importance of having a good sense of humor. <i>Example:</i>	manners
5. Parents can teach children how to _____ if they give them a chance to think of alternatives and work out conflicts. <i>Example:</i>	patience
6. Parents who _____ children when they do something right help children to develop a positive sense of self. <i>Example:</i>	read
7. Parents show _____ when they don't rush children and encourage them to take their time to do things well. <i>Example:</i>	laugh
8. Parents are continually giving children examples of how to act and in that way are the most important _____ children have. <i>Example:</i>	praise

Disciplining Children: What Works

Parenting is hard! Children’s behavior can be very challenging and it can be hard to know how to respond when they do things that drive us crazy! But before you act, be aware:

- Many behaviors are normal! It is very important to understand normal child development!
- There are strategies that work!

Tell Children What They Can Do, Not Just What They Can’t

Sometimes children hear “Stop!” or “No!” or “Don’t do that” but don’t know what to do instead. Tell children what they *can* do in order to teach and reinforce positive behavior. For example, instead of saying “don’t” or “stop” in each of these situations, teach the child what to do:



Instead of saying:



You could say:

“Don’t put your shoes on the sofa.”	“Always take your shoes off before you sit on the sofa.”
“Stop yelling indoors!”	“Use your quiet indoor voice.”
“Don’t run in the store.”	“Always stay with the grocery cart.”
“Don’t come to the table with dirty hands.”	“Always wash your hands before we eat.”
“Stop being so loud.”	“Talk quietly.”
“Stop playing around.”	“You may sit at the table and read or draw.”
“Shut up!”	“You need to be quiet when we’re in the movie theater because it disturbs other people if we talk. You can talk after the movie is over.”
“Don’t touch anything in this store!”	“If we touch anything, it might break. Hold my hand when we’re indoors.”
“Don’t hurt the dog.”	“Treat the dog gently. Pet the dog like this.”

Disciplining Children: What Works, cont.

Distraction

Distraction is one of the best ways to redirect toddlers and pre-schoolers from doing something you don't want them to do (that is inappropriate) to something *they* want to do (that is appropriate) that you also want them to do.

For example, if a child wants to jump on the sofa, tell her a place she can safely jump (like doing jumping jacks or going outside.) If a child needs and wants to be physically active and you don't want him to run in the house, take him to the park or for a walk around the block. If a child wants to do something that is against your family's rules, tell her the rule and give her an alternative. For example, if she writes on the wall, tell her, "We do not write on the wall," and give her paper and crayons and a place to draw. If he hits his brother, tell him, "We do not hit in this family," tell him to go to apologize to his brother, then go to his room and cool down.

Don't give attention to the undesired activity. Instead, redirect the child toward appropriate behavior.

Positive Recognition

Make it a habit to routinely notice the things a child is doing well. Give positive attention to those behaviors you want to encourage. When she finishes her homework, tell her you are proud of her. When she puts her plate in the sink, tell her you appreciate that she remembered your family's rule. If he gets ready for school without fussing, tell him he did a good job and thank him for helping you. If he does well on a school assignment, review the work with him and praise him for working hard.

Think about Consequences in Advance

Children need to learn that there are consequences for inappropriate or unwanted behavior. Some families give positive rewards or points that can be traded in for treats for following rules and behaving well, and take points away for misbehavior; other families use praise and positive recognition for good behavior and consequences for bad behavior.

Consequences should be **clear** and **consistent**. Make sure you respond the same way to the same behavior all of the time. Make sure consequences are designed to teach good behavior. Make sure consequences are not too harsh for the unwanted behavior. Save big punishments for serious behavior.

“How to Discipline Your Child without Spanking” VIDEO



www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVFt7Ahs8gw

Watch this video in class. Review the six steps outlined in the film:

1. **Establish clear rules. Set boundaries and be consistent.** Help your child understand the rules by repeating them clearly in words they can understand. Say, “no hitting” or “we don’t draw on furniture” or “stay with me” or “please put your plate in the sink” in a clear firm voice so your child understands what is expected.
2. **Use distraction before children misbehave.** When a child is about to do something that you don’t want him or her to do, remind him or her of the rule and then introduce something else. For example, say: “It is not okay to pull the dog’s tail. Please come over here so we can read a story.”
3. **Don’t give feedback to tantrums.** Ignore behavior you don’t like -- don’t reinforce it! When a child is misbehaving, don’t yell or scream (negative reinforcement) or cuddle or comfort (positive reinforcement). Instead, tell the child the behavior is not okay and don’t give attention to the acting-out.
4. **Use time out.** When a child is 3 years old or older, use time out for approximately three minutes. Remind the child of the rule they are being disciplined for, then give immediate time out for approximately three minutes. For example, say: “You may not hit your brother. You may not get off this chair for three minutes.”
5. **“Catch them being good.”** Use positive reinforcement whenever a child is doing something positive. Recognize good behavior. Tell them you appreciate it when they do something good -- because children will be more likely to do more of that behavior in order to get the positive reinforcement. For example, say: “How great that you remembered to wash your hands after going to the bathroom! Good for you!”

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/child-young-child-boy-girl-kid-1797643/>

“How to Discipline Your Child without Spanking”, cont.

6. Don’t spank, hit, whip or beat your child. If you were spanked when you were young, you may be uncomfortable trying a different approach. You may believe hitting is the best way to show a child how serious you are and to establish your authority. But hitting children can lead to unexpected consequences. Think about these things before you spank:

- When children are hit, they learn that hitting is okay.
- Children may not be able to tell the difference between hitting for discipline and hitting animals, other children, or future partners when they are angry.
- It is easy to lose control when you are hitting.
- Children will respect your authority if your rules are clear, if you are consistent, and if you show them respect, even if they are not spanked.

Many parents were hit when they were children and therefore may not know any other ways to teach their children how to behave. They may have never seen a child raised using alternative, non-violent methods and so they are reluctant to try them. They may be afraid their children will see them as weak. But remember: it is possible to raise healthy, happy, disciplined children without spanking!

Questions:

1. Why is it important that rules be consistent and clear?
2. What is an example of “distraction” that might be used to get a child to do the right thing?
3. What is the difference between “negative” and “positive” reinforcement?
4. Why is it important to “catch a child being good”?
5. What are three possible unexpected consequences of spanking, beating or hitting children?

Children Learn What They Live

Read the poem, "Children Learn What They Live," by Dorothy Law Nolte:

www.empowermentresources.com/info2/childrenlearn.html



1. Do you agree or disagree with the poet's ideas of how children's experiences affect their feelings, attitudes and behaviors?
2. Reflect on your own experiences as a child and as a parent to evaluate the truth of each line. Share your reflections with the class.
3. What are some other (positive and negative) examples of ways in which children "learn what they live"?

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/african-child-mother-american-boy-990326/>

A Song for Mama

by Boyz II Men

Watch the video or read the lyrics to the song "A Song for Mama" by Boyz II Men.
Then answer the questions below.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=tap90z44WR8

www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/boyziimen/asongformama.html

1. Write three sentences in which you describe how the singer feels about his mother, in your own words.

2. A **metaphor** is a type of figurative language in which one thing is said to be another in order to show a comparison. ("I am a rock.") What metaphors does the singer use to describe his mama? To tell when she was there for him?

3. A **simile** is a type of figurative language in which one thing is compared to another, using "like" or "as." What similes does the singer use to describe his mother's love for him and his love for her?

4. What were some of the thoughts and feelings you had when you watched the video or read the lyrics?

Taking Care of Children: Advice Poems by Parents in Jail



Someone to Look Up To

Someone to look up to,
to follow after and be like,
like Batman and Robin...

Someone that you want
to tell the world about with all
your heart... like Granddad tells you
how it was back in the day...

Someone that gives you
that extra push... like your best
friend when you are down...

Someone that helps you
learn things you need to know
in life...

Like that old school teacher...

That's what a father is.

A Rock

A father is a rock
that can't be moved.
A rough road that can't be driven on.
A father is that unspoken love
that every little boy needs in his life
but is often not shown.
He is the hero of the household.
My father was there for me,
but he never told me he loved me.
I guess it was machismo --
but sometimes I wish
I could've heard those words
from time to time.

What is a Father?

A father is like no other --
he can never be replaced.
He's always there in the light
and never has forsaken me through my
tough nights.

A father is like a big brother
that I never had --
he lets me know everything is all good
when I'm feeling down and sad.

A father did what he could
or thought to be true.

So what is a father?

A father is my guide
who always tried to be there.

A father in my childhood held me
high in the air.

A father is my father, being all he could
to me!

A Mother's Shining Star

When I'm weak, you make me strong.

When I'm worried, you help me
carry on.

When I'm down, you bring me up.

When I'm lonely, you bring me joy.

When the world seems like it's on
my shoulder, one look at you and

I know that you will never forsake me.

You're my shining star.

The Father I Want to Be

The father I want to be
is the father who's there
through the good and the bad.

The father I want to be
is the father I never had.

The father I want to be
is a father who corrects his child
when he is wrong.

The father I want to be is
a father who never leaves his child
alone.



A Father is a Person Who Loves and Cares

A father is a person who loves and cares about his loved ones, and will be there for them through hardship, adversity.

A father is someone who is very attentive to his kids, very responsible for his kids' actions.

A father is his kids' heart and soul and who is very firm with his kids' production and also very attentive to his kids' problems.

Father Is....

Father is a provider,

Father is a protector,

Father is a thinker,

Father is a leader,

Father is a liberator,

Father is an educator,

Father is a warrior,

Father is a strategist,

Father is a king...

So why is he called

Baby Daddy?

--Mustapha Bomani,
GED Instructor

Parenting

P is for Parents who have children

A is for Action

R is for Rest

E is for Education

N is for Necessity

T is for Teaching

I is for Intelligence

N is for Never-ending

G is for getting my GED

What is a Mother?

Makes sure everybody's healthy
and happy

Open arms, open heart

Tries her best

Helps out when she is needed

Earns her children's trust

Raises her children to be responsible

Recipe for a Healthy Family

2 cups of peace
3 cups of wisdom
4 cups of walking upright
5 cups of responsibility
6 cups of laughter
7 cups of picking up the pieces
8 cups of shedding the tears
9 cups of much love
10 cups of kisses and hugs
Mix them all together and you will have
a healthy family

A Father Is

A father is someone
who his child look up to.
Someone who is strong for his family.
Someone who provides for his family.
Someone who his child would want
to be like in every aspect of life.
A father is the home protector,
food provider, stress reliever.
A father is a person you can talk to
when you are going through something.
A father is someone
that keeps everyone in order.

A Mother Is

A mother is caring and giving.
She is always there for her children.
A mother is helpful and supportive,
never hurtful.
A mother is dependable.
A mother is love, always.
A mother is a woman who cares
without a doubt
A mother is a woman who stands on her
own, no matter what comes up against her
A mother is a woman who
goes out of her way for her child
A mother is a woman who gives her all,
no matter what
That's a mother's love.



What a Father Should Be

A father is a good role model who teaches his son or daughter to do things that are responsible and takes time out with them when they are in a crisis. A father is a person who is loyal to his family. A father will never forsake or leave his family. That's a father.

What a Mother Should Be

A mother is a person who goes through nine months of pain. A mother is a person that shows patience and is honest to her loved ones. A mother is a person who will never forsake you or leave you. That's what a mother is!



Images from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/people-man-adult-hands-child-3120717/> and <https://pixabay.com/en/heart-love-red-valentine-romantic-157895/> and <https://pixabay.com/en/swan-swan-babies-baby-swans-2494925/> and <https://pixabay.com/en/the-sun-hot-outdoor-sunrise-2816097/>

What I Wanted My Father to Be Like

I would have really liked for my father to be around a little more. My mother had to raise me, which was not a problem, but --- you know, a boy needs a good father figure. But in my case, my father never cared about nobody but himself.

What a Father Should Do

I think a father should:

- Be loving and caring, someone that takes his responsibilities (meaning family) more seriously than anything, always putting family first.
- Take up quality time with kids, like fishing, playing ball, going to movies, or playing games.
- Be dedicated to his work.



Teach Somebody Something

If I could teach somebody something, I would teach my nephews how to stay out of trouble. I want them to do something with their lives. I would teach them how to get good grades in school and respect everyone.

The first thing I would do is teach my nephews how to get good grades in school. I would tell them they have to do all their work in school and finish all their homework, and then go over their work before they do anything else. If they don't know something or understand something they can ask someone like me, their mother or their grandma. This will teach them how to get the help they need and how to develop their minds. It will help them do well in school and succeed in life by getting a good job.

The second thing I would do is teach my nephews how to respect their elders. They have anger problems, so they need to work on it and I'm going to help them. It's going to be hard because everyone in my family has anger problems. But they need to learn how to say, "Yes, sir, no, sir," and "Yes, ma'am, no ma'am," and do what their elders say. They need to figure out how to treat others because one day they're going to have kids and their kids will treat them the way their parents model for them to act.

If I teach my nephews how to stay out of trouble, how to pass all their classes and how to respect adults, I believe they will grow up to go to college and have successful lives.

---- Ronnie



