

6 THINGS PARENTS NEED TO AVOID (Author Unknown)

1. You always give them what they want when they want it. This is very dangerous and has devastating consequences. Children who always get what they want start to believe that they deserve everything they want. That they are entitled to it and shouldn't have to work for it. How are they going to learn the value of delayed gratification if they never experience the thrill of waiting and working for something?
2. You want them to have the life you didn't. Lots of us grew up in less-than-affluent homes. And maybe now that we have experienced some financial success we want to give our kids all the things our parents couldn't afford. But when we constantly lavish extravagant gifts on them, they stop appreciating the small things. In fact, they often stop even appreciating the big things. In the end, our kids need the gift of learning gratitude and responsibility more than they need iPods, cars, lavish parties, and perfect wardrobes.
3. You're afraid to say no. Sometimes we're afraid to say no to our kids because we're afraid of the backlash. When they're young, we're afraid they'll throw a temper fit in the store (ah, I've already experienced this one!). And when they're old, we're afraid they'll sulk or rebel or think we don't love them. But we cannot allow our fear to keep us from doing what is best for them - and sometimes that's saying no.
4. You want them to fit in with their peers because you're afraid they'll be different. We cannot try to keep up with the Jones's - and make sure our kids keep up with the Jones's kids. Are we buying them things so that they can impress others? So that they'll fit in? So that we can feel good about ourselves? We really need to check our motives in this. Fitting in is not the goal. Raising responsible kids who will shine amongst their irresponsible peers should be.
5. You feel it's easier to just give in. When we give in and just give our kids what they're begging for - or stop making them do the chores they're whining about - we teach them a dangerous lesson. We teach them that if they whine and complain enough, we'll give in. It might be easier in this moment, but it will not be easier in the long run.
6. You want to protect them from failure. When we always bail them out and insulate them from their own failure, we teach a pattern of irresponsibility. How can they learn from their mistakes and poor decisions if they never experience the natural consequences? So maybe next time they forget their homework we shouldn't be so fast to run home and get it for them. Maybe they're better off suffering the small consequences now instead of the large consequences that will result from their still being irresponsible when they enter college and the workforce.

So how do we teach our kids to be responsible? We need to shift the responsibility to our kids.

We need to stop making it our responsibility to clean up their toys, make their bed, and ensure they have everything they need for school. These things need to become their responsibilities. Instead of yelling, begging, threatening, and nagging, we need to simply give consequences when needed. Here's the plan....

How to Teach our Kids Responsibility

1. Have a plan. Let's say our teenager struggles with being ready to leave on time. Have a plan and clearly explain it. "If you are not downstairs ready to go by 7:15, you will have _____ as a consequence."
2. Follow through consistently. Once the plan is in place, follow through. If they're not downstairs by 7:15, the consequences must go into effect.
3. No nagging, threats, or yelling. We're trying to make it their responsibility, so no nagging and no threats. If they forget, we won't yell. We'll simply administer the consequences.
4. Don't rescue repeat offenders. The first time they're running late and forget their lunch maybe we should have some mercy and run back and get it. But if it keeps happening, we need to stop rescuing them.
5. Remain unemotional. If they argue and complain, don't get hooked. You are doing what is best for them - even if they may not understand.
6. Show empathy not anger. Refrain from spiteful comments like, "Too bad you forgot your lunch! If you would've gotten out of bed earlier, you would've had time to go through your checklist." A sympathetic comment will go much further while still enforcing the lesson. Try "I understand you are sad that you won't have your lunch today. Next time you need to get up on time so that you'll be more clear-headed and able to remember it."

Child rearing Scriptures (GOD'S WISDOM): Proverbs 1; 3:11; 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:17