



AGES **THREE TO EIGHT** CURRICULUM

PARENT HANDBOOK

ENGLISH

Program Description

Power of Parenting Curriculum: Ages Three to Eight

In each of the following sessions, participants build knowledge and skills. They also gain parenting support in a strengths-based group environment.

Session 1: Orientation & Self-Care

Focused on the parents' need to dedicate time and energy to themselves in order to be more effective caregivers to their children. Together, parents will explore stress reduction techniques, mindfulness, and the importance of social connection with others—all protective factors in the face of stress.

Session 2: Parenting Styles

Focused on three parenting styles and how each influences the relationship between parents and children in different ways. Together, parents will explore advantages and drawbacks of each style and examine their own preferred parenting style in the process.

Session 3: Temperament

Focused on identifying temperament and understanding parents' own style of responding to their child. Together, parents will discover the role of temperamental fit and the importance of taking their children's perspectives.

Session 4: Parent Café

In a Parent Café format, groups of parents will discuss prompts about new strategies of self-care and if they've adjusted their parenting style in terms of their child's temperament.

Session 5: Communication

Focused on stages of language development, literacy strategies, and positive communication. Together, parents will explore how to effectively use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to promote their child's language and communication abilities.

Session 6: Love & Limits

Focused on positive discipline strategies and the reasons behind children's behaviors. Together, parents will learn to understand and anticipate children's behaviors, and to respond in a firm, consistent, and loving way so that they can guide their children to eventually control their own behaviors.

Session 7: Play & The Media

Focused on the benefits of play, parental support for play, and developmentally staged activities. Together, parents will discuss strategies to create an enriching environment for children to play with other children or adults, and the benefits and risks of media exposure, including online play.

Session 8: Parent Café

Review key concepts of 3 prior sessions. In a Parent Café format, groups of parents will discuss their learnings and new strategies in terms of communication, positive discipline and the balance of play/media use at home.

Session 9: Learning and Thriving

Focused on different learning styles and other factors that foster children's learning. Together, parents will explore strategies to not only create environments that fit their child's learning style and can effectively support their learning, but also benefit the parent-child relationship overall.

Session 10: Raising a Resilient Child

Focused on parents' role in the development of their children's resilience-building process. Together, parents will explore ways to support and encourage their children to learn to feel capable and to handle life's ups and downs.

Session 11: Parent Café

Review key concepts of learning styles and resiliency. In a Parent Café format, groups of parents will discuss what new knowledge and skills have been useful as they help their child learn new things and cope with challenges.

Session 12: Graduation

A celebration of parents' growth, achievements, and the community they have built over the past three months. Together, parents will share stories of impact from their participation in the Power of Parenting program.

POWER OF PARENTING™ PROGRAM

AGES THREE TO EIGHT - CURRICULUM

1 Orientation & Self-Care	2 Parenting Styles	3 Know Your Child: Temperament	4 Parent Café	5 Communication	6 Love & Limits
7 Play & Media Use	8 Parent Café	9 Learning & Thriving	10 Raising a Resilient Child	11 Parent Café	12 Graduation

Parent Information

Name: _____

Area/City: _____

Site/Location: _____

Name and Ages of Children:

Ages Three to Eight
Session 1: Orientation and Self-Care
Ideas for Taking Care of Me

Which of these strategies would you like to try this week? Try picking at least one for each area

1. My Physical Health

- _____ Eat fruits and vegetables.
- _____ Do stretching exercises.
- _____ Take a 10-minute walk.
- _____ Dance in my home.
- _____ Play physical games with my children (just for fun).
- _____ Take my prescribed medication regularly.



2. My Emotional Health

- _____ Take a break and breath slowly 5 times.
- _____ Write on a journal your feelings and thoughts.
- _____ Find a creative outlet (photography, painting, singing, knitting, writing, dancing, etc.)
- _____ Find a fellow parent to share experiences and talk.
- _____ Get involved with a community activity (public library, community center, faith organization, etc.)
- _____ Connect to mental health support (individual counseling or group counseling).

3. My Mind

- _____ Identify something you would like to learn (language, skill, craft).
- _____ Read a chapter of a book or an interesting article.
- _____ Find a mentor or someone you trust to ask for advice.
- _____ Take an online class (there are tons of free classes out there).

Other Strategies



Ages Three to Eight
Session 1: Orientation & Self-Care
Affirmations (Self-Calming)

Self-calming thoughts or affirmations are things you think about or say to yourself (or teach your child to say to themselves) to help calm down and feel strength.

TRY SAYING THESE:

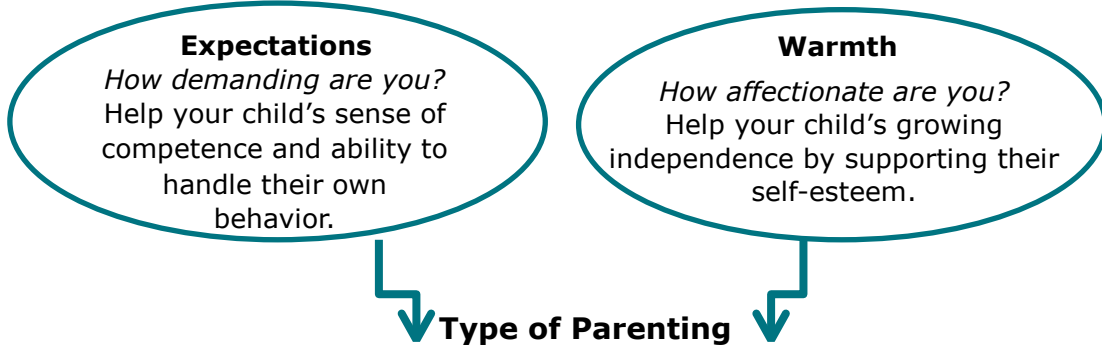
- I will remain curious about my emotions.
- I can stay cool.
- Pause. Let it go.
- I'm going to take a break from this now.
- If I stay calm, things will work out better.
- I can control how I act.
- I don't need to get mad.
- Step away. Stay calm.
- I'm going to go chill out. We can talk later.
- It's okay. I can handle this.
- I'm going to keep my voice down and calm.
- I can talk calmly about this.
- A walk around the block to get fresh air will help.
- I'm not a little kid. I don't have to throw a temper tantrum.
- This is no big deal.
- I can handle this.
- I can talk without yelling.
- I can talk about how I feel without getting defensive.
- I will take three deep breaths and sit down quietly.



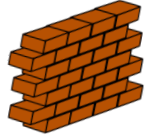








You can also think about positive things that make you feel better: something you are looking forward to, something relaxing, a place you enjoy, or any image that calms you and feels positive.







Ages Three to Eight
 Session 2: Parenting Styles
Love and Limits

Parenting styles can be measured by: (1) Parents' expectations of the child and (2) The warmth or expressions of love that the parent shows toward the child.



Types of Parenting	Expectations	Warmth (Expressions of Love)	Comparison
Controlling Focus on obedience and punishment over discipline	 High	 Low	Brick Wall 
Responsive Create a positive relationship, enforce rules, and be flexible to a child's needs and temperament	 Adequate		Backbone 
Permissive Don't enforce rules or expectations, as "kids will be kids"	 Low	 High or Moderate	Jellyfish 

Ages Three to Eight
 Session 2: Parenting Styles
What Parents Can Do... and What Happens

WHEN PARENTS...	CHILDREN LEARN TO...
Show affection and give attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feel loved and connected -Love others -Have a sense of worth <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"I know you're upset you didn't make the soccer team, but I love you and am proud of you for trying."</i></p>
Encourage their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep trying and never give up -Be positive <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"I see you're trying—I bet you'll get it soon!"</i></p>
See strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See their own strengths -Feel confident <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"It might be hard, but let's see if you can do it first."</i></p>
Set realistic expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feel accomplished -See how to set goals <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"You don't need to get an A on every test, but I want you to do the best you can."</i></p>
View mistakes as OK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See mistakes as part of learning -Try new things <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"I bet we can learn something from this mistake—what do you think?"</i></p>
Show patience and listen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop patience -Feel understood and accepted -Understand others <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Be patient. You've got this!"</i></p>

*Derived from Best Start Resource Center

Ages Three to Eight
Session 3: Temperament
Identifying Temperaments



Step 1: Choose ONE child to focus on. For each question, write the choice (a or b) that best describes your child in the CHILD column.

Step 2: Write the choice (a or b) that best describes yourself in the YOU column.

	CHILD	YOU
1. Activity Level. How active are you and your child? a. Very active b. Quiet		
2. Adaptability. Do you and your child adapt easily to changes in routines or transitions to new activities? Or do you and your child take a long time to become comfortable in new situations? a. Slow to adjust b. Quick to adjust		
3. Approach to New Things. Are you and your child eager to approach new situations and people? Or are you or your child hesitant or resistant to new things? a. Slow to warm up b. Jumps right in		
4. Intensity of Reactions. Do you and your child react strongly and show feelings in a dramatic way? Or do you and your child tend to be quiet even when very happy or upset? a. Strong response b. Mild response		
5. Mood. Are you and your child optimistic and often in a positive mood? Or are you and your child generally very serious or upset? a. Easily upset b. Generally happy		
6. Regularity. Do you and your child get hungry or tired at predictable times? Or are you and your child unpredictable with your biological needs? a. Unpredictable b. Predictable		

NOTE: Do you and your child match?
Or are you different (mix of a's and b's for each question)?

Ages Three to Eight
Session 3: Connecting with Your Child
Parents Can Do



Any Temperament

- Work with your child’s temperament rather than trying to change it
- Be careful not to compare your child to other children
- Focus on your child’s strengths, and tell them when they do something well

A Fearful Temperament

- Keep your home calm and predictable, and provide structure to your child’s daily life
- Use one of your child’s favorite objects to ease anxiety during transitions
- Prepare your child for any new experiences that occur

A Flexible Temperament




- Give them new experiences to encourage their enthusiasm
- Make sure their needs don’t get “lost” compared to other children
- Teach them how to evaluate the safety and appropriateness of activities and behaviors

A Feisty Temperament

- Maintain consistent rules
- Avoid name-calling or labeling (“troublemaker,” “hyper,” “problem child”)
- Offer a safe and calm space where the child can relax and regain control when needed

List one new thing you would like to try this week to work with your child’s temperament:

Ages Three to Eight
 Session 5: Communication
Keys to Active Communication

 <p style="text-align: center;">ATTITUDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When listening: Show interest, curiosity, and compassion. • When responding: Understand how your words, tone, and body language may change the meaning of your response.
 <p style="text-align: center;">ATTENTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When listening: Pay attention to your child’s body language, tone, and gestures. Stand at their level and make eye contact. • When responding: Use “when... then” statements to show your child that you were paying attention to what they wanted. • “<u>When</u> you finish your homework, <u>then</u> you can watch TV.”
 <p style="text-align: center;">ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When listening: Try not to dismiss your child’s feelings or immediately pass judgment on what they’re saying. • When responding: Use “I-statements” to express your point of view without dismissing theirs. • “<u>I</u> felt frustrated when you kept asking to play a game while <u>I</u> was trying to make dinner.”

Adapted from The Lost Art of Listening, by Michael P. Nichols, PhD

Ages Three to Eight
 Session 5: Communication
Communication Strategies

WHAT TO DO

WHY IT MATTERS

SELF-TALK: Describe what you are doing, thinking, and feeling as you naturally go through your day.

UNDERSTANDING: Your child will hear different words and be able to relate them to the world.

LEAN IN: If possible, make eye contact and stop other activities.

RESPECT: Your child will learn that their words are important and they are valued.

REVISE: Add more detail or background to what your child says to you.

GROWTH: Your child will learn more ways to express what they are interested in.

BE OPEN: When you talk or read, leave some statements open for your child to finish: “This doll likes to...”

CONTRIBUTION: Your child will feel capable and confident as they add to the conversation.

BE CURIOUS: Start sentences with “I wonder if...” or “I bet you like...”

ENCOURAGEMENT: Your child will be excited to share what they know.

PAUSE: Be comfortable with silence so that your child absorbs what you say.

PATIENCE: Giving the child time to think gives them a chance to respond.



Literacy Building Activities: TELL STORIES — DRAW — PLAY “I SPY” — SING
 READ — CREATE POEMS — RECITE RHYMES

Ages Three to Eight
Session 5: Communication
Bilingual Learning Tips



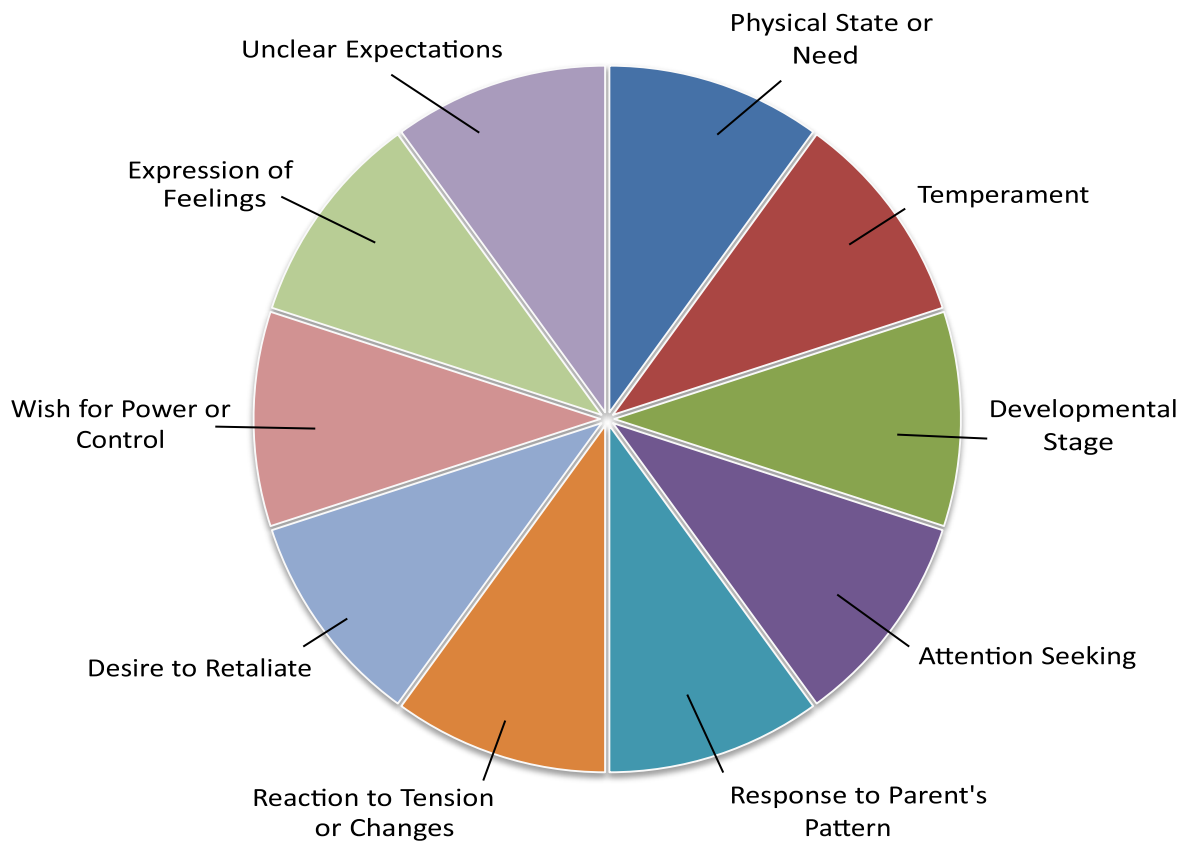
- Use Your Native Language at Home
 - Children can easily learn several languages at the same time.
 - Talk with your children about the benefits of speaking two languages as they get older.
 - Don't forget that you are key to maintaining your home language. What you value, your children will learn to value.
- Tell Stories, Sing Songs, and Share Books Together
- Share with your children the stories, chants, rhymes, poems, sayings, and songs from your childhood that are an important part of their heritage.
 - Read a book to your child every day in the language you feel most comfortable.
 - If you don't feel comfortable reading words, you can point out the pictures in the book and talk with your child about them.
- Check out materials in your native language from the library
- Look for books, DVDs, and music in your language.
- Talk About Your Traditions and Culture. Visit your child's classroom or childcare provider.
- Share your language and traditions, including family songs.
- Teach your children about the games you played as a child.
- Look for Activities in Your Community
- Attend cultural festivals and concerts and meet other families who speak your home language.

Adapted from Too Small to Fail

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/early-learning/talk-read-sing/bilingual-en.pdf>

Ages Three to Eight
Session 6: Love & Limits
Understanding Motivation and Behavior

Possible Reasons Kids Do What They Do



Ages Three to Eight
 Session 6: Love & Limits
Discipline as Teaching Worksheet



Instructions: In pairs or small groups, we will fill out the chart with your ideas. Choose your own “behavior example” or use the following examples. (NOTE: There are no right or wrong answers!)

Behavior of concern	At what age should the child “learn to manage this behavior”?	What are the possible reasons behind this behavior on the part of the child?	What positive discipline strategy would you try with this age child?
Choose your own:			
Example: Refuses to put toys away/clean up			
Delays going to bed or other routine at bedtime			

Ages Three to Eight
Session 6: Love & Limits
ABCs of Positive Discipline

Anticipate problems: Make it easy for your child to stay safe and behave appropriately by planning in advance. Remove temptations. Make sure your child is not tired or hungry.

Be a good teacher: Teach your child polite words and greetings. Practice good ways to behave in new situations. Tell your child when they have done something good, and show how pleased you are. Respond to misbehavior with gentle reminders. Use humor to avoid conflicts.

Calm yourself: If your child acts up in a way that upsets you, try not to react. Take a deep breath, count to 10, turn away or leave the room. Respond when you are feeling calm.

Scale solutions: “Provide just enough help for the child to succeed on their own.” Ask a leading question. Give your child words to help them ask nicely or remember what they are supposed to do. Step by step.



Ages Three to Eight
Session 6: Love & Limits
Strategies That DO Change Young Children's Behavior
(And What to Avoid)

For Responsive Discipline

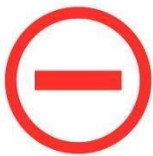
DO try:



- Clear, concise instructions
- Establishing limits in a calm voice (If...Then)
- Reasonable, short-term consequences (ex: If they throw a toy, they don't get it back)







AVOID:



- Insulting, name-calling, or embarrassing your child
- Being sarcastic or yelling
- Time Outs
- Making empty threats
- Physical punishment (shaking, slapping, spanking)



Ages Three to Eight
Session 7: Play & Media Use
Types of Play: Toys and Activities

<p align="center">Objective (Manipulative)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play that uses hands and fingers to build or construct things. • Involves trial and error (building up, knocking over) and connecting pieces. 	<p align="center">Construction toys Puzzles Pattern-making toys Dressing and stringing toys Sand and water play toys</p>
<p align="center">Physical / Active</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with the entire body involved. Includes running, jumping, climbing, crawling, spinning, throwing, wrestling, chasing, and play-fighting. • Tends to increase through the preschool to early school years. 	<p align="center">Push and pull toys Ride-on toys Balls Outdoor and gym equipment Sports equipment</p>
<p align="center">Imaginative / Creative</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play that uses objects and the imagination to act things out. • Includes role play and pretending to use objects differently (using a block as a toy). Also, play with music, art, dance, etc. 	<p align="center">Dolls/stuffed toy/puppets Dress-up/play scenes Superhero play Musical instruments Arts and crafts materials Books/reading</p>
<p align="center">Social</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative Play (preschoolers and up) • Children begin taking turns and following rules and directions much better as they grow. Adults are less involved. 	<p align="center">Hide-and-go-seek Board Games Plays/scenarios acted out</p>

Ages Three to Eight
Session 7: Play & Media Use
What Parents Can Do

The Child's World of Play

- Be available and respond to your child: Ask questions, praise, and help if needed (but try not to “be in charge”)
- Set limits and supervise, but allow your child to choose
- Accept a child's change in interests as a part of their growth and development
- Encourage children to enjoy playtime by themselves sometimes
- Encourage children to play with others as they grow and can handle it
- Provide a variety of interesting toys and new activities for the child to experience
- Encourage effort over winning, especially in competitive games

Playing Together

- Be responsive to your children's ideas, and let them take the lead
- Do things you both enjoy
- Set aside time to play with your children when you are free from distraction
- Have fun yourself
- Show your child games that you enjoyed as a child



Ages Three to Eight
Session 7: Play & Media Use
Be Media SMART: 10 Tips for a Healthy Family

Set Limits

- Keep young children from seeing inappropriate content
- Keep digital devices out of children’s bedrooms
- Turn off all devices an hour before bedtime

Monitor

- Know what your children are watching on Youtube, TV, movies, music, and games

Aim for Balance

- Be sure children are getting plenty of physical activity
- Make or buy healthy alternatives to the junk food advertised on TV

Role Model

- Model healthy habits like screen time, eating fruits and vegetables, and exercising regularly
- Resist watching programs, listening to music, or playing games with adult content when your children are around

Teach Yourself

- Be sure you understand the rating systems for TV, movies, music, and games
- Go to www.kids-in-mind.com to find movies that reflect your family’s values





Set limits and expectations
Monitor activities
Aim for balance
Role model
Teach yourself

What will you do?



Ages Three to Eight
 Session 9: Learning & Thriving
Supporting Your Child’s Learning Style

- Here are a few tips for how to help your child learn according to their learning style
- See if you can add some ideas of your own







Visual 	Auditory 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make flash cards with pictures on them Use colored pens when writing • Find picture books or graphic novels to read • I could try... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read books out loud • Listen to audio recordings of books • Make up songs or rhymes to memorize facts • I could try...
Verbal 	Tactile/Kinesthetic 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about what you are learning • Repeat back verbal directions • Use mnemonics (word tricks) to memorize facts (e.g., ROY G BIV for the colors of the rainbow) • I could try... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have something in hand while reading or studying (e.g., silly putty, a stress ball) • Get up and move around while studying • Create 3-D models • I could try...

Ages Three to Eight
Session 9: Learning & Thriving
Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset



	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
<u>General Beliefs</u>	My abilities and skills are inborn. I can do things well because I'm born with talent.	My abilities and skills can be learned, developed, and strengthened. ✓
Views on Challenges/Mistakes	They show other people that I can't.	They are chances for me to grow. ✓
Attitude toward Challenges	Avoid them.	Welcome them. ✓
Attitude toward Mistakes	Fear and run away from them.	Face and learn from them. ✓
Comfort Zone	Stay in the existing comfort zone and refuse to go out of it.	Keep pushing the boundary to make the comfort zone bigger and bigger. ✓
How to Develop	Focus on talent/quality, e.g., "You're so smart! You're born to be a scientist!"	Focus on effort and learning, e.g., "You've tried your best! Let's see what else we can try." ✓

Ages Three to Eight
Session 10: Raising a Resilient Child
Role Modeling for Resilience

WHEN PARENTS...	CHILDREN LEARN TO...
<p>Show affection and give attention</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feel loved and connected -Love others -Have a sense of worth <p><i>"I know you're upset you didn't make the soccer team, but I love you and am proud of you for trying."</i></p>
<p>Encourage their children</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep trying and never give up -Be positive <p><i>"I see you're trying—I bet you'll get it soon!"</i></p>
<p>See strengths</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See their own strengths -Feel confident <p><i>"It might be hard, but let's see if you can do it first."</i></p>
<p>Set realistic expectations</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feel accomplished -See how to set goals <p><i>"You don't need to get an A on every test, but I want you to do the best you can."</i></p>
<p>View mistakes as OK</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See mistakes as part of learning -Try new things <p><i>"I bet we can learn something from this mistake—what do you think?"</i></p>
<p>Show patience and listen</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop patience -Feel understood and accepted -Understand others <p><i>"Be patient. You've got this!"</i></p>

*Derived from Best Start Resource Cen

Reflection

Which session had the most impact on my parenting?

What piece of parenting advice from another parent has really influenced me?

I hope when my child(ren) look back on my parenting, they will say that I was:

Resources

Find a Program: <https://www.families-first.org/find-a-program/>

Address: 50 Hunt St, Watertown, MA 02472 (Main Office)

Phone Number: 617-868-7687

Main website: <https://www.families-first.org/>



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