

25 ways to give children a safe start

Make a personal connection with children

1. Smile at every baby you see.
2. Say hello to every child you pass.
3. Learn the names of children in your neighborhood.
4. Carry fancy stickers in your pocket and give one to a child every now and then.
5. Volunteer in a child care center or teach a Sunday School class.

Relationships with a number of adults help children to grow up strong and to overcome the impact of negative experiences. The more positive adult role models a child has in his or her life, the better chance the child has to grow up safe.



Reach out to support parents

6. Tell parents their children are wonderful.
7. When toddler throws a tantrum, give the parent a helping hand and some encouraging words.
8. Listen to a parent's frustrations without judging.
9. Offer to baby-sit or run an errand for young parents.
10. Tell a father you admire him.
11. Give a mother a rose.

The number one trigger of child abuse is stress. Anything we can do to reach out to families and reduce their stress will reduce the likelihood of child abuse. Parents have a huge responsibility and a huge challenge. They need encouragement and thanks from all of us for the big job they are doing.



Help children learn limits and respect for others

12. Show respect for children and teach them to respect you.
13. Set limits calmly and firmly with children. Tell them clearly what you want them to do. Praise them when they do it.
14. Teach by your example how to disagree with dignity.
15. Show children how to be gentle with animals.

Children need love and they need limits to feel safe. They need to be respected and to learn to respect the rights of others. Failure to provide positive discipline is a form of neglect.



Give children opportunities to relate to real people

16. Turn off the TV.
17. Read a book with a child.
18. Give a child a chance to be helpful.
19. Teach a child something you know.
20. Take children to visit an elderly neighbor.

By age eighteen, the average American child has witnessed 16,000 simulated murders, and 200,000 acts of violence on television. Children need to learn socially responsible behavior through relationships with caring adults.



Enjoy children! Encourage their imagination, Energy, and enthusiasm

21. Don't be afraid to goof around a little with a child.
22. Remember the silly things you tried as a kid.
23. Build a snowman in the moonlight.
24. Let children know they can soar as high as their dreams.
25. As a child "What if?", "What else?", and "Why not?"

Imagination is a great asset to problem solving. Children who have been encouraged to use their imagination have a better chance of overcoming the odds and being successful.



For More Information Contact:



Advocates For Children
P.O. Box 3116
Auburn, Maine 04210
(207)-783-3990
www.advocatesforchildren.net



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