

# Parenting *ideas* INSIGHTS

## Building parent-school partnerships

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### 7 ways to help you be on top of your parenting game

Effective parents equip their children with the skills, know-how and values they need to stay safe and be successful. These seven ideas will help make sure your parenting reflects the times in which we live.

Everyone wants to be the best parent they can be, yet it can be confusing knowing just what to focus on. Here are seven ideas that reflect current trends and needs and will help you be on top of your parenting game:

#### 1 Give the gift of restraint

At a time when kids receive so much it's easy to forget that restraint is a virtue. Just because you can afford to give children and young people what they want, doesn't mean you should. Differentiate between a want and a need, and encourage restraint, goal setting and saving.

#### 2 Build your developmental knowledge

Lucky you have two eyes, as you need to keep one parenting eye on meeting kids' current needs and the other on preparing them for the next stage of development. If starting or leaving secondary school is a year away then start thinking now about how you can make sure your child or young person is ready for the next phase of their life.

#### 3 Reinforce self-regulation

*"You waited your turn! Great stuff!"*

*"Thanks for packing away the toys without being told." "Good on you for staying in bed when you*

*woke up rather than coming to our bedroom and waking us up."*

A child's ability to self-regulate behaviour (like the ability to self-soothe and self-occupy) is highly underrated, and doesn't come naturally to all kids. That's where consistent parenting using visual management and behavioural consequences comes in.

#### 4 Practise digital parenting

The most tech-savvy generation ever raised needs digitally-aware parents. The internet is fun and it's here to stay, but it can pose risks for some kids. Digital parenting means providing guidelines for safety without limiting children's opportunity to learn and communicate in the online world. It also requires you to understand the digital world that your kids inhabit.

#### 5 Develop character strengths in kids

Recent studies (most notably the work of US-based Angela Duckworth) have found that character, not cognitive ability, is the single most reliable determinant of how a person's life will turn out. The traits associated with success include the inclination to persist at boring

or difficult tasks (**grit**), the ability to delay gratification (**self-control**) and the ability to follow through with a plan (**conscientiousness**).

#### 6 Practise reciprocity

The best families, like the most meaningful communities, are built around the principle of reciprocity. *"We help each other out and we treat each other fairly"* builds belonging and forges greater kinship between siblings. Start by getting kids of all ages to help out at home without being paid.

#### 7 Encourage social risktaking

One in three children are risk-adverse when it comes to meeting new people and entering new social situations. Social media removes risk for these kids, yet it's not the answer. Use a variety of strategies ranging from **scaffolding** (baby steps), **practising** meeting and speaking to new friends and **modelling** social risk taking yourself to encourage kids to continually refresh their social networks.

Pick one or two of these ideas, or your own parenting idea, to focus on over a month. Once you've mastered one idea then move on to another, so that you are constantly improving and being up-to-date as a parent.

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