



Family *wisdom*

Every few weeks we provide advice, expectations and support around the foundations of good child development. The aim is to prepare our children for adulthood. These cover:

1. Listening and attention;
2. Sleep, exercise and diet;
3. Preventing children from seeing harm/trauma/inappropriate TV or games;
4. Hygiene and personal care;
5. **Boundaries and routines/assertive parenting;**
6. Socialising.

If you have a good idea or thought to contribute, please get in touch with us.

Assertive parenting

As parents, **our primary role is to prepare our children for life's challenges.** I'm forever grateful to my parents for instilling resilience and a strong work ethic in me, despite our humble beginnings. Growing up in a working-class family, my mum's favourite phrase, "**life is not a bed of roses,**" reminds us to be equipped for difficulties. She recognised that success requires hard work and adopted an **assertive parenting style - firm yet fair** - in raising my brothers and me. Her approach enabled me to overcome serious physical and mental health obstacles, experiences that have shaped my resilience and skills for navigating both my stressful job and the demands of raising my own young family. As fellow parents, you can relate to the incredible demands of raising children - it is hard!

By implementing **an assertive parenting approach**, you can help your child develop the **resilience, self-discipline, and respect** necessary to navigate life's challenges successfully. How can you achieve this?

1. Clearly communicate rules and expectations in a calm, respectful manner. *For some rules you could involve your child in discussing and agreeing upon reasonable boundaries.*
2. Follow through consistently with appropriate consequences when rules are broken. *Your child might have a tantrum - which they will continue to do - until they know your boundaries won't change.*
3. Allow age-appropriate autonomy and freedoms within defined boundaries. *This will help teach your child to become independent and solve their own problems.*
4. Model the behaviour you expect from your child through your own actions. *This includes modelling how to cope and survive life when it gets hard and goes wrong - because it always will! Make the unsurvivable survivable.*

Use consequences, not punishments, to teach the effects of actions. Consider and apply them in two ways: natural or logical.

- **Natural consequences** occur directly from a child's behaviour, like feeling cold for refusing a coat, hungry for skipping lunch, or not having a toy replaced that they broke. Be clear with your child: "It's cold outside, you need a coat" or "If you throw and break that toy, you won't get another one".
- **Logical consequences** are imposed reasonably and related to the behaviour, like removing toys until cleaned up, losing privileges for misuse, or having a time-out for hitting a sibling. These teach accountability and responsibility. Be consistent (repetitive) with your child - **like a scratched record** - as they will get cross and angry about consequences to start with. When the child is used to this assertive approach, things do become better - it does take a cool head and determination to enforce these expectations. When they are calm, use this as an opportunity to discuss the discomfort they felt and how to make a better choice next time. And praise them for doing it right!



If your child has additional needs these boundaries and consequences would look different, but the end goal is the same. If you are unsure what to do, or need more help, get in touch with us. .