

The Seven C's of Successful Parenting

Ever wonder what it takes to be a successful parent? In the paragraphs that follow, I will attempt to provide you with an answer to that question. I call these my "Seven C's of Successful Parenting."

Confidence is a belief in one's own abilities. It is also an attribute that can determine whether or not a parent is in charge or if it is the child that has the upper hand. Confidence is power. Children will respond more positively to a parent brimming with confidence than to a parent oozing of self-doubt or uncertainty. Stand firm, speak assertively, and know that you are doing the right thing.

Consistency is the ability to maintain a particular standard or to be able to repeat a particular task with minimal variation. Consistency brings a sense of predictability to a child's life. It lets him know what to expect when his behavior is not appropriate or acceptable. When consequences change periodically and are at irregular intervals, then a child will learn that misbehavior might not lead to any consequences at all. The same consequences should be given for the same behaviors each and every time.

Communication is the exchange of information between two people. It involves a sense of mutual understanding and sympathy. Parents simply cannot be parents without this component. Communication must be clear, open, and understanding in order to be effective. Children often have a lot to say and putting up walls or refusing to discuss certain matters will only cause them to seek the advice of others or to bottle it all up until a breaking point is finally reached. Be approachable and willing to discuss issues without criticism or rejection. Effective communication is essential to successful parenting.

Composure means having a calm and steady control over one's emotions. Out-of-control parents typically raise out-of-control children. Yelling and screaming at a child is about as effective as giving them directions in an unfamiliar language. Parents must work to take the emotional aspect out of their discipline practices and save the positive emotions for more appropriate times. Children learn to exploit their parent's emotional weaknesses quite effectively, often leading to rifts between parents. Keep calm and collected, even when things get difficult. Patience, my dear.

Connectedness means being joined or linked firmly together. When applying this trait to parenting, we tend to think of the bond or connection between a child and his or her parents. A disconnected parent is essentially just "a roommate with leverage." Spend time with your child. Get to know your child. Be caring and compassionate. A healthy bond will lead to a sense of mutual respect which leads to happier parents and better-off children.

Common-sense is the ability to make rational decisions and use good judgment. If you are already struggling with two difficult children and then decide to have another, you do not possess this trait. Common-sense is difficult to learn. You either have it or you don't. If you don't, then I would highly recommend seeking and taking the advice of someone that does. If you do, then make sure you use it. Be logical when parenting, not emotional.

Consequences are essentially the results of our actions or behavior. They can be positive or they can be negative. Effective consequences are the root of effective discipline and can ultimately shape a child's future behavior. For instance, giving a child what he or she wants in order to tame a raging tantrum results in a positive consequence earned for throwing a tantrum. A parent that does this is not using effective consequences. One can expect that child to throw another blistering tantrum next time he or she wants something. Choose consequences that are logical and fair, not just easy or convenient.

Now that you have read the descriptions above, think about what they mean to you and how they relate to your own parenting style. Instill these qualities into your parenting practices and watch as the relationship you have with your child progresses and your effectiveness as a parent improves.