



Kenny's 8 Count for Successful Parenting



1. **Don't focus on being your child's friend. They need you to be the parent.** The family unit is not a democracy. It requires leadership and when parents don't take charge, children are all too happy to step in to run the show. Unfortunately, kids lack the emotional and mental maturity for the job so it is easy to end up with a 2-year old tyrant, a self-indulgent 6-year old, or a drama-king or -queen teen. Take the reigns. Lead with love and grace but with firm expectations and boundaries. Children need these to feel loved. Friendship will come later when your kids look back in awe at what an amazing job you did!
2. **Establish logical consequences for unacceptable behavior.** An excellent book on this topic is *Parenting with Love and Logic*. Try to think beyond spankings, time out or restriction. For example if a child refuses to eat what has been prepared for dinner, give a time limit for finishing the meal and explain that they are welcome to wait for a different option in the morning. Do not cave in and offer something else. The child may go to bed hungry but WILL NOT starve. They won't be as likely to turn up their nose when they associate their behavior with hunger. Or let's say your child has a planned outing later in the day but has not completed chores. Explain that they will be allowed to go as long as their chores are finished. If the outing time comes and their chores aren't finished, become a broken record: "I will be happy to take you as soon as your chores are finished." No screaming or yelling is required (on your end at least!) Stick to your guns.
3. **Strive to be consistent.** If you want your child to respond to your first directive, don't wait to take action until you've repeated yourself three times. You are training them on what is expected. For your sanity (and theirs) follow through at once. This is a tough discipline, especially when you are worn out. But kids are smart. They will take advantage of any perceived weakness on your end. Regularly enforcing your boundaries and expectations will make life more simple and enjoyable for everyone.
4. **Don't negotiate with young minds.** In the interest of helping children to develop good decision-making skills, try, whenever possible, to offer a couple of options that are completely acceptable to you. For instance, if you allow an hour of television after homework and before bed, don't say, "What would you like to watch?" Instead, "Would you like to watch program A or program B?" that you have pre-approved. In a restaurant, don't ask, "What would you like to eat?" and start a fight when they want something that is full of sugar or grease. Instead ask, "Would you like option A or option B?" that you already know they will enjoy.
5. **Be nosy.** You have every right to know where your child is 24 hours a day; 7 days a week. Know their friends and their friends' parents. When you don't feel comfortable, trust your instincts. You are the parent and what you say goes. Get to know their teachers and become allies, not adversaries. You are on the same team. If they didn't love kids, they wouldn't have chosen the teaching profession.
6. **Teach your child the value of hard work.** Don't lavish your child with too much stuff. How will they ever experience delayed gratification—the joy of working hard for something and finally getting it? If things come too easily, children will have the wrong idea of what to expect in life. Helping your child set goals and the plans to achieve them will develop an appreciation for what it takes to succeed.

"What I say you must obey." Kenny Bayless

7. **Help them become the best version of themselves.** Children come out of the chute with most of their personality traits pre-programmed. Your job is to bring out the best in them and help them figure out where they fit in this world. You may have a child who is a book worm and hates sports or visa versa. Try not to force your preferences on them but encourage them in their interests and help them figure out what they might be able to do/accomplish in that area.
8. **Stay positive.** This can be easier said than done. If we have a playful, smart and lovable puppy that also pees on the floor, what are we likely to focus on? Remember, your child didn't pick the weaknesses they have. You may a child who strives to please you in all things, and/or one who tests you in all things. One isn't good and the other bad—they are different. Children who try to please you may be motivated by connection/intimacy with you. The child who tests is often motivated by the desire to figure out how things around them work (including you). Both have a place in this world. You want to help your child overcome self-defeating habits but also to catch them in the act of doing things right. If your child has a hard time telling the truth, thank them "for trusting you" every time they tell the truth. If we focus on the positive, we will see more positive. Remind them of their good traits and not their failures.

Recommended Parenting Studies:

Parenting with Love and Logic by Foster Cline and Jim Fay

Growing Kids God's Way by Gary Ezzo

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