

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PARENTING™

I AM ESSENTIAL TO MY CHILD'S LIFE SUCCESS

I intentionally practice 6 ideas to strengthen my children's well-being.

If not me, who? If not now, when?

1 MY CHILDREN WILL SUCCEED BY TRYING HARD AND NOT GIVING UP

- I praise my children for their efforts so they don't give up.
- I teach them that you can learn a lot from mistakes.
- I explain to my children that they have to do their best, in and out of school.

2 I USE EVERYDAY MOMENTS TO PROMOTE LEARNING WITH MY CHILDREN

- I read with my children daily and ask them about the content of the story.
- I have fun with my children. I sing songs and play games with them.
- I count out loud with my young children.

3 MY WORDS HAVE A POWERFUL EFFECT ON MY CHILDREN

- I talk with my children warmly and listen attentively to develop a close bond with them.
- I share my culture and values with my children through stories and mementos.
- I talk to my children throughout the day about chores I'm doing.
- My child and I take turns talking and listening during our conversations.

4 MY FAMILY EATS TOGETHER, GETS ENOUGH REST, AND EXERCISES

- My children get to bed early and at the same time every night.
- I exercise regularly with my children outdoors.
- I limit my children's time watching TV or using electronics (smart phones).
- We eat healthy meals, together as a family.
- When I'm feeling stressed, I take a deep breath, talk to another adult, or go for a walk.

5 I STAND UP FOR MY CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

- I make sure my children go to school every day ready to learn.
- I help my children with their homework.
- I stay informed about school by attending cafecitos and school performances, and by being engaged during parent-teacher conferences.
- I work with my child's teacher to make sure we understand how we can both support his learning.

6 I STAND UP FOR MY CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

- I make sure my children receive the services they need at the clinic, in community agencies, and in government offices.
- When I need information for my children about food, health insurance, and other services, I visit a local community agency or call 2-1-1.
- We regularly use community resources such as libraries, museums, parks, and other recreational spaces.



Grail Family Services

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MESSAGE

RESEARCH SUPPORTING THIS MESSAGE

1. MY CHILDREN WILL SUCCEED BY TRYING HARD AND NOT GIVING UP

Through perseverance, children can become smarter and more successful. There is a popular idea that children are born with certain traits, including their level of intelligence, and that there is little that parents, schools, or children themselves can do to improve them. Stanford researcher Carol Dweck suggests that children should be taught the opposite mindset – what she calls the “growth mindset.” Dweck states that “this growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts.”

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.

2. I USE EVERYDAY MOMENTS TO PROMOTE LEARNING WITH MY CHILDREN

Learning begins at birth, and can happen anywhere, at any time. An Annie E. Casey Foundation report explains that school readiness is a key determinant of 3rd grade reading proficiency, which in turn predicts success in high school and beyond. To be school ready, children need activities, starting from birth, that foster their language, literacy and number skills.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2013). *Early Warning Confirmed: a research update on third-grade reading*. Baltimore, MD: Leila Fiester.

3. MY WORDS HAVE A POWERFUL EFFECT ON MY CHILDREN

The words of parents (few or many, kind or harsh) create an environment that can either promote or hinder a child’s cognitive and social development. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* suggests that parents should “[create] an environment that is playful and nurturing, is rich in conversation...and, in general, builds a belief in the child that the world is a receptive and responsive place.” Such an environment is associated with better developmental and cognitive outcomes for children.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

4. MY FAMILY EATS TOGETHER, GETS ENOUGH REST, AND EXERCISES

Eating well as a family, exercising, and getting enough rest are all necessary for children to learn at their best. When children are tired or hungry, or when they get sick often, they are not ready to learn. An article by Anne Fishel, associate clinical professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, suggests that “eating dinner with your kids is the most important thing you can do with them.” The National Sleep Foundation (NSF), states that “sleep is especially important for children as it directly impacts mental and physical development.” The National Institutes of Health states that “most children need at least an hour of physical activity every day.”

Article by Anne Fishel, associate clinical professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, titled *The most important thing you can do with your kids? Eat dinner with them*.

Article from The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) titled “Children and Sleep.”

Article titled “Exercise for Children” in MedlinePlus, “the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends.”

5. I STAND UP FOR MY CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

Parental engagement is key to a child’s school success. In *A New Wave of Evidence*, researchers Karen Mapp and Anne Henderson found that “students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to earn higher grades and test scores; pass their classes; attend school regularly; have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; graduate, and go on to postsecondary education.”

Henderson, A.T. & Mapp, K.L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

6. I STAND UP FOR MY CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

Learning is hampered if the conditions for it are less than ideal. For a child, the task of learning is a full-time job. A report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (*Early Warning Confirmed*) states that “family stressors can distract children from the task of learning, including hunger, housing insecurity, family mobility, family violence, parental depression, and abuse and neglect.” Parents should try to access whatever community resources they can to reduce stressors.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2013). *Early Warning Confirmed: a research update on third-grade reading*.