



The Do's and Don'ts of Parenting

The most important points recapped

a pinup for the refrigerator

1. **Regular Daily Routine:** Be sure that your child eats a healthy breakfast and takes a snack (but no pastries or sweets) to school. Also take enough time over lunch and dinner to listen to your child's experiences.
2. **Sleep:** Elementary school children need at least 9 hours of bed rest.
first and second graders: 19:30 – 20:00 (7:30 - 8:00 p.m.)
third and fourth graders: 20:15-20:45 (8:15 – 8:45 p.m.)
fifth and sixth graders: no later than 21:30 (9:30 p.m.)
Follow the same bedtime routine every day, for example, dressing for bed – brushing teeth – good-night story – good night kiss – lights out!
3. **Homework:** The goal is for your child to do homework independently. Be near by and check homework, but do not do it for your child. Otherwise your child can not learn and the teacher does not even know what your child has understood and what it has not.
Extra practice: discuss with the teacher, agree on a time limit (ex. 10-15 minutes), set timer and stick to time limit agreed upon.
Praise what your child does well!
4. **Rules / Agreements:** Children can become insecure and anxious or particularly provocative and tyrannical if they are raised in the absence of limits guiding their behaviour. Rules must be reasonable and clear. Both parents and children must uphold their end of agreements. Breaking rules must have logical and sensible consequences.
No means NO! Therefore, think before you say "no" and never threaten consequences that you can not or do not want to uphold.
NEVER punish a child with love withdrawal (such as pouting or not talking for days). Such treatment is cruel and is harmful to children.
5. **Recreational activities / Friends:** You should know who your child is spending time with. Also, be interested in your child's hobbies and friends. Be sure to have joint activities that are fun for the whole family.
6. **Curfew:** Negotiate curfews with teenagers! (During the week, earlier and on weekends 10 p.m. and once a month it may be later.) 12-14 year olds: No going out during the week and curfew at 9 p.m. on weekends. 12 and under:

Going out at night should be the exception and then in connection with a youth group, class, or club. You should always know where and with whom your child is. Your child must let you know if his/her plans change.

7. **Television / Computer and Cell Phones:** TV is not a babysitter. Children need to learn appropriate media behaviour – from you! Children should not sit in front of a screen for more than 1 hour a day (including PC-games, Nintendo, Cell phone games, etc.). The younger the child, the less time it should spend watching TV – for children in second grade and under, not more than 30 minutes daily. Be sure that the programs your child is watching are appropriate for his/her age.

Studies have shown that children who watch “ a lot” of TV, have lower grades than children who watch less; emotionally stimulating material immediately before or after learning hinders the transfer of learned material from the short term memory to the long term memory. No TV before school or in children's bedrooms!

Cell phones: Only use cell phones with pre-paid cards (to avoid exorbitant telephone bills). Be careful of the dangers of unregulated Internet access via cell phones (chatting, porno sites with paedophile contacts, betting...)

8. **Pocket money:** Weekly or monthly allowance helps children learn to how to handle money appropriately. Fulfilling a bigger material desire requires forgoing fulfilment of many little ones. The money should be managed independently, that is, it may be spent at once for “silly” expenditures (but you should NOT help out with payment in advance or credit so that your child can learn to budget his/her money without getting into debt). Pocket money should not service as a gratification for good performance or be withheld as a punishment! (For the appropriate amount of pocket money, see page 12 of this brochure.)
9. **No Violence!** Battered children are not able to develop appropriate levels of self-confidence and are more likely to use violence to solve conflicts than others. Children need love, recognition and praise. No physical punishments! If you're about to loose your temper...STOP! Think before you act! (For example, count to 20). Retreat, relax, reflect – and do something for yourself. You must feel that you have calmed down before re-approaching your child. In an emergency, call the “parents-hotline” tel. 071/244 2020. If you do loose your temper or hit your child despite these precautions, be sure to apologize to your child.
10. **Cooperation between parents and teachers:** School is not only the responsibility of teachers. Meet with your child's teacher regularly to discuss your child's progress and visit the school occasionally. Your child should see that you consider school (and doing homework) important and that you have a good rapport with his/her teacher.