

Parenting Resource Guide

Oasis Publications, Inc. *** www.fitness4kidz.com

When the Monkeys Run the Zoo **Cuando los Monos Estan a Cargo del Zoo** **Parenting Pointers 0-6 Years**

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Getting Started

Whether you're married or single and expecting....you've just married a person with children.....you're blending your family with your spouse's....your child has just left his/her child with you....you've adopted a child....the list of possible parenting situations goes on and on.....

Family structures are more varied and complicated than ever before, but there are also many more resources available to deal with them. However, all authors and philosophies have their own

points of view, approaches and methods.....and who's to say what's right or what's right for you and your particular situation?

In my opinion, they all have something to offer. There will be a kernel of truth or wisdom in each approach, but not everything works for everyone all the time. Therein lies the problem and who has the time and energy to figure all this out?

When the Monkeys Run the Zoo attempts to offer you the “best of the best” from a variety of sources. There are effective approaches that run through all the different points of view and I have tried to collect them into one place that will entertain and educate both you and your child.

As you read each verse to your child, have him/her “find the monkeys” (8-13 of them) hidden in each illustration. Take this time to read as many parenting pointers as possible which all pertain to the message being given in each verse. The more times you share the book with your child, the more pointers you will encounter and the more comfortable your child becomes with the ways you want the parenting experience to grow.

The **Growth and Development Chart** in the middle of the book is a great resource. Parents who know what to expect in the different skill areas as their child ages, have a much more realistic outlook of what to expect from them. If you know what your child is capable of, the parenting experience becomes a lot more fun for both you and your child.

Getting Started

Parenting is defined as: “the rearing of a child or children, especially in the care, love and guidance given by the parent.”
(The American Heritage Dictionary)

A helpful starting point mentioned by many “parenting experts” is creating a list of your parenting expectations. When you spend some time thinking about the following questions they will help you focus on what kind of parent you want to be (see pages 4-7), to understand what hopes and goals you have for your child and to help you chart how to get there.

Parenting Expectations

- What kind of person do you want your child to become?
- What character traits do you want your child to have?
- What kinds of childhood memories do you want for your child?
- What kinds of memories of you as a parent do you want to live with?
- Will you raise your child like you were raised? What will you change? What will you keep? Why?
- What kind of relationship do you want to have with your grown child?
- Add your own questions.
- Outline your concerns / areas where you would like help.
- List the people you can go to for assistance.

What Kind of Parent Do You Want to Be?

The following examples are often taken to the extreme, but describe different parenting styles. Some styles will overlap. Do any of them strike a chord with you? Please you? Repel you? These are presented to help open your eyes to what you want and don't want to define you as a parent.

- 1. Best Friend:** “Best friend” parents want, above all, to be liked by their children. They indulge their children, letting them have anything they desire or act anyway they want. These parents allow almost any behavior as long as they just don't have to confront their children with anything that might make the children angry with them. These parents basically let their kids “call the shots”, putting them in control of family dynamics.

Results: Children without boundaries are unhappy, insecure and confused. They act out in an attempt to have an adult show up and provide guidelines. These children actually grow to dislike their parents and resent them for not taking control.

- 2. To the Rescue:** “To the rescue” parents, also known as “helicopter parents”, hover over their child, always ready to step in and “fix” whatever happens. These children are never given a chance to work out their own problems because their parents are always right there with all the answers. These parents' sense of worth is closely tied to their children's actions and achievements. They want to prevent failure and remove all obstacles to success. When that fails, these parents usually blame others...teachers, coaches, friends, society, etc.

Results: Children never get any practice making choices which reduces their chances of making good ones once away from their parents. They rarely have the opportunity to grow through adversity and can end up feeling incapable and useless. This can lead to an uninvolved, apathetic attitude towards life or cause kids to become frustrated and rebellious. Either way, these kids don't see their parents as having done them any favors.

- 3. Follow Me!** “Follow me” parents insist that their children automatically respond to every demand they issue. These parents want to be in full control of all aspects of their child's life. Fear of discipline, that usually involves physical pain, motivates their kids to comply with all demands. Lots of yelling, posturing and threats keep these parents in control of all situations.

Results: These parents tell their children how they should act, think and feel. They want things done their way...or else! Again, kids get little opportunity to make choices, develop any self-worth or enjoy a relationship with their parents. Fear of punishment if orders are not followed motivates the child. Tough love as the only love can build resentment and rebellion.

- 4. Whatever:** “Whatever” parents just want the parenting experience to be over with already. They want their old lives back and will follow the path of least resistance while parenting. They remain as uninvolved as legally possible in their child's life and can't wait for the child to leave home.

Results: “Whatever” parents find it easier to do things themselves than to take the time to teach their kids how to do them. They use bribes and threats to motivate instead of providing reasons why actions have consequences. “Whatever”

parents tend to ignore their children (TV, anyone?), pursue their own desires and let their kids do the same. Kids who feel unloved and worthless and live with few guidelines will often turn to their friends and the community for family....gangs keep their eyes open for these “abandoned” kids.

- 5. Keeping up with the Jones’:** Keeping up with the Jones’ parents don’t want their kids to miss out on the latest whatever. They worry more about what other parents are doing than on what is truly the best for their child. They don’t want to appear less than able to provide all the material, superficial things while ignoring the real needs of their children.

Results: These are the over-scheduled kids. They are ferried from one activity to the next, with little down-time. The desires of the child are rarely considered because the parents have a certain image they want to project. These kids feel pressured to perform and unappreciated for themselves which, again, can lead to frustrated, rebellious teenagers.

- 6. Too Cool:** The “too cool” parents want to impress upon their kids (and their kids’ friends) how “groovy” and “with it” they are. They don’t act their age and their kids are left without proper examples to follow. They encourage risky behaviors among their kids, assuming this is what their kids will think is “cool”.

Results: Kids without role models are adrift. They are forced to make more unhealthy choices before arriving at good outcomes because no one is helping them through the process. “Too cool” parents are so involved with their own lifestyles that their kids take second place. These kids can exhibit inappropriate behaviors, language and dress because no healthy examples are

being set. As with other parenting styles that don't pay enough attention to the children, the kids will look to others for guidelines and usually have little respect for their parents.

- 7. Tiger Moms:** There has been much publicity recently about "Tiger Moms" who are driven to make sure their children are successful. Their mantra is "discipline, practice, perfection" and they motivate with threats and fear of the future. Educational excellence, musical prowess and mathematical skills are usually associated with this parenting approach. These parents are so focused on outcomes that there is little space left for creative expression, recreational activities or a social life

Results: Children raised in this environment tend to succeed, but at what cost? Their unhappiness is ignored in favor of the attained grades and skills. They can have more difficulty thinking "outside the box" and socializing. Resentment and rebellion can accompany this parenting style. In fact, the author's (see page 12) second daughter did rebel and was finally allowed to play sports and scale back on the musical instrument practice routine....a great example of "rules with latitude".

- 8. Wishful Thinking:** These parents hope to find lost glory through their children. They wish things went differently when they were kids and attempt to recapture missed opportunities in their own childhood through their children's lives. You can see this in toddler beauty pageants, on sports fields and academic competitions where the driving force is the parent's, not the child's.

Results: Here, again, the child takes a back seat to the parents' wishes with dubious outcomes. Some children seem prodded into growing up too soon, others suffer sports related injuries or academic burn-out. All of them will probably realize someday

that they were sharing their childhoods with their parents. Again, resentment and rebellion usually follow situations where force is the motivating factor.

9. Parents with Purpose: “Parents with Purpose” recognize the importance of parenting and welcome the opportunities to guide their kids to full, happy, productive lives. This is their purpose. They recognize their children as unique individuals and love them unconditionally. They stay focused on the goals they want to help their kids achieve, listening to their kids as those goals evolve, and, most importantly, they enjoy the ride. These parents share certain characteristics, they:

- treat each other with love and respect
- take care of themselves, ensuring they are happy, healthy and able to meet the needs of their children
- are excited about being a parent
- have thought about what kind of parents they want to be
- put their child’s welfare ahead of other demands
- respect the individuality of their child
- love unconditionally
- listen and talk to their kids
- are not be afraid to establish rules and guidelines
- will explain the reasons for those rules and guidelines
- consistently enforce those rules and guidelines
- enforce with understanding and reasonable consequences
- give their kids opportunities to make choices
- meet all their child’s physical needs (healthy food, safe and clean environment, enough sleep, exercise, mental stimulation, medical and dental attention).

As you can see, parenting is not for the “faint of heart”. It takes love, patience and determination just to begin the process. Raising happy, healthy, productive children is probably the most important thing you will ever do. To approach it with anything other than your best efforts betrays the responsibility that has been entrusted to you. GOOD LUCK!!

Resources

1. **“Google”** the topic whenever you encounter a problem or have a parenting question. You will be amazed at the wealth of information available. Whether it’s crying, teething, potty training, parenting organizations, discipline techniques for young children, biting, games to play, books to read or whatever, help is there.
2. **Government Organizations for Young Children:**
 - **US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families** – www.acf.hhs.gov outlines all the services offered by the US government to aid children and families. Health, child abuse and neglect issues, family guidance, resource materials, financial assistance and much, much more is available in your local community. Visit the website and find your local office.
 - **Women, Infants and Children** – www.nwica.org is a national nutrition program for at-risk mothers and children 0-5 years. They encourage breastfeeding and provide counseling and food vouchers to ensure healthy starts for all of America’s children. Visit their website, or contact your local health department to find an agency near you.

- **National Head Start Association** – www.nhsa.org offers quality early education for at-risk children providing “support for the whole child, family and community”. They offer programs that bridge the poverty gap and prepare children for successful futures. Parent trainings are an important part of the Head Start program. Visit the website to find a program near you.

3. Parenting Organizations:

- **Parents as Teachers** – www.ParentsasTeachers.org (1-866-728-4968) This national organization provides parenting information, early detection of health and developmental issues, prevents child abuse and neglect and prepares kids for school success. Call or contact their website for local information.
- **Parenting Counts Centers** – www.ParentingCounts.org is a free service providing research-based information, videos, webcasts, online journals and a private online community for parents.
- **National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies** – www.naccrra.org provides information for parents and childcare professionals, a training academy, military child care help and a radio program.
- **Child Welfare League of America** – www.cwla.org is a national parenting network providing information on all aspects of child rearing. There is too much info to include here. Please check them out.
- **Zero to Three** – www.zerotothree.org offers a free in-depth, science-based e-newsletter, *From Baby to Big Kid*, on parenting issues for kids 0-3 years plus other resources.

- **National Association for the Education of Young Children** – www.naeyc.org offers a wide range of information for parents and childcare professionals “to help build better futures for all young children....through excellence in early childhood education”. Resource guides, reading lists, a radio program and author Q & A’s are a few of their services.
- **PTA’s** – Join the Parent Teacher Association at your child’s school. They will offer parenting classes and support. When you attend parent-teacher conferences and help with homework (provide supplies, place and assistance) you demonstrate how important an education is to their future.
- **There are too many** other options to list here. Please visit www.naeyc.org/links for a comprehensive list of national organizations for the young child.

4. Books and Other Resources

- **NuParent** – www.nuparent.org works with various organizations in your local community to provide parenting sessions for parents with children from pregnancy to 5 years old. They focus on “a parent-child activity, knowledge enrichment and social support”. Visit their website for more information.
- **Child Development Institute** – www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/parenting/talk-to-kids-listen.shtml is an article on talking and listening to your child. It provides techniques and the reasoning behind the importance of this practice to improve your parenting experience.
- **The Fatherhood Resource Center** – www.fatherresource.org provides materials and information to make sure dads are involved, responsible and committed

parents. Since 25% of preschoolers now have their dad as the primary caregiver, bringing fathers into the discussion is very important. The Center targets all fathers: new and expectant, dads with kids of all ages, military and incarcerated dads. Also visit www.dadsmarts.org for activities dads can share with their kids aged 3-5.

- **Oasis Publications, Inc.** – www.fitness4kidz.com produces bilingual materials on nutrition and fitness for young children and their families. All materials engage parents and encourage their efforts to raise healthy children. Visit the website and check out the books and game. In addition to Parent’s Corners on each verse page that provide tips for healthy living, you can download free lesson plans for the *Hop-A-Lot’s First Steps to Fitness* series.
- **Parents Magazine** – www.parents.com/magazine is a very helpful monthly magazine for parents of young children. The wealth and variety of topics cover just about everything parents will encounter on their way to raising great kids.
- ***Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood*** – Practical Parenting from Birth to Six Years by Jim and Charles Fay offers lots of insights and examples to illustrate the authors’ points of view. Check out the importance of empathy (understanding) in making discipline more successful.
- ***Screamfree Parenting*** by Hal Edward Runkel shows parents the down-side of losing your cool and how to prevent it.
- ***Unconditional Parenting*** by Alfie Kohn shows parents how to move “from rewards and punishments to love and reason”.
- ***Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mom*** by Amy Chua outlines “the Chinese way” of raising successful kids. There is much controversy over this approach and lots of food for thought.
- ***The Tao of Parenting*** by Greta Nagel focuses on the spiritual aspects of raising children using the ageless wisdom of Taoism, presenting another Asian approach to parenting.

- ***Accidentally on Purpose: The True Tale of a Happy Single Mother*** by Mary F. Pols relates the personal and logistical challenges of her unexpected pregnancy. She charts her growth from a self-involved young adult to finding new purpose as a single mom.
- There are too many books, articles, magazines, organizations and other resources on parenting to list them all. I have listed ones I have found helpful, thought provoking and/or provide a starting point. Again, searching the web for information on parenting, motherhood, fatherhood, blended families, local child care agencies, daycare centers, prenatal care, mealtimes and childhood nutrition, discipline, bed-wetting, spanking, temper tantrums, time-outs or other topics of interest will provide more options.

Make sure you use the **Growth and Development Chart** in the middle of the book. It is a *guideline*. Use the chart to check your child's progress. Talk to you child's health professional if you notice any obvious deviations/delays in his/her development.

Parents who take care of themselves set the best example for their kids. By exercising, eating healthy meals, avoiding smoking, drugs and over consumption of alcohol, treating everyone with kindness and respect, staying active with work, volunteer activities, hobbies or church children *see and hear* how to behave. **Nothing speaks louder or teaches more effectively than a parent's example.**

Everyone makes mistakes and wants "do-overs", especially parents. Parents who do the best they can and look for help when they need it, raise children who know they are loved.

Always recognize your children's abilities to achieve, love them unconditionally and **never** underestimate their ability to push your buttons

