

Today's Ideas and Activities - Creating Stability and Balance Give Your Child a Sense of Security At the Same Time... HAVE FANTASTIC FUN TOGETHER!

Lesson 3 - Creating Stability and Balance

We all have a need for a big part of 'our world' to feel like a safe place. At the extreme, when life becomes chaotic or there is pandemonium we flounder. Remember how you felt when 9/11 occurred. No matter where we lived, part of each of us shrank into ourselves a little. We didn't feel so confident, we didn't feel so safe, we didn't feel

When a child can rely on certain things to remain constant, and when she is provided with a good balance in her family environment, she feels secure, she learns trust, she learns to be reliable; she learns inner discipline and much more. This strong sense of security 'frees' her to approach her world with confidence and a positive outlook.

This sounds like serious stuff, and it is. But it is in the simple things that we can create all this for our kids. You do it already of course, but some ideas will help to focus on bringing more. Of course some families can have TOO much routine

Stability. It's all those little things that together add up

- The special way you always say goodnight to her with a last song and kiss
- Her routines of chores, homework, bath, teeth cleaning at set times
- The 'high five' you give each other in certain circumstances
- Your secret farewell sign together as you drop her off at school
- The day of the week you always go for a soda together
- That every year New Year is always a family barbeque for everyone at your place
- The way the family always play board games on Saturday nights
- How you have her grandparents over on Sundays
- That Sunday morning is 'Pancake Day' for breakfast in your family
- Eating one meal together at the table every day

What are some of your 'Family Things'?

Providing stability also means when you say something – **you MEAN it**. This is a biggie really. We have all been guilty of giving in even when we have made a fair and reasonable requirement of her. You do your child no service

by giving in to whining and nagging. And kids are past masters at it. The more often they can wear us down, the more often they can wear us down!

One hint here is to give her fair warning – ‘Okay you have 10 minutes now, then it’s bedtime’; ‘Pack up now, you need to be in bed in 5 minutes’ then insist she goes. If you have fallen in to a habit of letting her stretch you night after night, it may be smart to tell her that you are changing the rules from now on. Agree on the time, and then EXPECT her to do it.

The same scenario can apply at the shopping mall. Kids learn when they nag they get something. Set the scene before you step out of the car. ‘Today we are not buying extras, we are just getting the groceries’, and ‘This week you can have an ice-cream when we have finished the groceries’.

Balance. Again it’s the little things that together add up

As a teenager I belonged to a youth group which ran activities in a 4 Square Program: recreation, service, culture and worship. Throughout each month one Friday night would be allocated to each. Something of the same works for us at home too.

Consider:

- Work (homework, chores)
- Play (sports, playing in the garden, riding a bike)
- Entertainment (reading, watching TV, crafts, going to the movies)
- Social (talking with friends on the phone, visiting friends, having people over for a meal)
- Rest (sleep, and quiet times – with no TV)
- Service (helping others, giving a hand for charity causes or at school)
- Physical (food; a varied diet, OR a very limited menu with too many refined carbohydrates, sugars and salt)
- Gratitude (taking time to acknowledge the good things we have, instead of just focusing on more, more, more)

Some children spend 30 to 40 hours with TV and computer games. They can forget how to play. Consider the child who spends hours texting messages to friends – it becomes an obsession. What about kids who spend their waking hours training for some sport – because they ‘have to be’ a star?

Now, for Fun: Just One Activity Idea to Start a Fun Family Routine

The little daily routines are so important, but it’s also fun to have some family events or rituals – that happen like clockwork in your house. The kids get excited and look forward to them. It’s the FUN part of family routines. For suggestions to get your own ideas started take a look in your ebook [‘Raising Happy Kids’, pages 10 to 11.](#)

What's a fun thing to do? You might like to all go for an outing once a month of the first Saturday, each child taking it in turns to suggest and plan the day with you. What about the routine of the way you all celebrate special events – like good grades, birthdays a new job for dad, an achievement in cleaning out the shed – the WAY you all celebrate becomes a family 'thing' which your kids will love.

A regular date with your child is a magical experience. It might go something like this... 'From now on we can have a date, just you and me, once a week' (once a month, every 2 months) = **Wow, Dad wants to be with just me = he thinks I am special = I am special**

Create reasonable and fair guidelines

Discuss together some ideas, and your budget. Each date can be different, but within a framework. = **there are clear rules = I know where I stand = I know the rules**

Variety (providing balance) is the spice of life

Take it in turns to plan your outings. It can be as simple as a visit to the pet shop to look about, then a juice after; working on a craft you both enjoy, a picnic in the park, going to the movies. However if your child absolutely adores fishing – then do that every week. Just change the locations. = **it's good to different things with Dad = I like it when we change things around = I feel okay to do this**

Routine and consistency is important

There will of course be times when you have to change the day – but make sure you make up for it. This is a crucial part of creating a stable feeling for her. After a few weeks she will be telling her friends – 'I always go out with Dad on Thursdays' = **I can rely on this event with Dad = it feels good = I like consistency and habit (it's FUN)**

The payback for you both of having a regular date with your child (or children) is fabulous. I can assure you from my own regular monthly 'dates' with my adult children it is magical. I got to know them much better, we had fun, made plans, and I got to have three dates every month (son, daughter and daughter-in-law). I reckon this is a GREAT idea. Just guess how you would feel if you overheard your child telling friends about your regular dates!

The idea of consistency and developing habits guided some of the thinking when '[Go for Your Goals for Kids](http://www.4lifelifehappykids.com)' was being developed. Spending a regular time working together on something that is important to your child does so much more than just teach her the invaluable skill of goal-setting

Fun, the essential ingredient

Remember this; don't try to put all of these ideas into practice at once. Just pick an area or two you would like to explore and focus on for a while until you get that down pat, and most of all have fun with your children.

Balance and stability are found in routine and family patterns that kids can rely on. When these are in place children feel secure and safe; they know what to expect. The world is a reliable place for them and they feel happier.

