

Raising Happy Kids

A Report for Parents



By Winsome Coutts



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"It takes a whole village to bring up a child."

Old African Saying

*This Report is for parents, grandparents, teachers, uncles, aunts
and close family friends too.*

Please share this Report with your friends and family

We want the world to be a happier place

www.4lifehappykids.com



About The Author Winsome Coutts

Winsome Coutts is a qualified teacher, (B. Com, Dip Ed), a parent and grandparent.

Winsome studied Child Psychology as part of her training and raised two wonderful children (now wonderful adults) – she claims! And now she is privileged to have significant input with the raising of her grandchildren, seeing them on a daily basis, and contributing to what they are learning about this wonderful world.

From her depth of experience and vast reading and research of raising Happy Kids, Winsome has a great deal to offer busy parents and child carers.

Winsome says: *“As a parent, ex-teacher and now grandmother I just LOVE to see the children I know achieving magical things. All those years of experience communicating and relating to children, mean I do have a few tricks up my sleeve on how to connect with kids and impart ideas.”*

Her passion with children is to give them confidence and a strong sense of self esteem, and above all to ‘have fun’. This book can help.



Winsome with granddaughter Klara



Winsome with granddaughter Stina

Introduction

“All I want is for my kids to be happy”

Parents frequently say “I just want my kids to be happy”. But we sometimes forget how to focus on happiness in our busy family lives. Let’s find out what happiness consists of and how we can provide more of this gift for life for our precious children. It’s never too late; here are some pointers and some fun activities. Lots of these you know, some might help as reminders.

What is happiness?

When you understand how true happiness develops you can help your children find it too. Happiness is within ourselves, it is within our control; so we can teach our kids skills and attitudes which will allow them to foster their own happiness.

Children are surrounded by all sorts of alluring images and ideas on TV, in the playground and amongst their peers. Wealth, fame, personal beauty, power, countless gadgets and toys; these don’t bring us happiness. In fact chasing after these can even cause unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Happiness is within. Let’s look at some of the ways we can give this to our kids.

1. **Building Self-Esteem and Self Confidence**
2. **Building Relationships**
3. **Creating Stability and Balance**
4. **An Optimistic and Positive Attitude**
5. **Fostering Passion and Enthusiasm**
6. **Shaping and Teaching Family Values**
7. **Teach Gratitude and Giving**
8. **Be a Family with Lots of Fun and Fantasy**





Chapter 1

Building Self-Esteem and Self Confidence

This is about making our children feel worthwhile. When they feel good about themselves they are full of confidence and their self-esteem is high. They are ready to take on the world. When you value your child, he values himself. The way we communicate with them is crucial in building their self-esteem. You can show how much you value them in all the ways that you communicate with them. Everything else follows on from a high self-esteem.

How to Build Self-Esteem.

- Tell them how special they are to you. You can't say it often enough. Tell them why they are important: 'I have such fun with you', 'I was so thrilled when you were born', 'You have really good ideas' and 'I had a really good time with you today'.

Praise. It's the magic word when you are dealing with Kids. Praise their actions and character traits you admire – the ones you want to reinforce. Kids love to be praised, especially when they know they have done a good job. Notice your child's strengths and tell him about them. Of course you must be sincere. Download here: [100 Ways to Praise a Child](http://www.the-secret-dvd.net/pdfs/100_ways_praise_child.pdf) http://www.the-secret-dvd.net/pdfs/100_ways_praise_child.pdf

- Listen. When your child speaks - listen to him with your full attention. Stop what you are doing and look him straight in the eye. Ask questions that show you are really 'with him'.
- Treat them politely and respectfully as you would a stranger. When they interrupt, shouting at them or ignoring them is just as rude. Always be respectful – insults and sarcasm just make

them feel resentful and think about resistance and revenge. Good manners should absolutely start at home. Listen to your tone of voice – your words may be fine, but irritation and impatience can easily show with your voice.

- Ask their opinion and advice on matters that are relevant to them, and on family affairs. Get everyone together to plan outings and holidays. Perhaps you could say ‘We are going camping this year, we need to plan where we will go’, ‘We can afford a weekend away, will we go to the Theme Park or Water World?’ It is very empowering for children to know that their opinion counts.
- Do things together. This way you teach skills and they become more competent. Encourage them to try new things – by setting an example. When they see that you obviously want to spend time with them you are sending the clearest message that you think they are worthwhile. This doesn’t mean sitting in front of the TV with them while you read!
- Give your child choices – options that they can choose. This is great with littlies – instead of: ‘It’s time for bed now’, you can say, “Okay, it’s 7.30 and bed time; would you like to clean your teeth first, or have your stories?” The choices become more significant as they grow older.
- Choosing their own clothes, hairstyles (does it really matter?), what color their bedroom is painted; gives them some power over their own life. The more often you allow them to choose and have a definite say in things, the easier it is when something arises that you want to decide yourselves. They are also less likely to show rebellious behavior later and appear one day with body studs, tattoos or purple hair.
- When a behavior problem arises, you can gain not only some thinking time, by asking them what they would do in the situation, but in this way they start to learn how to take responsibility for their actions.
- Be prepared to revise your opinion on things. When they produce a convincing case, nothing is more empowering to them than having you back down on something you thought – by agreeing with their idea.
- Spend time with them – doing things they want to do. Have regular walks every week. This is great time to chat; you will find they will share their feelings at unexpected moments like this. Quality time – cannot be achieved without quantity time.
- Support them in front of others – make them aware that they are more important than visiting people. They know they are special to you.

“When someone does something good, applaud! You will make two people happy.”

Samuel Goldwyn



Some Fun Activities to Promote Self-esteem.

- ★ Build a cubby house, tree house or dog house together – let them make the decisions. Get them to help with the design, the color of the roof etc.
- ★ Plan and plant a garden – go shopping to choose the plants together.
- ★ Research your camping destination on the net; discuss where to choose and the reasons why, make a list of everything to take together.
- ★ Clean out the shed together and decide what to do with stuff.
- ★ Plan, shop for and cook a special family dinner using the best china. Write a menu. In fact, make this a permanent monthly event where you all sit down together and just talk for the evening. Each child can take it in turns to be the planner and cook.
- ★ Make a family movie together if you have a digital camera; discuss what you can show in it. Copy it on to disks as presents for grandparents, aunts and uncles
- ★ Plan a regular time of the week when you are always available for them. This is your family time – for them only.



**“Children need models
rather than critics.”**

**Joseph Joubert (1754-1824)
French Philosopher**



Chapter 2

Building Relationships

Research shows that people with strong healthy relationships tend to be the happiest people. The same goes for kids too of course. When we are giving and receiving affection and love we are at our happiest. Sharing warmth with family, friends and schoolmates gives kids positive feelings.

How to Teach Relationship Skills

- Praise and acknowledge your child as often as you can. They respond warmly and feel good about themselves and relating with you.
- Create opportunities for your kids to be with lots of other people. At first the family circle with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, all having fun together is a great learning environment.
- Help them learn to share and have fun together with other children. Invite other children over; not too many at a time, and play with the children. They learn relating behaviors from you. Make it lots of fun.
- Discuss things with the children – they will learn to relate to one another this way. Ask for their suggestions and comments.
- In public teach by example to always say thank you and to tell people that you appreciate what they do for you. Kids pretty soon adopt this, and apart from being polite anyway, well mannered children get more positive feedback from others this way.

- A sense of belonging in any group is a strong relationship need children have – belonging in our family, belonging in a team, belonging with a group of friends at school. Healthy family interaction with acknowledgement of all the members, no matter how young, teaches our kids acceptable relating strategies. They learn to get on well with others.
- Enrich your life through others. Make friends feel welcome in your home, and expose your children to people you like, thus demonstrating the strength you receive from others.
- Teach your children to be gracious when they lose as well as when they win. Learning to handle both success and defeat is an important life skill that begins in childhood.
- When you treat your child with love, respect and encouragement, they repeat this with the people they come in contact with.
- Demonstrate the importance of helping others to encourage thoughtfulness. Children raised in this environment become thoughtful and caring adults.
- Your child models your actions. When you obviously enjoy yourself with others, and have fun relating to them, your children learn to do likewise.

Kids with great relationships are happy kids. Healthy social and peer group relationships can also reduce stress, increase feelings of security, and generate other positive emotions, all of which are conducive to happiness. They won't be as vulnerable to enticements from popular culture to feel important or popular. When children feel connected and have good relationships they are less likely to be looking for attention and acceptance, with anti-social behavior.

Some Fun Activities to Help Build Relationships

- ★ Organize a family reunion and get your kids to work with you
- ★ Make a Family Tree together – this promotes a sense of belonging
- ★ Practice a concert and invite relatives and friends
- ★ Bake cookies to take to some friends
- ★ Tell old family yarns – grandparents might help
- ★ Say “I love you” to each other
- ★ Write a family story of an outing or holiday together
- ★ Organize a street party
- ★ Make a family photo collage with photos of lots of events together
- ★ Teach your kids to always write a thank you note or card to friends and relatives when they have given them a present. Post it together.



Chapter 3

Creating Stability and Balance

Kids thrive on routine and a balance of activities in their family life. Too many kids spend most of their time on one activity. If it's not the TV (babysitter!), perhaps they are spending 5 days a week at ballet or soccer lessons because they 'have to be' a star. Of course we need to be flexible, but try to be consistent and have regular routines in place.

How to Create an Atmosphere of Security and Balance

- Family routines are very important. It sounds simplistic but regular bedtimes and mealtimes are crucial. Kids will be much more comfortable and show less anxiety if they know exactly what to expect. Try to keep a consistent, but flexible, daily routine.
- Eat together. Having a separate sitting for the kids went out with Victorian times. What a great time for conversation and sharing your day. What a great time for teaching them what you know and believe
- No meals with the TV on. Maybe Saturday evenings as a treat. No TV after dinner; this is homework time. If homework is done, then there is time for other activities before bed.
- Sleep. One emerging problem with a lot of children is that they are simply not getting enough sleep. Here is another place where routine contributes to good habits. I have seen families where little children are still running around at 11.00 pm when visitors are over. Not only are they obtrusive during the adult time, but they get over-excited and don't handle the next day well.

- **Variety.** Plan lots of different activities with your family – some quiet and some physical. Then lots of rest. This provides a sense of stability.
- **Create reasonable and fair rules** for certain activities and behaviors in your family – with consequences that the children understand. Stick to them, they feel more secure when they know you can be relied upon.
- **Do not over-schedule.** Plan some time for just hanging about together.

Balance can mean different sports and physical activities, reading and crafts, going to cultural or spiritual activities and sharing in family fun as well as school work. Stability is 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.

Some Fun Activities to Help Build Relationships

- ★ **Make Sundays Pancake Day** for breakfast – kids look forward to a special family event that happens every week.
- ★ **Together plan a list of things you want to do as a family** and put them in the diary. These dates are then not-negotiable – don't make something else more important.
- ★ **Have a regular date with each child.** Years ago a seminar speaker told us how he took each of his six children on dates – alone to a place of their choice (with a budget). I started this with my children (already over 30 years old). This one-on-one time once a month has been magical.
- ★ **Family Rituals** – think some up, that are unique to your family. Little things like high fives at certain times, the way you always have a big hug the very first thing you do when you see each other after school/work; every Friday go out for dinner and some habits that are just yours.
- ★ **Create a family Vision Board** – we can all plan our future together. A Vision Board is a collection of pictures and special words about things that you would like for your family. A terrific fun project is **Jack Canfield's "Dream Big Collection" for kids**
- ★ **Have a set routine** for dinner, bath, teeth, story and bed – or the like. Remember kids thrive on routine
- ★ **Celebrate milestones,** both large and small.
- ★ **Make a Family Calendar** and write in some great events



Chapter 4

An Optimistic and Positive Attitude

It's delightful to see children who just have a great attitude about things. They look at the world with a positive and optimistic approach. They expect good things to happen rather than worry about something that might come. They see sunshine and rainbows rather than clouds and cold days. These children enjoy life. The way to develop excitement and anticipation for good things is by focusing on the positive in all your communication together.

How to Promote Optimism and a Positive Outlook

- Every night ask them to tell you about the positive things that happened that day; for example the ritual could be just before turning out the light: 'Tell me the six best things that happened today'
- Instead of saying 'How was your trip', ask them to tell you the best things they liked about a trip, a person, a movie, a book – always looking for the positive
- Tell them often about the good things you notice that they did, and the things that you think are great about them
- When you have pressing serious problems arise, it is not appropriate to let children know about them
- Teach them that to get a smile you have to give one – to look at other people and smile at them. Smiling actually has a physiological affect on our endorphins – so we feel better too.

- You are the role model – mostly children learn optimism and pessimism from their parents – so watch yourself for negative thinking and language. Two exceptional books by Dr Martin Seligman can help here: [‘The Optimistic Child’](#) and [‘Learned Optimism’](#)
- Talk to your child about the lovely attributes you notice in other people that they know, they will learn to look for the best in others too.
- Make sure you keep your promises. When plans fall apart too often for children – because something ‘more important’ has come up for you, they get a negative message about themselves and eventually they reduce their expectations that things will work out for them. Of course it will happen very occasionally and then your child can certainly cope with a reasonable explanation. The other side of this coin is – don’t make promises you can’t keep!
- Be observant if your child seems sad or afraid about something and discuss it with them until they understand their feeling. It’s okay to feel like this at appropriate times, but sometimes kids hear things out of context, and blow it up in their mind out of all proportion. Acknowledge these negative feelings – don’t discount them.
- When an event is coming up talk about how excited you are, or when grandpa is coming say how much you are looking forward to seeing him.

Optimistic and positive children see an exciting challenge, not a problem. They look for solutions with positive expectations. They are usually not bored

Children with positive attitudes are also more likely to be grateful and appreciative. Children who welcome opportunities and convey genuine gratitude to those who help them have been found to be very happy people.

“Optimism is the faith that
leads to achievement.
Nothing can be done without
hope and confidence.”

Helen Keller



Some Fun Activities to Promote Optimism and Feeling Positive

- ★ Create some affirmations together and pin them around the house. Start with: 'Think Big' and "You can Be, Do and Have Anything You Want' then **[click here to find some ready made ones:](http://www.the-secret-dvd.net/pdfs/kids_affirmations.pdf)**
http://www.the-secret-dvd.net/pdfs/kids_affirmations.pdf
- ★ Every so often stick a yellow posit note on their door or mirror saying something positive about your child
- ★ Create a Happiness Box. First decorate a cardboard box with pictures. On colored note cards he can write down happy memories he recalls. He can keep them in the box, and add to them at happy moments. He can also include photos, a ticket to the ball game, travel brochures of a great holiday place he you all went to or pictures of the Theme Park rides he had. On days when he needs a lift remind him to look inside the box and to tell you about some of the items.
- ★ Place a Chart or Notice on the fridge which you have personalized for your child. Every now and then, when she is not around, write something really good about the great things she has said or done, that you have noticed about her.
- ★ One mother, Ann, plays the 'personality game with her kids: *"I have 6 yr. old twins who love to play the personality game e.g. What are 5 things you like about yourself? What 5 things are you good at? What 5 things would you like to improve upon? etc. We play this in the car, at restaurants and anywhere there is time. These are great positive affirmations when they come from them."*
- ★ Plan exciting events together to look forward to and focus on excitement and anticipation till the time arrives
- ★ Say only positive things for a day
- ★ Around the dinner table all say five things you like about each person, or tell everyone good things about each other



Chapter 5

Fostering Passion and Enthusiasm

One major contributor to your child's happiness is a passion for something in their lives. It's important to honor the natural talents and interests our children possess. It doesn't matter whether it is football, reading, dance, music or cooking Passionate children are happy children because there is something in their lives that they absolutely love to do.

How to Encourage Passion and Enthusiasm

- Spend time together working on their hobby, go to the ball game, and sit on the river bank and fish, read fairy stories.
- Make sure that you don't impose your hobbies and interests on your child – though nine times out of ten they will want to emulate you anyway. It soon becomes apparent what they are interested in.
- Shopping, Video games and TV programs soon become boring and children want to buy more stuff – these are not going to provide happiness and fulfillment
- You are a role model. When your child sees you totally engaged with your hobby or sport, they follow suit.
- Advertising is everywhere, and very cleverly engages our children. Material things will not light-up real passion for kids. Make purchases of toys a real treat – not a regular event. Parents often choose this expedient way of entertaining their children rather than spend time with them finding something they really love to do.

Children who have an interest which comes from inside them are not bored; they have an excitement that adds vitality to their lives. When she is absorbed in doing the thing she loves most, she is happy. Your child is even happier when you take a great interest in their interest too

Some Fun Activities to Promote Passion and Enthusiasm

- ★ If a particular sport is his hobby, plan an exciting trip to the big ball game; or dance, take her to the theatre.
- ★ Collect advertising and pictures of the players and help him to make a poster or scrap book; keep the theatre tickets and program and research for details of the dancers for her poster or scrap book.
- ★ Purchase books about her hobby and help her work through them.
- ★ Even write a book together about their passionate interest.
- ★ Sit down together and ask them to tell you all about their passion. Ask questions to show you are really listening.
- ★ Involve them in your hobby, and if they show an interest teach them what you know, and have heaps of fun together with it
- ★ Ask your child what ideas they have about doing more of what it is that they love the most, and how you can help them



“If you do the best you can, you will find, nine times out of ten, that you have done as well as or better than anyone else.”

William Feather



Chapter 6

Shaping and Teaching Family Values

As parents you get to decide the values for your family, indeed it is your responsibility. A strong sense of your family values provides a good basis for self-knowing, and adds to your child's happiness. A child who knows where he stands and has a clear understanding of what is right and wrong is a happy one. He feels secure. Establishing boundaries and sticking to them provides your child with a yardstick by which to measure himself; he can rely on you to keep him on the right track while he is learning to set his own boundaries. He is thus a happier person. Some of the values we want to pass on to our children are discussed here:

How to Instill your Family Values

- Our family is most important of all. If your children take the most important place in your lives, then the way you communicate and spend time with them will let them know faster than a thousand words.
- Each person is important – not what they have. Popular culture promotes consumerism and materialism. It wants to create people whose primary purpose in life is to spend and devour; buy, buy, and buy some more in the mistaken belief that it will bring them happiness. What is more important to us – to value things over people, or would we rather teach by example; teach generosity rather than acquisitiveness.
- Our feelings are acknowledged. It's okay to feel negative feelings and to express them. When your child comes to you with a problem, try not to minimize their challenges and fears. By

helping them to look for solutions you send the message that it is safe to talk with you about problems.

- We control our own life. Responsibility for their own life – teach them how to set goals, and how to achieve them. This is very empowering. Get ‘Go for Your Goals’ a Parent’s Guide with two Kids Workbooks (different age groups). A brilliant process to follow.
- What is acceptable behavior? Set boundaries - reasonable behavior expectations. Discuss your family rules and explain why to your child. Then stick to them. They soon learn that they can get around you if you waver and give in, then they don’t know where they stand.
- Discipline rules. Create acceptable and fair consequences for certain behaviors and be consistent – if you handle it one way this week, ensure that you do the same next week.
- Responsibility. Children of all ages can be responsible for parts of their life – for tidiness, chores around the house, pocket money etc. They also learn responsibility for their actions when you allow them to make their own decisions and choices and discuss these with them.
- Learning together. One of your family values might be that it is good to learn. When you expose your children to a broad range of interests and activities you are providing them with golden opportunities to find out something which they might love and excel at.
- Fairness. Children respond to reasonable expectations – try to expect only skills and behaviors that are appropriate for their age. Fair family rules which are clearly understood by your children teach them to be responsible for themselves. They know what is right and wrong and act within that framework.
- Kindness. You can say things like – ‘We are always kind to animals, we never hurt them’ and explain why.
- Co-operation. Play games where everyone is involved and learn about co-operating to make the game fun.
- Honesty. ‘We don’t take things that belong to other people. We need to ask them, or pay for an item in the store’. Consider – is it okay for children (and parents) to help themselves to a few cherries and grapes as they do the grocery shopping?
- Helpfulness. When you assign age-appropriate chores you teach them to be helpful and that their contribution is important.
- Good manners are about making social interactions more comfortable and pleasant. Once again you are a role model. Your actions speak louder than words. Teach about thank you, good table manners, playing loud music, not interrupting, throwing rubbish out of the car window, talking on the cell phone in front of others, talking very loudly, etc. A well mannered child does not mean a suppressed child, and will be very acceptable in the community. You do your child a favor when you teach him good manners

- Physical Behaviors. If you tell them: 'It is not okay to hit your brother', then later hit her yourself, you are sending a mixed message – actions speak!

When a child finds fulfillment in relationships, experiences and activities rather than things, his life is happy, meaningful and joyful. Without even being told we usually know what our family values are about things. As parents we don't often sit down to discuss this, our values become known to our children by default – when we tell them not to do something. It is better by far to think about it and teach them in advance.

Some Fun Activities to Teach Your Family Values

- ★ Play board games – even make up one of your own together – teach fair play, taking it in turns and honesty.
- ★ Do volunteer time at the lost pets' home – teach about kindness to animals.
- ★ Make fun greeting cards for family and friends to tell them how grateful you are to have them in your life
- ★ All clean the car together – teach them to be helpful help.
- ★ Visit the library to learn something together.
- ★ Play ball in the back yard or park – teach about sharing.
- ★ Clean the family silver – learning to help.
- ★ Make a little photo book to give to grandparents – learning to think about things to make others happy.
- ★ Maybe just sit down and talk about values and explain what they are. Of course this is always on-going. In everything you do with your children you are imparting your values to them.
- ★ Make a Family Poster about your family's values; write them down and cut out pictures that represent your values.



Chapter 7

Teach Gratitude and Giving

Research shows that one attribute that really happy people share is a sense of gratitude, even when things aren't going too well. Oftentimes we look for happiness in the wrong places. We search inside with psychotherapy and self-focused actions; or we look outside for happiness by buying stuff and sometimes drugs and alcohol and other forms of gratification.

How to Encourage Gratitude and Giving

- Talk about the little things that make you both happy. The more you focus on them, so will they.
- Learning to share is sometimes hard for a little child; they are still quite egotistical till the age of 6. It's okay not to share their very favorite toys; they can put them away before friends come. One good way to teach them to share is to say that they can each have 2 minutes with the toy – then set the oven timer or your cell phone alarm. They understand the concept of taking turns.
- When you praise life, your child will certainly model you. Speak about appreciation as often as you can.
- Do something for others together; perhaps take your child to visit someone who is alone or bedridden.

- When teaching them about gratitude talk with them about the little things as well as big things that we can be grateful for. Appreciate the lovely day, the flowers and the birds. Talk with them about how fortunate we are to have a warm home and great holidays.
- Teach about learning to give. Children are naturally possessive of their toys. A starting point might be to together go through the clothes that don't fit anymore and give them to the Charity shop for other children

Children will ultimately find happiness outside of themselves, by giving of themselves to others. When we focus on helping others and put their needs before our own, we expand ourselves – and are truly happy. It is extremely satisfying and gives meaning and joy when we improve someone else's life, even in a very small way.

Some Fun Activities to Teach Gratitude and Giving

- ★ Teach your children to write a **Gratitude Journal**. Go to: http://www.4lifesehelp.com/self_help_tools1.html
- ★ Join a tree planting day.
- ★ Create cards for sending from your family for birthdays etc.
- ★ Bake cookies to take to some friends.
- ★ Gratitude Rock. Go find a special pebble each. It is kept in your pocket, and then every time you touch it remember to be grateful for something about your day.
- ★ Help an elderly relative spring-clean.
- ★ Do some volunteer work.
- ★ Think of ways your family could help with sustainability.
- ★ Plan a garage sale – of everyone's old things, donate the money to charity.
- ★ Participate in a community fund raising drive.
- ★ Invite friends over – and all cook the dinner together.



Chapter 8

Be a Family with Lots of Fun and Fantasy

Kids who play and laugh a lot within the family circle are very happy. We need to allow them to be kids and not to be too aware of some of the problems we adults face as we bring up our children. Fantasy encourages creativity, and it's fun.

How to Laugh and Play LOTS

- Just play! Allocate time for family fun and don't be afraid to be silly.
- Kids just love it when adults joke around and laugh with them. Laugh wholeheartedly and loudly, sharing anything that is funny.
- Lighten up. If you are forever busy and rushing around a bit overwhelmed with what you have to fit into each week; stop! Step back and see what can be eliminated or streamlined. Kids don't want us to be too serious.
- Play daydreaming and fantasy games together. Kids know the difference between make believe and reality, and just love pretending. The more ridiculous, the better.
- Allow them to be kids – try not to burden them with adult worries and responsibilities.
- You know it – 'The family that plays together stays together'.

Heaps of fun and laughter go a long way to making children happy. Laughter in fact has a physiological affect on activating our endorphins. The more kids laugh – the more they laugh. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of fun and laughter.

Some Fun Activities to provide routine and belonging

- ★ Lie on your backs and watch the stars or all go to the local planetarium.
- ★ Sit down together and make a list of fun things you all want to do together. Put it on the fridge and get the kids to choose one when you have a spare afternoon or few hours.
- ★ Roast marshmallows on a fire in the yard.
- ★ Rake autumn leaves and roll in them.
- ★ Pretend you are tourist in your own home town and visit all the significant sites.
- ★ Go watch a parade.
- ★ Read joke books together.
- ★ Play card games.
- ★ Hire a really funny movie and laugh together.
- ★ Have a Treasure Hunt.
- ★ Play charades.
- ★ Blow bubbles.
- ★ Play hide and seek. Our family version of this is to have one person hide (in a big enough space) then we all go looking. When you find the hider you wait until no-one sees, and hide with him. When everyone is hidden – the last one in has to be the next one to hide. Kids love squeezing in with the adults trying not to giggle.
- ★ Get up early and watch the sunrise from a nearby hill or vantage point.
- ★ Go buy lollipops and stroll along eating them.
- ★ Go ten-pin bowling.
- ★ Plan a secret hike with a map – and go on it

Have lots of fun with these ideas, and especially have LOTS OF FUN with your kids.

It's true, you'll turn around pretty soon one day and they will already be young adults. Mind you, parenting never stops. There is never a time when we won't want to praise our child.

Enjoy.

Great Resources for Happy Kids

E-book



'Go for Your Goals – for Kids'

by Winsome Coutts, a Parent's Guide and two Kids Workbooks (different for appropriate age groups). This is not taught in school, but is one of the most important skills we can give our children. This e-book set is a brilliant process to follow for parents, teachers, grandparents. Walk through the goal setting process with your child with fun exercises and examples. They learn what a goal is, why it is important, what specific steps to take, and how to handle setbacks. Once they learn this skill and have success with it, they have it for life.

Books

'The Optimistic Child'

by Dr Martin Seligman, an exceptional book by this noted psychologist strongly recommended for parents wanting to help their children to be positive and optimistic in life.

'Learned Optimism'

by Dr Martin Seligman This book is more directed at adults, and does spend considerable time discussing why becoming optimistic is good for us when we really want to learn how, but nevertheless, is well worth reading and learning from.

Programs



'Dream Big Collection'

by Jack Canfield: a really unique visualization tool that creates a private, sacred space for your child to define their dreams, goals and desires. Each Vision Book comes with a broad collection of inspirational words, quotations, and affirmations to select from and place them in their Vision Book. Combine them with pictures and images that inspire them and best represent their dreams and desires. A fun visual process.

"When you're connected to a source and to each other through conversation, through making love, through meditation, playing games with your kids, all that stuff, then your self-esteem's going to go up." - Jack Canfield

'How to Raise Happy, Healthy, Self-Confident Children'

by Brian Tracy; a 6-CD Program which teaches the four behaviors of effective parenting, how to communicate with your children on a deeper level and how to raise responsible happy children who are high achievers. In fact how to raise super kids!



"If you raise your children to feel that they can accomplish any goal or task they decide upon, you will have succeeded as a parent and you will have given your children the greatest of all blessings." - Brian Tracy

Free Resources

100 Ways to Praise a Child –

A free poster for your fridge

Kids Affirmations –

Free affirmations for children to use



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