

Q&A



How to impart the right attitudes and values to your child.

Q As learning dispositions are also important values, what are some practical ways to put PRAISE into practise?

Dianne: By nurturing children's learning dispositions such as **P**ersistence, **R**eflectiveness, **A**ppreciation, **I**ntentiveness, **S**ense of Wonder and Curiosity, and **E**ngagement (PRAISE), you are also imparting and strengthening values. You instil in them a sense of self-worth and self-respect. More importantly, you empower them to be responsible for their own learning. How you nurture these values is critical.

You need to articulate how these values 'look like' to children. Talk it through with the children and suggest examples of behaviours. In doing so, it allows young visual learners to easily understand abstract concepts, and to feel that these are achievable. Let's take Persistence as an example. After you have read a story that emphasises this value, discuss with the children a list of phrases they think will encourage persistence. For instance, 'I will not give up when I make a mistake', 'I know I can do this', 'The more I try, the better I get' or 'Even when my work is hard, I can still do it'.

Once you have co-constructed the

I HAVE FOUND IT USEFUL TO PERSONIFY AND MAKE VISIBLE ABSTRACT CONCEPTS.

//Dianne Seet-Swee

phrases with the children, share these with their parents and ask them to practise saying them with their children. You will be heartened to know that these phrases will remain at the tip of their tongues long after the children's kindergarten years.

Q How do I develop a sense of right and wrong, and what is acceptable and what is not, in my child who is below six years of age?

Sarojini: **PLAN** Identify a specific habit or behaviour you want to correct or modify. For example, getting your child to pack his toys after playing with them.

DO Sit with him and show him how to pack the toys — which toy goes into which container, etc. Go over the instructions a number of times until he understands what is acceptable and what is not. When he has done well, be specific in praising him, for example: "Matthew, that is the correct way to pack your toys and I am happy that you can do so. Good job!"

for parents

CHECK If your child doesn't pack up his toys, repeat the instructions in a clear, calm voice. Do not order or demand that he packs up immediately or else face serious consequences. Rather than focussing on how unacceptable the behaviour is, it is more helpful for the child if the parent can repeat the instructions, or show him again how the packing should be done. Correcting mistakes in an appropriate way helps the child learn faster and reduces the chances of temper tantrums.

ACTION If your child continues to defy you, take corrective action by separating him from the situation. Tell him that since he is not listening to instructions, he will have to quietly think about his actions for a short while. After a couple of minutes, bring him back to the activity and encourage him to complete packing the toys.

When he has done so, praise him for cooperating.

In this way, you can guide the child on what is acceptable, and correct unacceptable behaviour immediately. It can also be applied to situations where you would want your child to speak the truth, cooperate with siblings and friends, etc.

For more useful tips on character development, visit www.familiesforlife.sg.

for professionals



Ask The Experts!



DIANNE SEET-SWEE, the Principal of Ascension Kindergarten, has more than 15 years of experience in the early childhood sector. She is passionate about developing children's thinking and character through the creative arts. She is also one of the ECDA Fellows appointed to train and mentor other early childhood professionals, and develop sector-wide resources.



SAROJINI PADMANATHAN is a Families for Life Council member and a popular parenting facilitator and trainer. She is passionate about educating parents on healthy parenting skills and maintaining a happy marriage, and is also currently Director of Professional Board Administration and Director of Cell Therapy Facility at the Health Sciences Authority.