

10 Ways to Make a Positive Impact



in Your Child's Life

A Free eBook Provided By:

Montessori American School

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Work on Improving Your Parental Skills

Lead by Example

If you want to improve your child's behavior, it is important to remember first and foremost that you must "lead by example". Remember...you are your child's first and most influential teacher! Your child is ALWAYS watching and listening. They are learning all of the good, but unfortunately, they are also taking in all of the bad and the ugly. Whenever your child is in your presence, it is important to keep this in mind. Ask yourself, "Are my words and actions something that I would want my child to imitate?"

Think before you speak

Remember to be conscientious of how you are speaking to your child, both when they are behaving well as well as the challenging times. Be aware that thoughtless words said in anger and frustration can leave long-lasting emotional scars. Also, remind yourself that your child will likely imitate the way that you handle a stressful situation. If you lose your temper, they will be likely to mimic that behavior.



Take a breather

Sometimes emotions can escalate to a point that clouds our logical judgement. If your child is at the height of a tantrum, or if you are feeling at your wit's end, you may need to take a little "breather". Just finding something to provide a quick distraction for your mind can do wonders. For example, you could put on tranquil music, walk into another room for a minute, or simply close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Practice "diaphragm breathing" to get the most out of these deep breaths.

Seek support

If your child has behavioral issues, it can often help to talk to other parents who have gone through the same thing. It helps to know you're not alone, and that there are ways to work through this. Seek parenting groups, self help books, and local resources to guide you through parenting struggles.



Share your secrets

Don't hoard all of the valuable lessons you have learned over the years. Once you discover parenting techniques that work well for you, share your secrets for the betterment of mankind!

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Your Child's Diet

Instilling healthy choices from the beginning makes it much easier on you and your child down the road. Make sure you are aware of what substances are going into your child's body. Help them understand what is good or not good for them to eat and drink, and explain to them why this is the case.



From the start

Most physicians agree that breast milk is best for babies because it passes on colostrum and antibodies from the mother.

However, once a child has moved onto solid foods, how do you continue to instill healthy eating habits?

Educate them

Education about diet is important. Help children learn about things like the the benefits of

eating organic vs. non-organic or about genetically modified organisms and genetically engineered ingredients. Teach them in ways that they can comprehend.

Form healthy habits

Remember, eating habits are learned behaviors...they are not intuitive. The eating habits that your child is forming at home will stick with them well into adulthood. So, why not give them an advantage of a healthy start?

Today, more than ever, humans are disconnected from our food sources. The number of Americans who are cooking meals from scratch continue to dwindle. With everything else going on in our lives, it's often just easier to microwave a frozen dinner or grab something from a fast-food restaurant. However, the health benefits of preparing fresh food, or at least making healthy choices when it comes to restaurants or pre-prepared food are a huge benefit to you and your child.

As a parent, you also have to contend with the continuous assault by corporate food advertising. It's easy to feel frustrated, or even somewhat powerless against it. But, if you stick to a few simple techniques, it will help you overcome this and set a healthy foundation for your child's habits. At the very least, try to incorporate "variety, moderation, and balance," as well as fresh or whole foods, and you will be setting a positive path for your child.

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Turn off the Screens

Remember the days when everyone was worried about children “watching too much television”? Well, those days are behind us. But, unfortunately, not for the better. These days, television is now only the tip of the iceberg. There are now a plethora of electronics that cause children to be sedentary and turn into “zombies”.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child’s “screen time” should be limited to no more than one or two hours per day. This not only includes television, but all electronics with a screen.

The Mayo Clinic reported findings of studies conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which indicate that more than two hours a day of screen time can lead to the following issues in children:

- ▲▲ Obesity
- ▲▲ Irregular sleep
- ▲▲ More desensitized to violence
- ▲▲ Less time spent in active play
- ▲▲ Behavioral, emotional, social and attention issues
- ▲▲ Impaired academic performance (Elementary students with televisions in their bedrooms receive lower average test scores than those who do not.)

When your child is in front of the television, computer, tablet, etc., it is also important to ensure you are monitoring what they are watching. Make sure you are aware of the types of websites visited, YouTube clips viewed, games played, and television shows watched. With the availability of information on the internet, your child has access to more than our parents ever dreamed of worrying about. Research the “parental controls” on your television and computers, and set these to age-appropriate shows and websites for your child.



Get Back to Nature

As advances in technology increase, children have developed what some are referring to as “nature deficit disorder”.

It's a scary fact, but according to an editorial review by James Levine of Publishers Weekly, “...a 2002 British study reported that eight-year-olds could identify Pokémon characters far more easily than they could name ‘otter, beetle, and oak tree’.”

Many children are now opting for hours in front of the television, iPad, computer, or video games, over playing outdoors.

Obviously, it is important not to allow your children to fall into this habit and form a “nature deficit.”

Exposure to nature can be a powerful form of therapy for your child. Outdoor activities can help with attention-deficit disorder, improve creative skills, and can help maintain a healthy physique. The Vitamin D from the sunshine is also essential to your child's health.

To help your child enjoy and appreciate the great outdoors, consider these activities:

Grow a butterfly garden

If you have a yard, plant flowers that attract butterflies. Look for cocoons, and talk to your child about the transformation of caterpillar to butterfly. If you don't have a yard, take a walk the park or on a nature trail and observe the plants and insects.



Grow your own food

Even if you only have a patio, there are many plants that will thrive and produce fruits or vegetables in the shade. You can also take your child to a “U-Pick” or farm to pick fruits and vegetables.

Schedule outdoor playtime

Make it a habit for your child to play outdoors for at least an hour or two after school. It's easiest when this is regularly scheduled time, so they know it's expected. That way, they don't even have the option to turn on the television or run to the video games.

At Montessori American School, outdoor playtime is just as important as class time because it encourages a child's innate playful nature.



Don't Teach. Instead Help Them Learn

It is an innate response in most parents to “teach” their children new things. This is great! But, we must be conscious of how we are teaching. When a child asks a question, we automatically want to give them the answer. While educating your child is important, it is equally important to allow them to *learn on their own* so that they fully comprehend and retain the information.

If a child is uninterested in what you are teaching them, you may notice their eyes begin to glaze over. When this happens, the effort is lost. Even when a child asks a question, sometimes they've lost interest before you've even given them a thorough answer.

However, if you *spark a child's curiosity*, then you will have a much better chance of truly reaching them and helping them learn. Or, if a child has to research, contemplate, or discover the answer to their question, they are more likely to retain the information.



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Help Me Do it By Myself

Just as it is important to help your child “learn” on his or her own, it is also important to allow them to “do” on their own. This not only instills a good work ethic, but also boosts independence and confidence that will help them throughout life.

To help a child do tasks on his/her own, provide them with these “3 T’s”

Time

A child often needs time to figure out a new concept or learn a new task on their own. Be patient. Give them time to figure it out. Allow them to experience trial and error (as long as it’s not harmful) so that they can see why something works the way it does. If you see them getting overly frustrated, offer some assistance, but don’t “take over”.

Tools

Give your child “tools” that help them express their creativity, expand their knowledge, and encourage independence and self confidence around things that are of interest to them. For example, instead of toys as a gift, observe the talents and interests of your child, and give them tools that will help them excel in these areas.

Trust

Trust that your child can and will succeed! While you should be there for support, encouragement, and reassurance, you also need to step back and trust that your child has the ability to do it on their own.

Once your child has completed a task on his or her own, it is important to provide positive reinforcement for a job well done!

Also consider involving your child in tasks that not only help themselves, but the rest of the family. Simple jobs, like matching socks for everyone, cleaning common areas, setting the table or helping with dishes, helps to instill a foundation of helping others.



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READ, READ, READ

Reading books to your child is SO important. Not only does it improve literacy skills, creativity, and comprehension, but it also provides a wonderful bonding activity.

Reading to your child

As you read to your child, ask him or her questions about the story. This helps your child understand the content, as well as the concept of “plot”. Children often want to read the same book over and over again. This is fine! It just means that they are enjoying the language used, and appreciating the story. Even before your child can actually read, you should ask them to “read” the story to you. Likely, they have memorized most of the words. However, the act of reading the words out loud while looking at them is improving their skills.

Having Your Child Read to You

Once your child has learned to read phonetically, ask them to read to you out loud...and often. Be patient, listen attentively, and don't be quick to correct them. If they miss a word, ask them if the sentence makes sense and then offer the correction.





Exercise With Your Children

Child obesity numbers have continued to climb over the years. With today's technology, children have even more options of sedentary activities. Because of this, incorporating exercise into your child's daily routine is more important than ever.

To get your child excited about exercise, start by being a good role model. Show them that physical activity can be fun, rather than a chore, and remind them that it is an important time to take care of their body and health. Come up with activities you can enjoy as a family, and incorporate these activities into your routine at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

Remember, adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, however children need at least an hour. So, make sure you're also encouraging your child to have independent active play time or time playing outdoors with friends as well.

Physical activities you can do as a family

- ▲▲ After school, head to the park. Play catch, tag, frisbee, or other games that every one can enjoy.
- ▲▲ Jump rope with your kids or encourage a neighborhood jump rope group.
- ▲▲ If the weather is bad, be creative with indoor games such as [kid's yoga](#) or dancing to [music](#). Even video games such as Wii sports, provide an indoor activity that is still physically active.
- ▲▲ Take a family walk or bike ride.
- ▲▲ If you live in a neighborhood with amenities, such as a swimming pool, tennis courts, or basketball courts, make sure you are taking advantage of them.
- ▲▲ Got a backyard? Why not set up a net for badminton or other net ball sports?
- ▲▲ Play baseball or soccer with your kids or organize a neighborhood game.
- ▲▲ Encourage kids to participate in [active chores](#), such as light housework, washing the car, or cleaning the garage. Turn on some music, and make the chores fun to do together.
- ▲▲ Take a nature hike, observing wildlife, and collecting unique leaves or rocks.
- ▲▲ Enroll your kids in organized activities, such as soccer, flag football, swimming, gymnastics, or dance.



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Introduce a Second Language

"No one but a child can learn to perfection as many languages as he/ she hears spoken about him". ~Maria Montessori



From birth to around the age of six, a child is in what Dr. Montessori called the “sensitive period for languages.” This means, that during this time in their life, a child can learn a second language with no effort and no accent.

In our increasingly global world, most parents realize that it is a great benefit for their children to be fluent in multiple languages. Take advantage of the fact that your young child is at the “prime” learning stage for comprehending and retaining the ability to speak a second language.

At the ages of two and three, your child is increasing his or her vocabulary. However, they're also starting to recognize speech patterns that they have been hearing since birth. So, the earlier a second language is introduced, the easier it will be for your child to pick it up, and replicate the language's unique sounds.

According to an article in Parents magazine, the director of the Language Workshop for Children in New York City, Francois Thibaut, claims that when it comes to learning a language...the earlier, the better. Prior to age 3 is when the ability to hear different phonetic pronunciations is sharpest. As we age, we lose the capacity to hear and produce certain sounds if we have not been exposed to them early on.

Even just hearing another language in a television show or music is beneficial. However, providing a consistent education of a second language for your child is ideal.

Did you know that Montessori American School provides Spanish classes as part of the enrichment curriculum offered to students?



Consider a Montessori Environment Over a Simple Day Care Setting

In the United States, the economy and changing family structures often requires both parents to work. It has been estimated that over 85% of mothers across America are working. Because of this, some sort of day care is often necessary for younger children who have not yet reached school age.

It is important to ensure your child is in an environment that encourages learning from the start. A simple day care setting provides “care”, but does not always provide an education. The psychology and learning style of a child may not even be taken into consideration in a traditional day care.

Instead, consider enrolling your child in a [Montessori environment](#). Montessori will provide your child with the skills they need to not only be better prepared for 1st Grade, but have an early advantage in approaching all aspects of life. The Montessori environment create conditions in which children can develop their full, unique potentials.

An advantage of preschools and kindergarten is that they help children develop socialization skills at a young age. Montessori takes this a step further by creating conditions at school that give children a sense of joy, celebration, and a feeling that they are part of something bigger than themselves. This is all accomplished without taking away a child's sense of personal empowerment and personal responsibility. Children are provided an environment that fosters a sense of awe and wonder, and encourages creativity, independence, and self worth.

Yoga For Kids

Yoga helps children learn techniques for self-health, relaxation and inner fulfillment. Children derive enormous benefits from yoga. Physically, it enhances their flexibility, strength, coordination, and body awareness. In addition, their concentration, sense of calmness and relaxation improves. Yoga is a great gift to give your children.



Now Accepting 2 Year Olds: Help with Potty Training
Young children will be given the Montessori foundation in our warm, caring, and loving environment, through unique hands on experience. Your toddlers will be introduced to Spanish, Arts and Crafts, Music, Geography, and Geometry from an early age. We are sure that your young ones will love being at the Montessori American School.



Art Class for 4 Year Olds

Miss Norma, our experienced certified Art Teacher, will introduce art activities with oil pastels, colored chalk, markers, paints, and collages. Your children will work with origami and drawing skills. Every lesson will be simple and lots of fun!



Spanish Classes Included in our Curriculum

Starting in September, Spanish will be given daily, inside the Montessori environment. Children will be introduced to the basic vocabulary and structures. For those interested, an Advanced Spanish Class will still be given by Ms. Edith.



Art History for K's

Miss Norma will be teaching Art History to your child. They will start with cave drawings to present day artists. She will also teach them drawing skills and how to work with different mediums. Your child will be getting a start in art appreciation. Every lesson will be a great learning experience.

