



“Rejoice in the Lord always! ... Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:4-7



Welcome Parents & Families! *Reading & Music!* Everyone participates ~ ~ ~



“...You created my inmost being...” Psalm 139:13

- To treat kids differently is respectful...give first born kids special treatment.
- Expectations - let your kids help you and feel involved
- Identical twins have individual finger prints showing God’s love for them as unique
- Definition of a strong willed child is not stubborn - ‘that can be strong willed gone bad’
- Family Motto defining what is unique about your family
- Toddlers/Kindergartners have great creativity. Stay engaged, present in their imagination
- <https://www.theepochtimes.com/health/saving-childhood-a-new-movement-helps-parents-protect-young-kids-from-smartphones-5741070?>



Holiday expectations

- Ages 0-3: You want them looking at the world rather than screen.
- Find joy in the mundane as you go about your daily routine - you’re raising a new generation helping your kids to understand God’s love for them & their place in the world.
- What is it that fills you up
- <https://connectedfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Scripts-for-Unsolicited-Advice.pdf>
- Steps to success - - Scroll down to sign up for ‘parenting challenge assessment’: <https://connectedfamilies.org/3-steps-success-holiday-chaos/>



Action/Attitude - Describe the specific action/attitude to let kids know exactly what they did well:

“You were really careful to stay calm and thank everyone before you went on to the next gift.”

Benefit/Blessing - Help them understand how their behavior benefits everyone involved: *“That helped to keep all the other kids calm. Those who gave you gifts felt cared about and that you appreciated their gift.”*

Character - Label the character required to build a positive identity, such as *“You really showed gratitude and self-control. Nice work!”* This becomes the source of more behavior consistent with that identity ... *“I am a grateful, self-controlled kid”*.



Here are some practical tips to make this easier for all of you at dinner:

1) Keep it light.

Whether you're telling knock-knock jokes or watching how entertaining peas are when they roll around on your plate, fun at the table reduces the anxiety that drives most food avoidance.

2) Help children explore and learn about a variety of food with no expectation to eat it.

Knowledge decreases anxiety. Let kids explore and even play with their food. Especially for younger children, it is developmentally essential to explore and have fun with their food to learn about it. Ask questions that help kids talk about the food's shape, color, smell, texture, taste, and how it compares to foods they enjoy - e.g., "The peas are green, just like little grapes! Does it have a big or little smell? Is it salty or sweet? Slippery, soft, or crunchy?"

3) Use positive language.

Avoid saying "Stop," "Don't," or "No" at meals. It is helpful to state rules regarding appropriate behavior in positive terms: "The food stays on the table." "Chairs are for sitting, not standing." "We use our inside voices at the table."

Replace demands ("Eat your carrots!") or questions ("Can you eat your chicken now?") with "You can" statements that help a child feel empowered. For example, "You can try that new food." If your child says "NO!" simply smile and reply, "You can when you're ready."

4) Serve "safe food" at every meal.

Serving one thing that your child finds acceptable can greatly reduce power struggles. Avoid special-order cooking or "kid food" and "adult food" delineations. Everybody gets a little of everything on their plate. Nobody has to eat anything! Help kids serve themselves.

5) Remember the "10 Times Rule."

Research shows that it takes about 10 times of trying a food to know if you like it. Don't try to persuade them they really did like the broccoli. Let them have their opinion, smile, and say, "We'll try it again sometime. It takes lots of tries to decide."

6) Gently affirm sampling of new foods.

Do not pressure, manipulate, reward, or excessively praise children for eating. These tactics imply children wouldn't naturally want to eat the food, i.e., there's something wrong with it. Observations like, "I see you tried something new," or "We're both eating our peas" are helpful. Your child should realize he is eating something of his own choice, not to please you.

The most important thing is to continue to offer a good variety of healthy food in a safe, fun environment without taking over your child's responsibility of choosing what and how much to eat! If you can help them learn to choose wisely for themselves, they will keep growing those skills on their own for a lifetime of healthy eating.