

Family values

Parents are one of the most important role models for young people growing up. They have a huge influence on their children. Children will grow up doing what their parents **do** – rather than what they **say**.

If we don't set a good example, we can't expect high standards from our children.

A powerful word

Some of us may never have heard our parents apologise to us as we were growing up. However, parents are human too. They don't always get it right. Sometimes saying 'sorry' can be the strongest, most powerful word.

ACTION POINT Learn to apologise to anyone – whether child, parent, partner or colleague – whenever you need to.



Enjoy fun and relaxation together

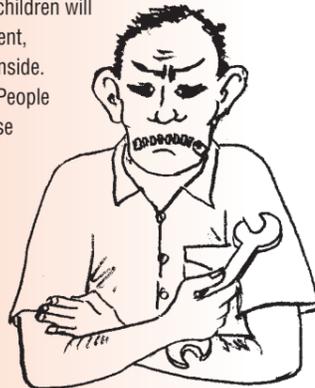
There is never enough time in life. However, it is so important to set aside quality family time. If possible, suggest a time each week when every family member (or extended family) can spend an hour together – longer if possible. Let each member of the family in turn choose how to spend this time. One week a child may choose a game, the mother may decide to make biscuits together, the grandmother may choose a walk. Everybody shares in this activity.

Learn to express your feelings

I worked with a mechanic. He used to say, 'If it doesn't work I usually hit it! This doesn't work so well with children or my wife, though. I don't know how to explain how I'm feeling.'

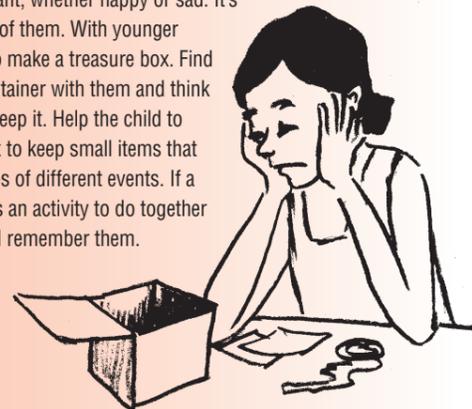
If we, as adults, can't express how we feel, our children will not learn how to either. Feelings of disappointment, sadness, frustration and pain can all be locked inside. They are only expressed as outbursts of anger. People need to express how they are feeling before these feelings explode and hurt someone.

ACTION POINT Tell someone honestly and openly how you feel – without hurting anyone. Talk about the relationship that means most to you. Be honest with yourself. Feelings cannot hurt you, but trying to ignore them can.



Treasure special memories

Memories are important, whether happy or sad. It's good to be reminded of them. With younger children, help them to make a treasure box. Find or make a special container with them and think of a special place to keep it. Help the child to use their treasure box to keep small items that have special memories of different events. If a parent is dying, this is an activity to do together that will help the child remember them.



What helps to keep a family stable?

Reflect on these words and what they mean to you...

- security
- love
- encouragement
- understanding
- fairness
- patience
- kindness
- clear communication
- grace

What words would you add to this list?

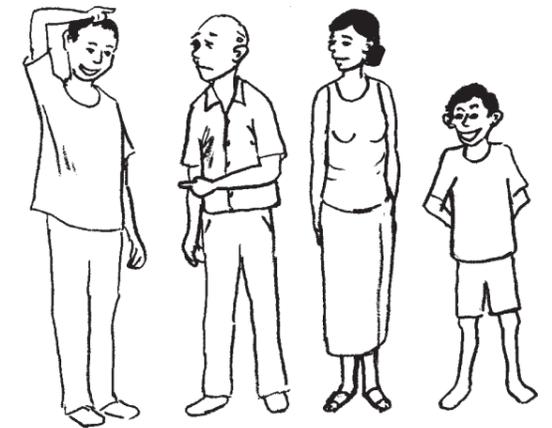
Ideas for games...

Hide and seek

One person covers their eyes and ears and counts slowly up to 100. Everyone else hides. The person shouts, 'Here I come, ready or not!' when they have reached 100 and tries to find everyone. The last one to be found is the next person to count and search.

Seven-up

Form a small circle and begin counting from one. As each person says the number they place one arm across their chest. If they use their right arm to point to the left, the person on their left says the next number. If they use their left arm to point to the right, the person on their right says the next number. The direction can be reversed at any time. Count until seven is reached – but this time, instead of saying 'seven' out loud, the person puts one hand up onto their head, again pointing either to the left or right. The next person starts again at one. When someone makes a mistake, they're out of the game!



The name game

Everyone needs to be able to write to play this. Each person needs some paper and a pencil. In turn, choose different categories, such as girl's names, trees, birds, football teams, rivers, cities, countries, fruit or songs. Without looking, one person points on a newspaper to find a letter from the alphabet. Give everyone a time limit (one or two minutes) to write down one word that begins with that letter in each of the categories. Then score points. If anyone else has the same word, it's crossed out. You score one point for every correct answer that no-one else has used. Keep playing, using different letters, and add up the total.

Bible charades

One person begins by miming a person or a story from the Bible. The first to guess correctly is the next to mime. This can be very funny!

Storytelling

Find a comfortable place to sit together and make up stories. Someone starts off an imaginary story with a few sentences. Each person in turn adds a few more sentences to the story. Alternatively, take time to tell children stories about their culture and history.

Healing touch

Sometimes a loving hug can stop the hurt and help to heal. However, in some families people just don't express their feelings through touch. Children grow up believing that it's not correct to hug. But we never grow out of needing to be held and hugged.

ACTION POINT Hug people you love – but only if they want you to! You will both feel better for it.



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