



Accentuate the Positive

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As parents, we often use up so much energy nagging and correcting our children that we have little energy left to relate to them in positive ways. This is particularly true if our child has ADHD, learning disability, or another developmental problem.

In contrast, the happy families I have known have a positive tone and direction. In angry, unhappy families, most interactions have a negative tone. This is one area where all of us as parents can work toward a better record.

We can tip the balance in our families in a more positive direction by applying some of the following principles to our relationships:

Listen to the child. Listen without interrupting or correcting.
Listen to really hear what he or she has to say.

Discipline fairly, consistently, and firmly.
Discipline the behavior; don't attack the child's character.

Give the child space.
Let the child do his or her own thing as long as the activity does not infringe on the rights of others. We are saying, in essence,
"I trust you to make some choices for yourself about what you will do with your time."

Look for the child's good points.
Everyone has some gift. Everyone does something well. Everyone has some redeeming features. The sparkle is there if we only look for it. Ours will be a much happier family if we look for each other's talents rather than each other's faults. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior is more effective than frequent criticism of negative behavior.

In summary catch them being good and tell them you love it.