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**The ideas below work great. However if you have grown up with different habits, you may find using them consistently is much harder than just knowing about them. Give me a call if you need help to get these ideas working for you.**

### **HELP FOR PARENTS: How to Raise Happy Children**

- I) **TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF:** Burned out parents make unhappy children.
- A) Notice how you feel about what the children are doing. Act before things get bad and you get mad.
  - B) Just for you, make some quiet time; some physical activity time; eat right; relax some every day. Work in a break from your kids. Nap time isn't for them. It is for you!
  - C) Join forces with the other adults who deal with the children in your care: friends, counselors, teachers, courts, social workers, parents, grandparents, etc.. Share ideas. Don't try to raise children all by yourself.
- II) **TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHILDREN:** You are one of their primary models. What they see is what you get.
- A) If you do drugs, alcohol, smoke, yell, curse, hit or criticize around your children, they will tend to do the same things when they grow up.
  - B) If you listen to your children, keep your promises, play with them, and respect them, they will have these important skills when they grow up too.
- III) **WHAT YOUR CHILDREN NEED:** Besides food and shelter, children need two basic things from those who care for them- Structure and Nurture.
- A) **Structure:**
    - 1) Make sure your child is old enough to do what you expect. Then make sure you show them how you expect them to act
    - 2) When they act right, let them know it. When they do not, see that they get back on track.
    - 3) Follow a regular schedule of meals, chores, study time and bed time. This will give your children a sense of calm and control in their lives.
  - B) **Nurture:**
    - 1) Children need to know that they are loved, regardless of their behavior.
    - 2) Give your children your attention. Listening to them is more important than telling them. Let them know what you understand about how they are feeling.

3) Let your children know what they are doing right. It is more important than telling them what they are doing wrong.

4) Give your children surprises, cuddle time, warm fuzzy feelings, and other wanton acts of random kindness.

Providing structure and nurture for your children does not guarantee that they will not make mistakes. But it will give them the discipline to work, direct their lives and learn from their mistakes. It will also give them confidence that they are loved and can love. These are among the most precious gifts parents can give their children.

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