

Why You Might Be Discouraging Your Child Without Realizing It

Most parents want to do well when it comes to encouraging children and motivating them to be the best they can be. But, in attempting to do so, well-intentioned parents sometimes end up discouraging their kids instead. Here are 4 ways you can discourage your child:

1. You offer too much help.

So, your child wants to learn how to rollerblade. You wisely bundle him up in a helmet and pads and walk with him outside. At that point, he wants to try on his own. But you start shouting suggestions, walking along beside him and instinctively reach for him every time he falters. To you, this is just Safety 101. To him, it's you showing you don't think he can do it on his own.

The same thing can happen when your child is working on a paper for school, trying a new hairstyle or learning a new skill. You see all of the ways to make their task easier and more efficient and you tell them all of your ideas. Unfortunately, your offer of help sends the message that you don't believe in them. Your child will either say something like, "I can do it myself!" Or, they'll give into your suggestions, do it your way, and miss an opportunity to grow.

2. You compare them to others.

Sure, you're just trying to motivate them by pointing out the successes, or failures, of others. "Josh, I noticed that Caden stands with his feet a little further apart when he's batting. You should try it, too." Or, "Sophia, your sister had that project when she was in second grade. Let me find her old

project for you to review.”

Again, your intentions are noble, but by comparing your child to someone else, you’re telling them that they are not good enough.

3. You always expect more.

There is a time and place for everything. But, when your child tells you they got a B on a really hard test, it is not the time to say, “That’s great. Do you think you can make an A next time?”

Our children want us to praise them for their hard work and success, without having us always look for how to make their performance even better. So if your son tells you his coach thinks he’s really coming along with his football training, don’t jump in and suggest ways he can do even better. Let your child bask in the praise, minus any ideas for improvement you might have.

4. You minimize their victories.

This can happen in a couple of ways. First, you just don’t realize what a big deal it is to them so you offer half-hearted comments. To prevent this from happening, really tune in. If your child is soft-spoken, you might need to really listen to see if something is important to him. If it is, lavish him with praise.

The other way parents minimize their children’s victories is by being too busy or distracted to fully join in the celebration. This one can be tough. You’ve just walked in the door when your daughter wants to show you her 10-page project with a million details. As much as you want to put her on hold, give her the praise she’s craving.

What are some other ways you find yourself discouraging your kids? {eo}

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