



The Age of Opportunity **by** **Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D.**

Take-Away Points from Chapter 7*

How Parents Can Make A Difference

- 1. Before children can master self-control three factor must be in place:**
 - a. They must be emotionally secure enough to move from external or “parental” control to self-management “self-control” = CALM;**
 - b. They must be behaviorally skilled enough to know how to act = COMPETENT; and**
 - c. They must be assured enough to take responsibility for their own behavior = CONFIDENT.**
- 2. For parents to help their children achieve self-regulation they need to parent with warmth, firmness and support.**
- 3. Parenting with warmth means providing children with affection, praise and responding to their emotional needs.**
- 4. Parenting with little or inconsistent warmth makes children feel insecure.**
- 5. Parenting with warmth gives children a sense that they are loved, valued and protected which, in turn, helps children to feel calmer when on their own and that is essential for the development of self-regulation.**
- 6. When fostering security in children, parents need to remember:**
 - a. You cannot love your child too much;**
 - b. You need to be physically affectionate;**
 - c. Try to understand and respond to children’s emotional needs especially as they change as children age;**
 - d. Provide a safe haven meaning children need a home that is free of stress, where they can relax and feel peace of mind; and**

e. Be involved in your children's lives, meaning it is important to attend school functions, getting to know their friends and spending time with them.

7. Parenting with firmness means that there is a degree and consistency of limits that parents impose on their children's behavior.

8. Firm parents have clearly articulated rules that children are expected to follow.

9. Firm parents make their expectations clear to their children.

10. Firm parents explain their rules and decisions to their children.

11. Firm parents are consistent with their rules and expectations of their children and establish routines for recurring daily tasks.

12. Firm parents are fair and are flexible enough to modify rules as children mature.

13. Avoid harsh punishment. Physical punishment is demeaning to children.

14. Effective punishment has five elements:

- a. Identify the wrong act;**
- b. Describe the impact the wrong behavior has on you;**
- c. Suggest one or more alternative actions a child can take other than the wrong behavior;**
- d. Clearly state what the punishment will be; and**
- e. Explain that you expect your child to do better next time.**

15. It is important for parents to be supportive of their children, which means they tolerate and encourage their children's growing capacity.

16. "Scaffolding" is a term that refers to techniques parents use to show their support for their children and entails giving their children more responsibility or autonomy than their children are used to.

17. Set your children up to succeed by creating expectations that help them demonstrate their maturity. When they are able to meet these expectations they will gain the confidence to do things well and on their own.

18. Praise your children's accomplishments, but focus on the effort and not the outcome.
19. Don't be overly intrusive. Children need to develop a sense of mastery and self-sufficiency and that cannot be accomplished if parents micromanage them.
20. Parents should relinquish control gradually, as their children get better at managing their own lives.
21. Parents should help their children think through decisions rather than making them for their children.
22. Protect children when you must, but permit when you can. Children need to learn from their mistakes.

Styles of Parenting

There are three styles of parenting primarily: autocratic, permissive and authoritative.

23. Autocratic parenting is cold, firm and psychologically controlling. "Do it because I said so." Discipline is completed by asserting power and control, often in cold punitive ways over children.
24. Permissive parenting is warm and supportive but very lenient, often indulging in children's whims. Permissive parenting strives to keep children "happy" by not setting limits and trying to avoid conflict.
25. Authoritative parenting is high in warmth, support and firmness where there is no hesitation to set limits on children's behavior or maintain standards. Discipline is accomplished from a position of warmth not power in ways that support children and do not squelch their growing sense of autonomy.
26. Children who are raised with authoritative parenting are more confident, more poised, more determined and more self-reliant.
27. Because authoritative parented children develop confidence, they can more easily resist peer pressure. They are less likely to use drugs, commit serious crimes, cheat on school work, even cut class.
28. Authoritative parented children are better at regulating their emotions and therefore report less anxiety, less depression and have less psychosomatic problems like insomnia or eating disorders.
29. Children from autocratic parented households report lower self-esteem and are less socially poised. They are also less self-reliant and less persistent.

30. Children from permissive parented homes have good levels of social poise, self-confidence and self-assurance, but they also have much higher levels of drug and alcohol abuse and their school performance is lower.

Prepared by Suzanne Burdett, freelance writer and former Glenbard parent

***This handout contains the words, thoughts and expressions of author Laurence Steinberg and are not those of the preparer.**