

6 Proven Methods for Inspiring Your Children to Behave

Before we start, let me explain my claim — six proven methods for inspiring your children to behave. I am proudly raising three little monsters who call me mom. They have been the best test/focus group I ever could have asked for and through them I have learned, by trial and error — lots and lots of error — what works best in getting them to behave. While my techniques may work like a charm on my three, I have no clue if they will work for anyone else. But just on the off chance that other moms out there could benefit from my proven methods, I thought I'd share.

So, here they are:

1. Praise: Too often we give our kids the majority of our attention when they've done something wrong. It's natural, only human. But, when we give them even more attention for doing something right, amazing things can happen. So, the next time they are being good citizens, make them feel like they are the best of the best. It shouldn't be too hard, right? I mean, these are the golden stars that you birthed afterall, *smile*. Whenever my kids do something right, I praise them. Like, the superstar-fanatic-I-just-ran-into-Beyoncé-at-the-airport-and-I-am-about-to-faint-I-am-so-excited type of praise. This has been very effective in inspiring them to repeat the same good behavior in hopes of getting that same treatment; which they surely receive every single time.

2. Turn a blind eye: Whenever they are acting up — minor misbehavior, not the biggies — just turn a blind eye. Ignore them. Pretend you didn't see a thing. This has been extremely effective with my third, and most rambunctious, child who is constantly redefining the term 'cray-cray' with his various mischievous acts. I especially appreciate the way he stops and looks at me after he's done something he knows damn well he had no business getting into. Waiting for the reaction that never happens and appearing to be perplexed by my lack of response. I just chuckle to myself and then look forward to the next time he does something right so I can get back to #1.

3. Study child development: I know you are like, what in the world, did she just suggest I enroll in college courses to learn how to get my child to act right? No, I would never. I think parenting is best learned by doing, not reading. However, there is some value to be gained from reading up on the psychology of child development. There are quite a few books that I've read that have helped me to better understand how to engage in the mind games that are required to successfully get children to behave. My favorite is *Your Child's Growing Mind: Brain Development and Learning From Birth to Adolescence*, which was very helpful for getting inside the child's mind.

4. Pay attention: You are probably wondering why I told you to turn a blind eye a minute ago and now I am telling you to pay attention. There is a method to my madness. Stay with me here. So, one of the biggest reasons why kids act out is because there is something going on. They may be dissatisfied with an aspect of their home situation or perhaps there are things going on at school. It is important to pay attention to your children and what's going on in their lives so that you are aware of, and can mitigate, the issues that could possibly trigger undesirable behavior.

5. Lead by example: I am a huge fan of showing your children what you want them to do by [your example](#); and this especially applies to their behavior. You can't throw tantrums and pout when you don't get what you want (don't look at me like that, I have witnessed adults acting like this on many an occasion — and with their children watching!) and then expect that your children will not act the same way. This is especially true with older children, i.e. tweens/teens, who need to be shown how to express their complex emotions without succumbing to negative behaviors.

6. An offer they can't refuse: I know, I know. It's like I am telling you to bribe them into being good...ok, you got me. That is exactly what I am saying. This is a very effective method in producing the results you want. When we are about to head off to the grocery store, and I know the kids are going to make me want to not be myself for the next 45 minutes, we have a little pre-game talk. This is what I need from you (to not make me look like the world's worst mom with the crazy kids who don't know how to act out in public) and here's what I will do for you (let you live... hahaha ok, I will buy you something.. dammit). It's not my favorite, but it works in a pinch.

Your turn: What are your proven methods for inspiring your children to behave? Please share your secrets with me by leaving a comment below.