

10 Parenting Tips for Raising Happy, Healthy and Joyful Kids

While sitting in the waiting room during the last school holidays, while Jake and Holly each had a kinesiology session, I stumbled across a beautiful book of bite-sized bits of inspiration for parents called **Loving Each Day for Moms and Dads** by **John Roger**. As I flicked through it I found the suggestions really helpful, so I photographed a few of them!

Here are 10 of my favourites for raising happy, healthy and joyful kids who can successfully navigate their way through life:

1. **When you teach children, use their language to talk to them:** If it's baby-talk, you use baby-talk. If it's love-talk, you use love-talk. It should all be love-talk. Even when you are saying, 'Shh, be quiet,' the child should not hear any harshness. The child should hear 'I love you very much; please be quiet now.'
2. **It's OK to apologise to your children:** You can make mistakes too. They'll still love you.
3. **Play imagination games with your children:** Show them how to imagine beautiful things, and how to change scary images into funny ones. If they see a monster chasing them, teach them to change that monster into a tiny monster and see it running off a cliff while they stand safely behind a tree and watch.
4. **Raising a child isn't always easy, but it can be easier than we sometimes make it:** If you relate to your child with loving consideration and respect, when that child gets to be sixteen, you probably won't have a problem on your hands. You're going to have a friend who will be a joy and a comfort.
5. **After you set boundaries for your children's behaviour and wellbeing, you must keep the boundaries for the children until they can keep them for themselves:** If you don't keep them consistent, they will find no value in them.
6. **When you don't have to, don't be in charge:** As long as it doesn't endanger the child or break an arrangement on which you two agreed, give your children freedom to express themselves even when their expression is different to yours.
7. **Children can get spread out too thin very early in life:** By the time they've finished sports, dance lessons, soccer and band, they may be too tired to do their homework. Children need free time to just be children too. Help them make choices so they enjoy and complete what they are doing, and feel good about themselves.
8. **Be honest with your children:** If you lie to your child, you forfeit the greatest trust a child has.
9. **Explain to your child that tests at school do not record their failure:** Tests show areas where they can learn and grow, and point out their strengths. They are a reference point to know how they are doing, and to show them where to do more work.
10. **The early years of growing up are so important:** When children are little, they must know that you're there, that you love them, that you care, that they can trust you, and that you're the one they can count on.

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