

“Kind”

Did you know that the Bible talks about being kind? Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another.” Kindness is a teachable virtue - but you have to make it a high priority in your home. Here are 5 ways to raising your child to be kind:

1. Use language of kindness in your family.

This will help to convey kindness as an important family value and expectation. For example:

- “Would you be kind enough to help your sister pick up the family room?”
- “That was a kind thing to do.”
- “Thank you for your kindness.”
- “Can you use kinder words to say that?”
- “How can you settle this in a kind and peaceful way?”

2. As a family, brainstorm ways to practice kindness.

Together, make a list of kind things people do for others. Examples:

- A person holds a door for someone coming behind.
- Someone gives up a seat on a bus or subway.
- People stop to help a driver who’s having trouble.
- A passerby gives food or money to a homeless person.
- Neighbors or church members make meals for a family that’s just had a baby, is facing a serious illness, or has lost a loved one.
- A student is friendly to a schoolmate who seems to have no friends.
- You offer to help with housework or yard work without waiting to be asked.
- You share a snack or treat with someone.



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This translates into an awareness of kindness and moves into action.

3. Model kindness in word and deed.

- Treat your children kindly. When I asked my 7-year-old granddaughter, Winnie, “How can parents teach their children to be kind?”, she replied: “They should be kind to them.” Kids learn the meaning of kindness by the treatment they receive.
- Set an example of kindness and respect by how you talk to each other as parents. When you argue, avoid abusive language and make up quickly.
- Set an example of kindness and respect by how you treat and talk about persons outside the family such as relatives, neighbors, and teachers.
- Avoid uncharitable talk about other people—and explain why such talk is not kind or respectful (“We don’t like it when people say bad things about us behind our backs”).

4. Insist on kindness and respect in *all* family interactions.

- Correct unkind and disrespectful behavior immediately by asking for a “re-do”: “Can you kindly say that in a more respectful way?”
- Don’t allow children to speak disrespectfully to you - either in what they say or how they say it. Have a clear family rule about that and a consequence if your child continues to speak disrespectfully after one reminder. Involve your child in setting that consequence (“What do you think is a fair consequence for speaking disrespectfully—one that will help you remember the rule?”).



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- Don't allow siblings to tell each other to “shut up,” call names, or be unkind, rude, or disrespectful in any other way. Have a clear family rule about that as well and be consistent in enforcing it.

5. Teach kindness by giving kids real responsibilities in family life.

At the heart of kindness is a spirit of helpfulness. Research now finds that most American parents feel they've spoiled their children. In too many families, adults are doing all the giving, kids all the taking. That's a recipe for producing selfish, entitled persons like the 15-year-old boy who said, “Why should I mow the lawn? It's not my lawn.”

The best antidote for that kind of ungrateful self-centeredness is for children to have regular, meaningful responsibilities in their family from the earliest years. Research finds when children have chores - jobs they're not paid to do, but ones they're expected to do as contributing family members—they develop a greater concern for others. Model, teach, and talk kindness regularly in your home and it will be a priceless lesson that your child will carry throughout life.



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Reference

Lickona, T. (2020). Raising Kind Kids: 5 Simple Things you Can Do. Downloaded from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/raising-kind-kids/201805/raising-kind-kids-5-simple-things-you-can-do>



North American Division

Family Ministries
Children's Ministries

9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046

Phone: 443-391-7200
www.nadfamily.org
www.childmin.com



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