

30 DAYS OF POSITIVE PARENTING

As parents, we all want our children to be raised in a house full of love and support. Sometimes it can be hard to be the positive parent we always envisioned ourselves being, at least it is for me! Start with the little things such as trying to yell less and you'll find other things falling into place. In an effort to be more positive, here's week one for a tip a day for 30 days of positive parenting. Some of these ideas might seem simple, some you might already do, but all of them are positive. Ideally, each day can build on each other so by the end of the 30 days, your house will be a happier, more positive place! I suggest bookmarking the article or printing it out so you can keep track of which day you are on, working through the list.

Day 1:

Say I love you to your child when they wake up. Say it again at bedtime—and mean it! We all know we love our children, but sometimes forget to say it. Take the time to say it and take this first day to just relax and put your heart out there for your children.

Day 2:

Before transitions during the day, give your children a head's up—a 5 to 10 minute warning—before the next thing happens. For example, if it's nearing dinner time simply tell your child, "We are eating dinner in 10 minutes, so you'll have to clean up your toys in 5 minutes." A prime time this needs to happen is bedtime or when you're going to leave the house. Letting your child know when the situation is going to change shows that you value their time and respect them.

Day 3:

Read together for at least 10 minutes, letting your child pick out the book. Spend the time snuggled up together, enjoying the time together. Don't worry about having your child read, identify letters or answer questions about the story, just enjoy the time together.

Day 4:

Have a family meeting (even if your family is only mom and one child!) while having ice cream. Talk about and set family expectations that will promote family and consistency (I prefer to use the word expectations to rules). These expectations might include having dinner together at least 5 times a week, having a family game night, screen time limits for the TV/computer/tablets, and bedtime.

Day 5:

Let your child choose their outfit. If this is a stretch for you and you really want your child to match before leaving the house—lay out three outfits and let your child choose which one to wear. Letting your child make choices where there are no wrong answers is important for building positive decision making behaviors.

Day 6:

Hug your child. Physically touch your child by hugging them, giving them a pat on the back or rub their hair. Try to do this several times a day. Sometimes, as children get older, we lose that physical connection that children still need.

Day 7:

Create a bedtime routine. Set a time and routine to follow through with every night. Your routine might include a bath, brushing teeth, reading books and some snuggles before a kiss goodnight. Keep the bedtime routine consistent and carry it through from night to night.

This is such a work in progress—parenting that is. No one has it perfect and everyone is trying their best. If you have tips to share on how you've created a positive household, please share with our readers!

Day 8:

Let your child cook with you. If your children are younger, this might be harder. Consider something simple like cooking French Bread Pizza Cooking with kids-making homemade french bread pizza! So easy and fun with your children. They can put whatever they want on the pizza and there's no going wrong!

Day 9:

Listen to your child. Sit down, ask your child about his or her day and really listen. I open up conversations about my children's day by saying, "Tell me about the best and worst part of your day." That leaves the conversation wide open for discussion. Don't pry or push, but sit and genuinely listen to what is said.

Day 10:

Model the person you want your child to be. Show your child that it's okay to make mistakes and apologize for them. Demonstrate to your child that it's okay to feel any emotion and that even adults get angry sometimes. Show your child how you cope with anger and disappointment. Children need to learn that everyone feels every emotion, we just learn coping and other skills. If your child is having trouble with anger, you have to check out the Anger Box in the article [It's OK to Be Angry: Teaching your preschooler about emotions](#).

Day 11:

Set achievable chores for your child to be able to complete based on their age. My preschooler is expected to take his dishes to the sink whereas my teenager is expected to load the dishwasher and feed the cats.

Day 12:

Are you still saying “I love you” every morning and every evening?

Create a meal plan for a 3 course family dinner together as a family-appetizer, main course, dessert. While preparing the meal plan, be thinking of ways to involve the kids in the preparation of the meals. Go shopping together to get the ingredients, make dinner as a family, then enjoy it as a family! This will probably have to be an activity you have to do on the weekend to have enough time!

Day 13:

Create a family song—a song, rap, or rhyme about the family. Keep it positive, upbeat and fun!

Day 14:

Have family game night! Let each child you have pick out a game and parents pick out a game as well. Grab snacks, sit around the table and enjoy each others company for an evening.

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Day 15:

Build a fort, order pizza and eat dinner in the fort! Building a fort can be as simple as throwing a sheet over your dining room table. Something as simple as this will be something your children will remember forever.

Day 16:

Are you still yelling and nagging? Today is a goal for you day. Set a goal to not yell at all today. Remember things that we’ve been doing such as saying I love you, giving 5-10 minute warnings before changes happen, and letting your child make simple choices such as what to wear. Those are fabulous! Now today, focus on you and how you react to the small things. Make it a complete effort to have a 100% NO YELLING day at your house. Then, carry it on. Try to do it tomorrow, and the next day, and the next.

Day 17:

Treat your children with respect. Listen to their ideas. Take them for a walk and just enjoy the time together. Don’t have any expectations of what will happen, then you won’t be disappointed when the walk turns into a scavenger hunt for the coolest rock on earth or to look for as many butterflies as you can find. Just enjoy your child for who he or she is. Let them be themselves.

Day 18:

Join a school or community event that you can do as a family. This might be a day volunteering to clean up a park or help at a recycling plant. What's great about this is that it's not only helping the community, but it's helping your family community as well since you're doing it together.

Day 19:

Set goals with your child. Even the youngest of children (who can have conversations) can set simple goals. Depending on the age of your child will be the type of goal question you ask. But, generally speaking, ask your child, "What would you like to accomplish this month/week/etc...?" For my older daughter, it is getting a scholarship to a private high school. So we discuss steps to reach that goal. For my preschooler, a goal for him is to use the iPad. For him to be able to use the iPad, he has to have a certain set of behaviors. Teaching goal setting and strategies to reach goals from an early age is so helpful to children! It teaches them to follow through, which is why I wrote the article: I don't let my kids quit...and that makes me??

Day 20:

When you see your child doing something mischievous or that they shouldn't be doing, try to find something positive about what they are doing. Turn it into a song, rap, or something rhymed redirecting their behavior to a new activity. For example, my son wants to help with everything whether it's appropriate for him to help with or not. So I often have to find ways to him to help me with cleaning or cooking in ways that he won't get hurt. Then he still feels welcome and involved, but has boundaries and is participating.

Day 21:

Create a new family tradition. Something that your family has never done (or rarely) before, always wanted to try and would like to make a habit out of! Maybe it's hunting for beach glass once a month and getting ice cream afterward. Maybe it's hiking in the woods and looking for tracks. Maybe it's having breakfast in bed once a month. Every family is different, so everyone's new tradition is going to be different! Have fun with this one and get creative!

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Day 22:

Find something positive your child did today and point it out. But instead of saying, "I'm so proud of you"—say "You must be very proud of yourself." This gives your child ownership in what he or she did that they should be proud of while letting them know you recognize their hard work.

Day 23:

As a family, sit down and make a “bucket list” for the year of things you want to accomplish as a family. Include simple things such as go kite flying together or blueberry picking. Let everyone have a say in the list and don’t put anyone down for their ideas. Hang up your bucket list and check things off as you accomplish them as a family.

Day 24:

Try to avoid punishments of any kind today. Look for the positive in what your child is doing, redirect that energy and find another way to channel it. This is HARD!

Day 25:

As soon as you get home from work, set aside all electronics and give your child your full attention for 10 minutes. They might be playing, doing homework, or having a snack. But give them 100% of your attention for 10 minutes.

Day 26:

Plan a movie night together. This is just the planning stages and it’s fun! Let your child pick a movie (if you have more than one child, you’ll have to come up with a rotation plan for who can pick a movie for movie night). Create personalized movie tickets together, putting the date, time and location of the movie (for example, a ticket might read: Come see Brave Friday night, living room, 6:00-popcorn and pizza will be served). Then, follow through that Friday! Make sure everyone comes and that no one is on their phone, tablet or computer during movie night!

Day 27:

How is the not yelling going? Are you still saying I love you every day? Put a note in everyone’s lunch today reminding them of how special they are. Maybe add some stickers or something to personalize the note. Kids love getting notes in their lunch boxes at school or even just a note brought to them with their lunch at home (if your kids are home with you).

Day 28:

Spend the day recognizing things you and your family appreciate. Throughout the day, if you appreciate something, say, “I appreciate how you put your shoes on to get ready for school.” or, “I appreciate the way you let your brother use the bathroom first this morning.” Tell your children you’d like to hear at least 3 things they appreciate by the end of the day as well.

Day 29:

Set aside a time for siblings to play together today, uninterrupted. If your child is an only child, you are the playmate. Spend 30 minutes of free play time between siblings, letting them work out their conflicts without adult interruption. Tell them that this is a no yelling time. If you are the playmate, do not immediately give in or solve all the conflicts during play. Allow your child to try some problem solving on his or her own.

Day 30:

Take pillows, blankets and cushions and make a big pile in the living room. Have each child say something they love about another person in the family, then run and jump into the pile of softness. Take turns and play until everyone is tired of playing. What a great way for us to hear positive things about each other!