

## Listen, Love and Laugh

For many of us parenting may be the most rewarding important job there is...it may also be the most difficult. Parenting is filled with wonderful moments and many rewards. Raising children can also be demanding, exhausting and overwhelming.

Three important elements in parenting are: *listen* to your children, *love* them, and *laugh* with them.

The following parenting tips may be useful to you:

1. Spend quality time with your children.
2. Create work/life balance between work schedules, activities outside the home, and family time.
3. Assist your children in being able to express themselves and *listen* to what they have to say. Listening is critical because it helps children develop early communication skills and it shows that you care about them
4. Display *love*, care, consideration, and appreciation.
5. Teach responsibility by being responsible yourself.
6. Lead by example. Teach principles that relate to being considerate and polite to others.
7. Set rules and limits that they understand. This lets your children know what is expected of them, and assists them in developing skills in self-discipline.
8. Establish routines by setting firm schedules around mealtime and bedtime.
9. To build better rapport with your children whenever possible give them logical and practical choices and let them make the decision (within reason).
10. Discuss the reasons that you set certain rules; allow them to assist in making the family rules and in deciding consequences for rules that are broken.
11. Take charge of your anger before confronting children, if rules are broken.
12. Give your children lots of compliments, hugs, smiles, and positives. Say "I love you" everyday. It is important for children to know their parents love them.
13. *Laugh* frequently with your children. Laughter is good for everyone's mental health!

Remember it is important to take good care of yourself in order to have enough energy to be available and helpful to your children. This includes getting enough exercise and rest, eating well, and learning to manage your stress in healthy ways.

If you have further questions the State of Michigan Employee Service Program (ESP) provides EAP assistance to classified state employees and their eligible family members. You can talk with Employee Service Program counselors by phone or in person, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. anywhere in Michigan at 800-521-1377. ESP's web page is located at [www.michigan.gov/esp](http://www.michigan.gov/esp)

The DOC Work/Life Coordinator can be reached at 517-373-7630 Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Web based parenting resources are located at [www.michigan.gov/corrections](http://www.michigan.gov/corrections), click on “Human Resources”, and then click on “Work/Life Services”.

For additional assistance and/or information the Parent Helpline is available 24-7 at 1-800-942-4357. The Parent Helpline is a state-wide Crisis Intervention and Information and Referral Service. Your call is *confidential and toll free*.

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