

7 Tips for Empowering Your Child...

AND WAYS TO PREVENT ENABLING YOUR CHILD.

Tip #1 – Stop Fixing the Problems

Be mindful of how often you are providing solutions for your children. By fixing their problems, you sometimes don't allow them to admit they even have a problem. You cannot do everything for your children or fix all their problems. They must learn to deal with their problems and find a positive solution. Furthermore, they may not need you to solve the problem. Sometimes they are just looking for someone to listen. Often a parent's best response is: *"That's interesting. What are you going to do about it?"* This is the type of reply/discussion that will give them the tools to develop decision making and problem solving skills.

Tip #2 – Let Things Get Worse

Sometimes the best thing you can do is to let things get worse. If you are constantly cleaning up the mess and bailing them out, you're simply enabling them and it will be harder for them to stand on their own. While it is tough, sometimes you have to allow them to experience some difficulty before things get better. As Helen Keller said, *"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."*

Tip #3 – Avoid Feeling Guilty

When you are trying to empower a child instead of enabling, it is tempting to feel guilty. It's tough to give children a bit of **tough love**. However, even though it is tough to hold back and let them work through their own problems, in the future it will be worth it. Stop those feelings of guilt in their tracks and realize that you are doing the best thing for your child!

Tip #4 – Avoid Nitpicking

If you want to empower your children, you should avoid nitpicking. While there are times to correct your children, you need to avoid doing this **too much**. If it becomes nitpicking, you can make them feel like they aren't able to do anything right, which will impact their **confidence**.

Tip #5 – Allow Kids to Begin Making Some Decisions

Another important tip for empowering your kids is to allow them to begin **making some decisions**. Offer them practical life choices whenever possible. It's tough sometimes because parents like to be in control. However, allowing them to make decisions will help them learn about **decisions** and the **consequences** of making those decisions.

Tip #6 – Avoid Negative Words, Like "NO"

Try to **avoid relying** on negative words, like the word "no." Negative words can take away the confidence of your child. Although this certainly doesn't mean you need to grant them every request, **rephrasing** things can make a big difference. For example, if your child wanted cake for dinner, you could tell them, "Yes, it sounds great to have cake for dinner, but the problem is that your body needs a healthy meal with vitamins and minerals." This is a positive way to state this without using the word "no."

Tip #7 – Pay Attention to Your Child

While it may seem simple, paying attention to your child is something that can make a big difference. Take a moment to think about it. *Are you really **paying attention** to your child when they come to talk to you? Do you stop what you are doing and **really listen** or do you continue doing other things and only half listen to them?* If you're not paying attention, you are sending a negative message to your child. When you really stop and pay attention to them, you send the message that you **care** about what is being said and that they are **truly important**.

"The essence of independence is to be able to do something for one's self."

- Maria Montessori