

# 5 Tips for Effective Parenting

Posted December 14, 2015

**Pat Harvey, ACSW, LCSW-C**, the co-author of **Parenting a Teen Who Has Intense Emotions**, was kind enough to write and share parenting tips for our blog. Read more about her book [here](#). Thanks Pat for sharing your expertise!

## **1. Parent wisely by:**

- Slowing down, calming down, and managing your own emotions before responding or making decisions so you can think more clearly
- Remembering both your short and long term goals and responding in ways that will help you achieve them
- Not judging, assuming or labeling; describe what you see without making any evaluation or assumptions about intent
- Remembering that your child – and you – are doing the best you can in this moment even while you may be working on developing more effective behaviors

## **2. Parent dialectically by:**

- Recognizing that different perspectives can have validity and trying to listen and synthesize them
- Not reacting with extreme or rigid responses
- Finding a balance between being too strict or too lenient, fostering dependency or giving too much freedom too quickly, having and maintaining limits and giving privileges, being firm and being gentle, providing structure and also being flexible

## **3. Validate, validate, validate**

- Listen when your child talks, take him/her seriously and acknowledge what he/she is saying to you
- Respond to the affect beneath the words and understand what your child is trying to express

-Do not deny his/her reality or feelings, accept them before providing any feedback

#### **4. Reinforce, recognize and acknowledge when your child is behaving in healthy and positive ways**

-Remember that behaviors can be changed; new behaviors can be taught and learned to replace problematic behaviors

-Pay more attention to healthy behaviors and less attention to unhealthy behaviors; using your attention strategically can help your child develop more adaptive behaviors

-Remember that reinforcement is more effective than punishment and teaches your child HOW TO behave

#### **5. Take care of yourself**

-Be kind to yourself

-You can only help someone else if you are also doing things that you enjoy and that bring you pleasure and a sense of accomplishment