



## Healthy Relationships: The Building Blocks Of Good Child Behavior

Parenting a child has boundless rewards. Many mothers and fathers -- as well as caretakers such as grandparents, relatives or foster parents -- will experience their relationship with their child as the single greatest joy of their life. And at the same time, most also will experience that relationship as their single greatest challenge. Because being a parent is not only about being there for the beaming smiles, the achievements, and the hugs. It is also about being there for the tantrums, the tears, and the refusal to go to bed.

Regardless of how wonderful your child is, you will face countless challenges relating to your child's behavior throughout each age and stage of your child's life. Be guaranteed, parenthood will be far more complex and complicated than you imagined. And perhaps because parents have such strong and close feelings about their children, there is plenty of opportunity to become frustrated when a child's behavior goes "outside the lines" of the acceptable. In such trying circumstances, battles can become too common -- making frustrations mount further. Parent responses can easily become focused on disciplining a child, punishments or even hitting. "Fixing bad behavior" can start to compete with the joy of parenting.

Luckily for us all, experts in child rearing -- including pediatricians and others -- know a better way. These experts offer a bounty of great information to help guide parents through the maze of managing their child's behavior. Their advice? Build a healthy relationship with your child by being a positive parent. Encourage good behavior instead of focusing only on bad behavior. Reward your children for being the child you want them to be, and there will be fewer occasions when you have to respond to the bad behavior. Successful parents understand they have more influence on how their child develops and learns than anyone else, including physicians, professionals and teachers. Positive parents also recognize they have many choices and places to go when they feel overwhelmed and need support.

If you are a parent, you may be saying, "That sounds great. But how do you do that in the real world?"

Beginning today and each weekday throughout the month of April, the Department of Children and Families dedicates its [www.CTParenting.com](http://www.CTParenting.com) site and Facebook page to offering the best guidance for making those nice-sounding words come true for families. These "**Healthy Relationship Building Blocks**" will give parents concrete, practical and effective tools for supporting more good behavior and reducing less desirable behavior. This week features links to articles written by experts on the basic principles of positive parenting. Then, subsequent weeks will offer expert articles that apply these ideas to the specific age of your child: infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; school age; and teens. Finally, we will dedicate the last week to how dads can apply this parenting "style" with their kids.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the Department knows that well-placed information is the best way to assist Connecticut parents who are uniquely dedicated to their children's well-being. We hope you find this effort useful in your daily parenting routines. Stay positive with your children to build that healthy relationship with your child -- the result will be positively rewarding for both you and your child!

Tomorrow's **Healthy Relationship Building Block**: Positive Parenting: How To Encourage Good Behavior; American Academy of Pediatrics

*To access all the resources offered in the HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP project please click here:*  
<http://www.ctparenting.com/healthyrelationships.php>