

# Positive Parenting

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## Creating Independent Children

It is our responsibility as parents to raise and to prepare our children for their future. We need our children to become independent, self-sufficient and competent adults. In order for these skills to develop in children, they need the opportunity to take risks, practice skills and experience various situations. They need to feel confident enough to say “NO” to their peers.

When parents are too protective, they tend to control every situation their child is involved in and do everything for their children. The parent who hovers continuously over their child’s every action can eventually cause:

### **LEARNED HELPLESSNESS**

- Child relies heavily on the parent, even for simple tasks
- Child is afraid to try
- Child feels he/she lacks the skills to try
- Child has difficulty taking risks

### **FEELINGS OF DISCOURAGEMENT**

- Child lacks the desire to take risks
- Child fears making a mistake
- Child gives up easily when “the going gets tough”

### **FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY**

- Child lacks the confidence to try something new
- Child feels he or she is not trusted

### **LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

- Child hasn’t had the opportunity to practice organizational skills

### **LIMITED DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS**

- Child can’t perform simple chores
- Child can’t manage money
- Child can’t manage time

# Steps for Developing Independence

1. Know your child's abilities, both strengths and weaknesses.
2. Do for your child only what he/she can't do independently.
3. Take the time to teach your child. Build it into your regular daily schedule whenever possible.
4. Take the time to encourage practice of the new skill.
5. Assign chores and gradually increase the level of difficulty as your child matures. Allow your child some choice in which chores he/she would like responsibility for.
6. Use praise and encouragement for ALL attempts made.
7. Encourage risk taking, keeping safety in mind.
8. Allow your child a chance to handle and make decisions about money. Children need their own bank account.
9. Allow your child a chance to practice time management. Use of an alarm clock is a good skill to learn.
10. Increase children's decision making opportunities as they develop and mature.
11. Give your child opportunities to develop your trust. If trust is broken, allow "new" trust to develop. Remember, we all make mistakes.
12. Make sure your child knows that you, the parent, still has the right to set limits and say "No".

**Tip:** Your goal should be to assist your child to become a capable, competent, independent adult who is also a good friend to you.