Parenting Partners

VIRTUAL TRAINING COPY
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Parenting Partners

11th Edition

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WORKSHOP ONE

Success Starts at Home

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Valuable Parenting Qualities

Every parent has valuable qualities, and those qualities make a real difference for your child and their school.

Which of these do you already see in yourself? Check all that apply.

- [ ] Caring
- [ ] Loving
- [ ] Kind
- [ ] Considerate
- [ ] Patient
- [ ] Understanding
- [ ] Good Listener
- [ ] Responsible
- [ ] Dependable
- [ ] Trustworthy
- [ ] Empowering
- [ ] Loyal
- [ ] Creative
- [ ] Fun
- [ ] Playful
- [ ] Structured
- [ ] Organized
- [ ] Flexible
- [ ] Consistent
- [ ] Firm
- [ ] Fair
- [ ] Teachable
- [ ] Planner
- [ ] Follow Through
- [ ] Empathetic
- [ ] Calm Under Pressure
- [ ] Encouraging
- [ ] Respectful
- [ ] Accountable
- [ ] Clear Communicator
- [ ] Problem Solver
- [ ] Values Driven
- [ ] Present

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Let's Start by Sharing Our Stories

Find one other person and:

1. Share a brief story about a positive parenting moment with your child or children.

   This could be a positive memory, a recent success, a special moment, or a time your discipline led to a good outcome.

2. Listener: Share 3-5 Valuable Parenting Qualities you heard in your partner's story.

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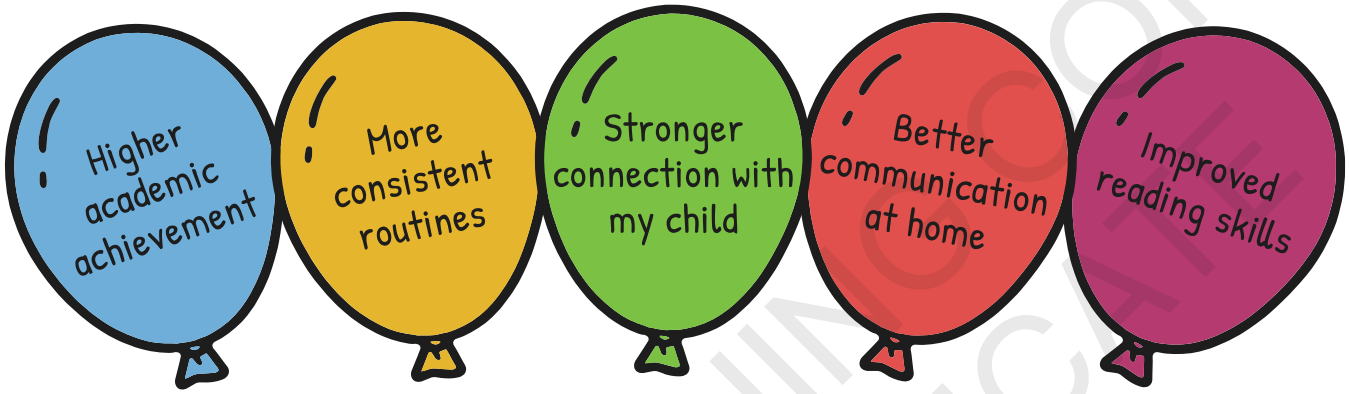
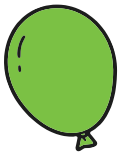
What Outcomes Do You Hope to See?





Write your goal on a balloon: What are you hoping to see as a result of attending these workshops and applying what you learn?

Here Are Some Examples Families Have Shared:

- Stronger connection with your child
- Better communication at home
- Higher self-esteem and confidence
- More consistent routines
- Improved homework habits
- Higher academic achievement
- Improved reading skills
- Stronger school partnership

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Parents Hold the Keys to Student Success!

When you put the parent roles into action, you unlock your child's potential.[1,2]

Encouraging

- Build a "can do" spirit
- Foster positive self-image

Creating Structure

- Establish routines
- Hold boundaries for behavior

Leading

- Advocate for your child
- Take initiative in their education

Supporting

- Support their academic success
- Plan for their future

Modeling

- Show enthusiasm for learning
- Read regularly

Communicating

- Talk regularly about school and life
- Express clear expectations

Collaborating

- Connect with other families
- Lean on your community

Partnering

- Partner with teachers and school
- Stay involved in school activities

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Success Starts at Home

Encouraging

Creating Structure

Leading

Supporting

Modeling

Communicating

Collaborating

Partnering

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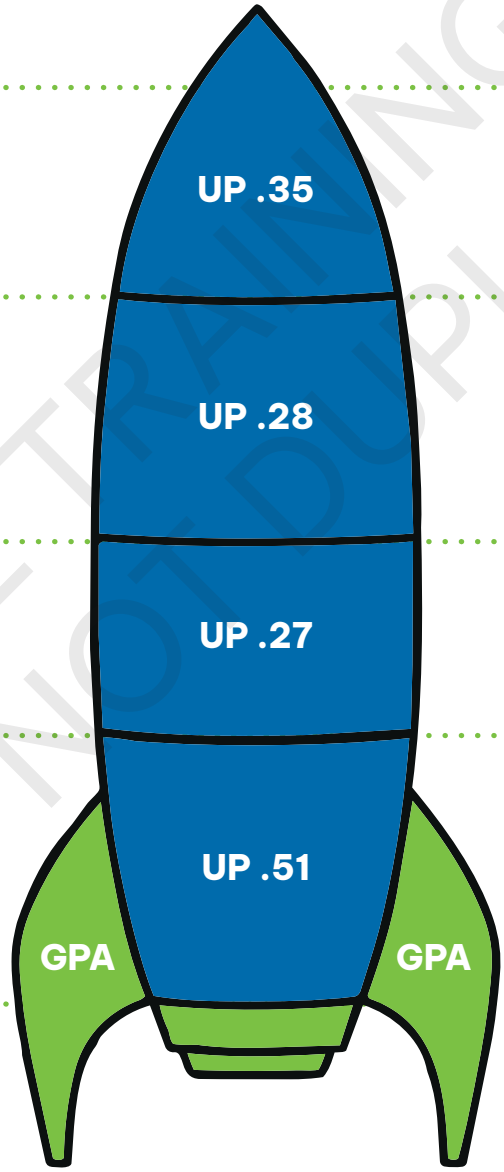
Parent Action Impacts Student Achievement

Research shows that when parents take action, student success takes off![3]



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Small Changes, Big Impact

Parenting Partners teaches simple, practical skills you can use at home. Families who complete the program increase these everyday practices and see real results!

What Parents Practice

- Reading together
- On time school attendance
- Homework monitoring
- Consistent structure at home
- Positive discipline
- Talking together more often
- Positive family communication
- School involvement

What Students Gain

- Stronger belief in education
- Higher graduation rates
- Better grades
- Improved self-regulation
- Fewer behavior problems
- Stronger social-emotional skills
- Better school connection
- Improved classroom engagement

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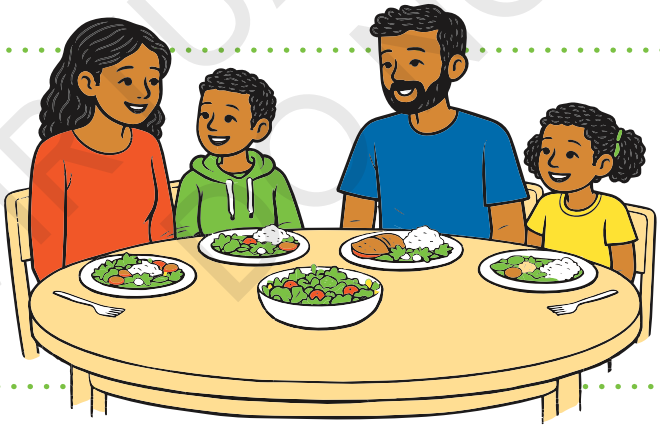
A Real-Life Example: Family Meals



Teens and kids who eat most often with their parents are **40% more likely to get mainly A's and B's** than kids who have zero to two dinners together weekly.[4]

Building Skills, Week by Week

One workshop at a time, you're building simple skills that help you live out the key parent roles, creating real change at home and school!

Creating Confident Kids

Building positive identity through encouragement and support

Communication That Works

Listening, setting expectations, and staying connected

Avoiding the Argument Trap

Setting boundaries and avoiding power struggles

Positive Discipline: Practice for Success

Using consequences as tools for growth and responsibility

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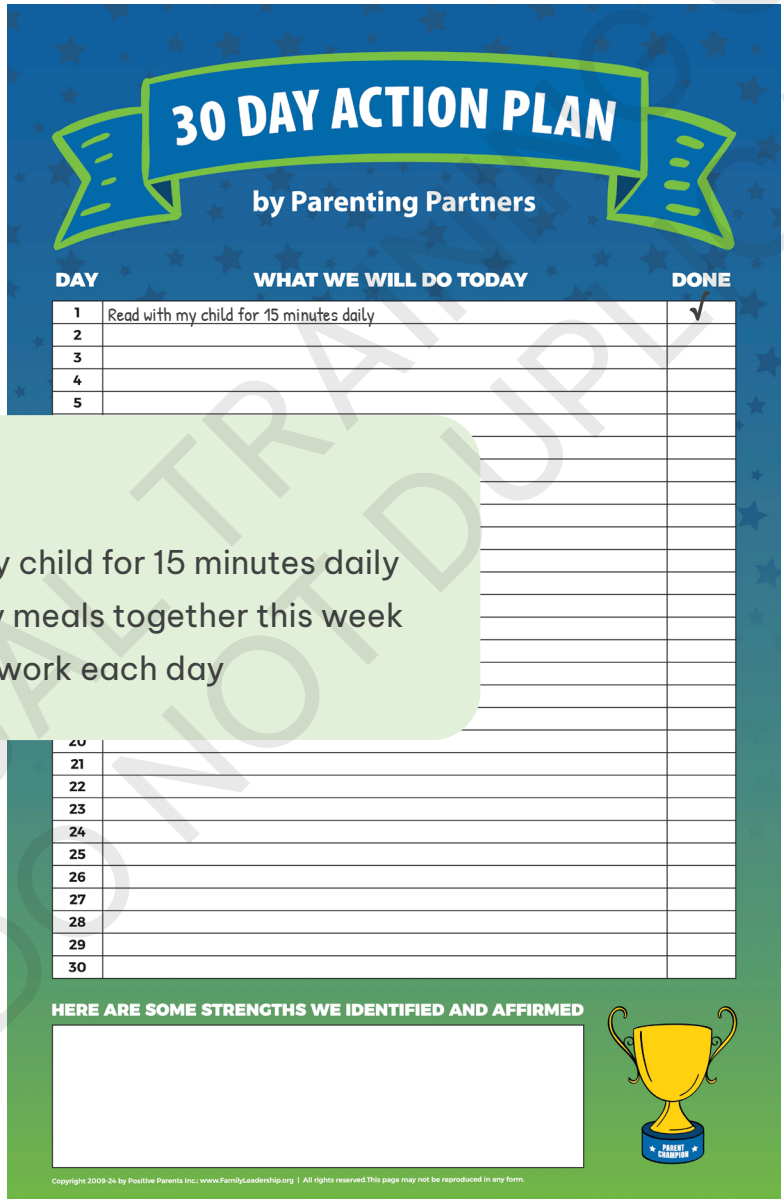
Put it into Practice. This Week I Will...

Choose 2-3 ideas from today's workshop to try at home. Write them on your poster. Each week you'll add more. By the end of the month, you'll have a complete action plan for your family!



Examples

- Read with my child for 15 minutes daily
- Eat 3+ family meals together this week
- Check homework each day

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WORKSHOP TWO

Creating Confident Kids

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The Power of Words

Our words have the power to tear down or build up.

1. Never mind – I'll do it myself! (impatience)
2. I've told you a thousand times, I'm not going to tell you again. (exaggerating)
3. I know I said I would do it, but something important came up. I'm sure you don't mind. (not keeping promises)
4. That's stupid! I can't believe you did that. (overreacting)
5. You're driving me nuts. You're such a brat! (name calling)
6. Why did you get a "B" instead of an "A"? (not seeing the good)
7. Stop crying. Don't be such a baby. (dismissing needs)
8. Why can't you be more like your sister? (comparing)
9. Not now! I have more important things on my mind. (not listening)
10. I'm sending the money with your older brother. I'm sure you'd just lose it. (lack of trust)
11. You never do anything right! It's ruined. (demanding perfection)
12. Look at this mess. Can't you do anything without it becoming a disaster? (personal criticism)

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Words for Encouraging, Affirming Character, and Listening Well

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Intent vs. Impact

Our children don't hear our intentions; they hear our words.

Slow down and ask...

How might my child hear this?

Will it feel confusing or discouraging?

How can I rephrase it to be more positive and effective?

Positive = words that build up, not tear down.

Not sarcasm, exaggeration, criticism, name calling or passive aggression.

Effective = clear and specific.

We say what we want, not just what we don't want.

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Positive Restatements

Let's practice rephrasing these to be more positive and effective.

Less Effective *Common Phrase*	More Positive and Effective *Restatement*
You're not going out in that outfit, are you?	*I think that outfit looks great on you, but I don't want you to wear it to the game.*
I've told you a million times, I'm not going to tell you again.	
Don't you think you could try a little harder next time?	
I'm not your maid, pick up after yourself!	
Never mind, I'll do it myself.	
Don't listen to me; I'm just your mom.	
You're the oldest, you should know better.	
It's my house my rules. When you pay the bills, you can do what you want.	

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The Voice That Matters Most

Our children are receiving messages from culture, peers, and social media that shape how they see themselves. But no voice is louder than yours.

What messages are your children hearing that tear down their self-esteem?

How are you talking to your kids about these messages?

No matter what message your child hears, their value never changes.

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Nine Elements of Self-Esteem

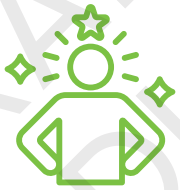
Self-esteem isn't just a feeling. It's made up of nine distinct elements that shape how your child sees themselves and their place in the world.

Belonging
Feeling accepted and part of a community

Purpose
Knowing your life and actions matter

Security
Feeling physically and emotionally safe

Empowerment
Believing you have choices and a voice



Confidence
Believing in yourself and your abilities

Competence
Knowing you can achieve, learn and grow

Resiliency
Bouncing back from setbacks and failure

Leadership
Believing your ideas and effort make a difference

Respect
Valuing yourself and being valued by others

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Identity Builders

Building confident kids isn't just about what we say. These Identity Builders show how the nine elements of self-esteem are shaped by what we do, how we show up, and the moments we create.

Show Up

Builds: Belonging & Security

- ☐ Give your child hugs and physical affection
- ☐ Give focused attention rather than multitasking
- ☐ Give your child a personal place or space
- ☐ Follow through on promises, even small ones
- ☐ Maintain consistent routines
- ☐ Reassure them during transitions or scary moments

Give Them Voice

Builds: Empowerment & Respect

- ☐ Invite your child's opinions and ideas
- ☐ Listen to their feelings and validate them
- ☐ Honor them in the presence of family and friends
- ☐ Embrace their unique temperament, personality and interests
- ☐ Speak to them respectfully, even when redirecting behavior

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Room to Grow

Builds: Competence, Resiliency & Confidence

- ☐ Give choices and allow your child to make decisions
- ☐ Share key responsibilities like pet care, chores, or planning a trip
- ☐ Provide opportunities to explore their interests
- ☐ Let your child experience failure
- ☐ Celebrate effort and progress, not just outcomes
- ☐ Help them problem-solve rather than fixing things for them
- ☐ Encourage them to set a personal goal and work toward it

Make It Special

Builds: Purpose & Leadership

- ☐ Let them teach you things like technology, music, or trends
- ☐ Look for ways your child can help you and others
- ☐ Plan a special outing, trip, or day doing their favorite thing
- ☐ Create family traditions around holidays and special recipes
- ☐ Ask for their input on family decisions
- ☐ Encourage them to join sports teams, music groups, or school clubs
- ☐ Help them find leadership roles like leading a project or peer mentoring

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Start with Strengths

Children who know their strengths develop stronger self-esteem. A strength is how your child naturally thinks, feels, or behaves at their best. Strengths go beyond grades or talent to include natural traits like curiosity, creativity, empathy, persistence, and humor.

What You See	Hidden Strength
Asks endless questions	*Curiosity*
Has strong opinions about everything	*Leadership*
Loves building or taking things apart	*Creativity*
Notices small details others miss	*Insight*
Feels deeply and cares a lot	*Empathy*
Wants everything organized a certain way	*Structure*
Argues or pushes back often	*Determination*
Has nonstop energy	*Drive*
Talks too much	*Communication*
Always wants to be around friends	*Relational*
Plans ahead or worries about what's next	*Strategic Thinking*
Prefers working alone	*Independence*

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Notice It / Name It / Nurture It

Notice It

Discover their strengths

What is one unique trait you notice in your child?

Name It

Speak it over them

Practice saying "I see _____ in you"

Nurture It

Build towards their future

How can you nurture this strength? Where could it lead?

Conversation Starters at Home

This week I will ask my child: _____

Examples

- *"What do you enjoy learning about most?"*
- *"When do you feel proud of yourself?"*
- *"What do you think you're really good at?"*
- *"What kind of problems do you like solving?"*

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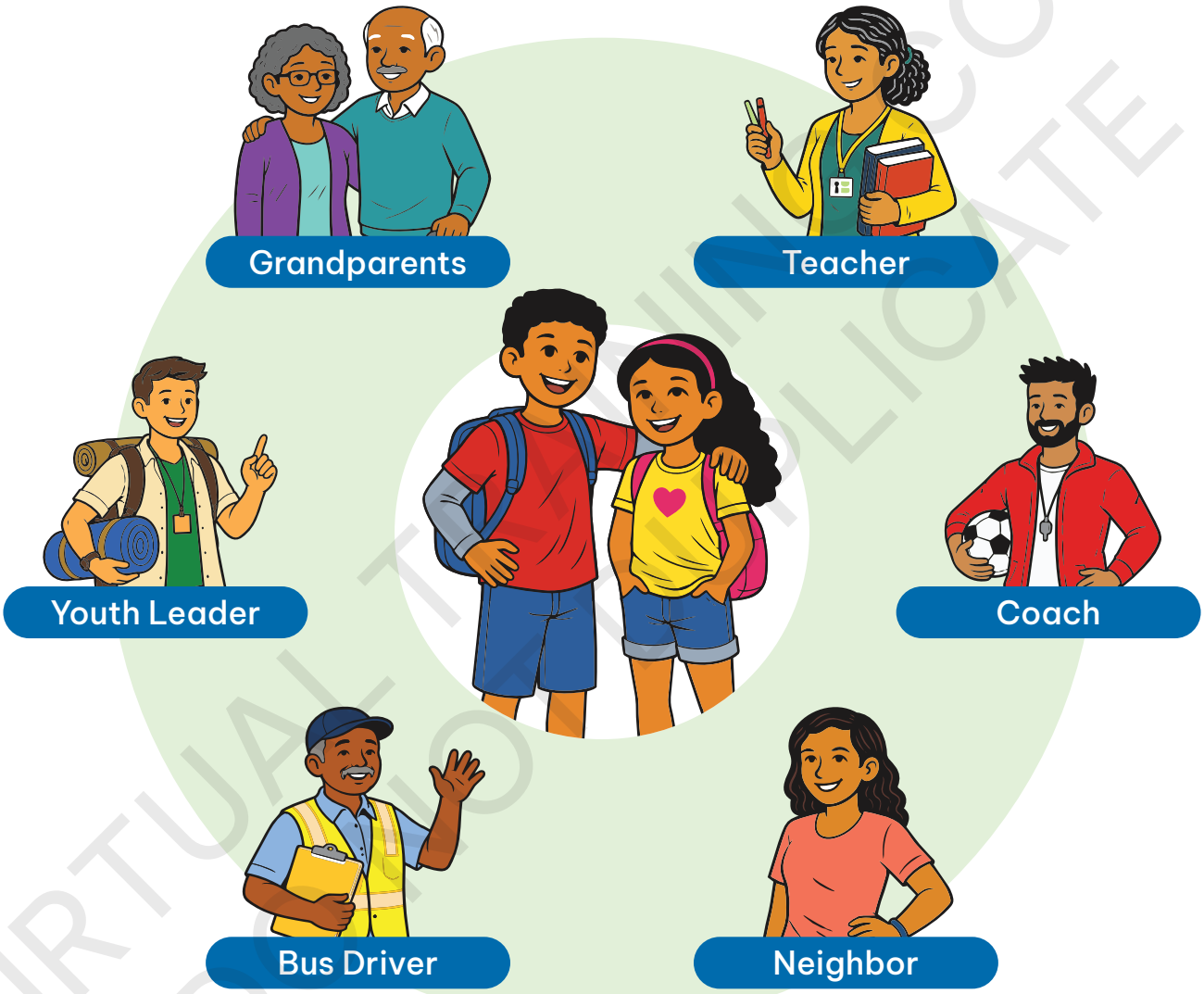
Circle of Support

You are the most powerful voice in your child's life, but you don't have to do this alone. Every child needs a circle of caring people who see them, believe in them, and help them grow.



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Who is already in your child's circle of support?

Who could you invite in? How could you partner with them?

WORKSHOP THREE

Communication That Works

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Distracted vs. Listening with Full Attention

We all get distracted. When our children are trying to talk to us, how we show up in that moment matters more than we realize.

What are some ways you get distracted when your child is talking to you?

How do your children respond when you give them your full attention?

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Parents Lead by Listening

When we listen well, our children learn to talk to us.
When we model listening, we teach them how to listen back.

Three Steps to Powerful Listening

Step 1

Listen with full attention. → Oh, I see.

Put everything else down and turn toward your child. Your presence matters.

Step 2

Hear them out. → I'm listening.

Resist the urge to jump in, fix it, or offer advice. Let them finish.

Step 3

Help them talk. → Tell me more.

Ask open-ended questions that invite your child to go deeper.

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Fixing vs. Listening Fully

It's natural to want to fix things when our children are hurting, but our children don't need us to solve every problem or hard feeling. They need us to hear them.

Who do you turn to when you need a good listener? How do you feel when that person really listens as you talk something out?

What do you think your child needs most from you when they come to you with a feeling or a problem?

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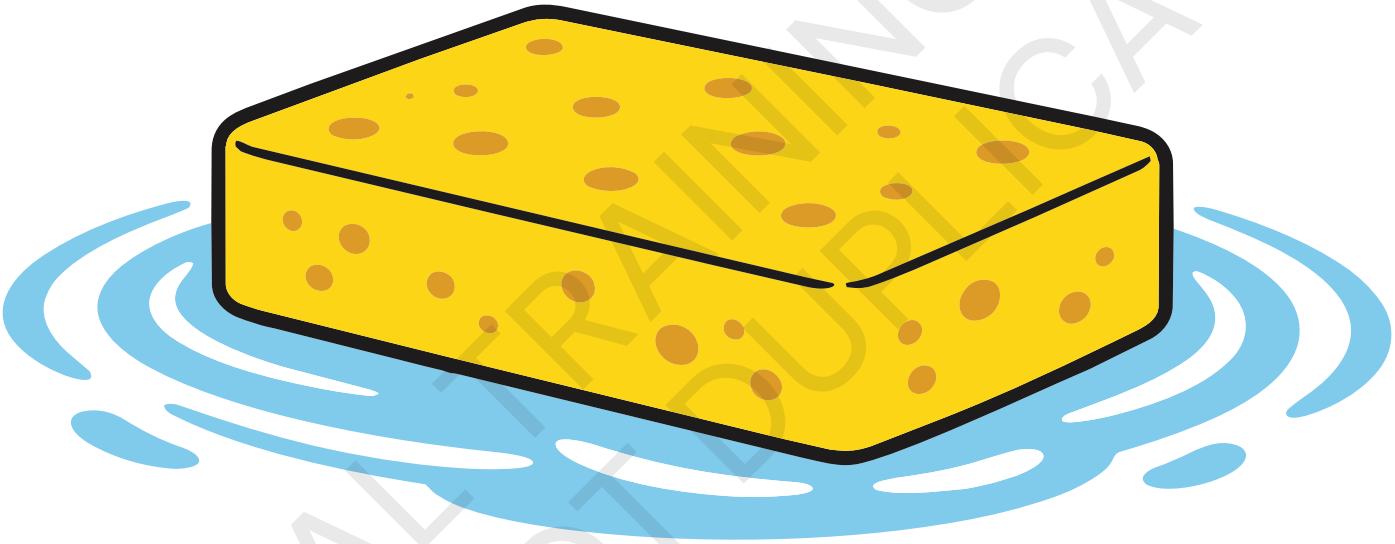
Soak It Up

Children need to feel heard before they can move forward.
You do not need the perfect words. You just need to soak it up.

Soak it up like a SPONGE.

Absorb what your child is feeling. Listen with full attention and without judgment.



What situations make it hardest not to jump in and fix things?

Where do your best conversations with your kids happen?
At dinner? In the car? At bedtime?

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Feelings Are Worth Exploring

Feelings are meant to be explored, not just managed. These five questions give your whole family a simple, judgment-free way to do that.

1. *When have I felt this emotion?*
2. *Where in my body do I feel it?*
3. *What triggers this emotion for me?*
4. *How does this emotion affect me?*
5. *What have I learned from this emotion?*

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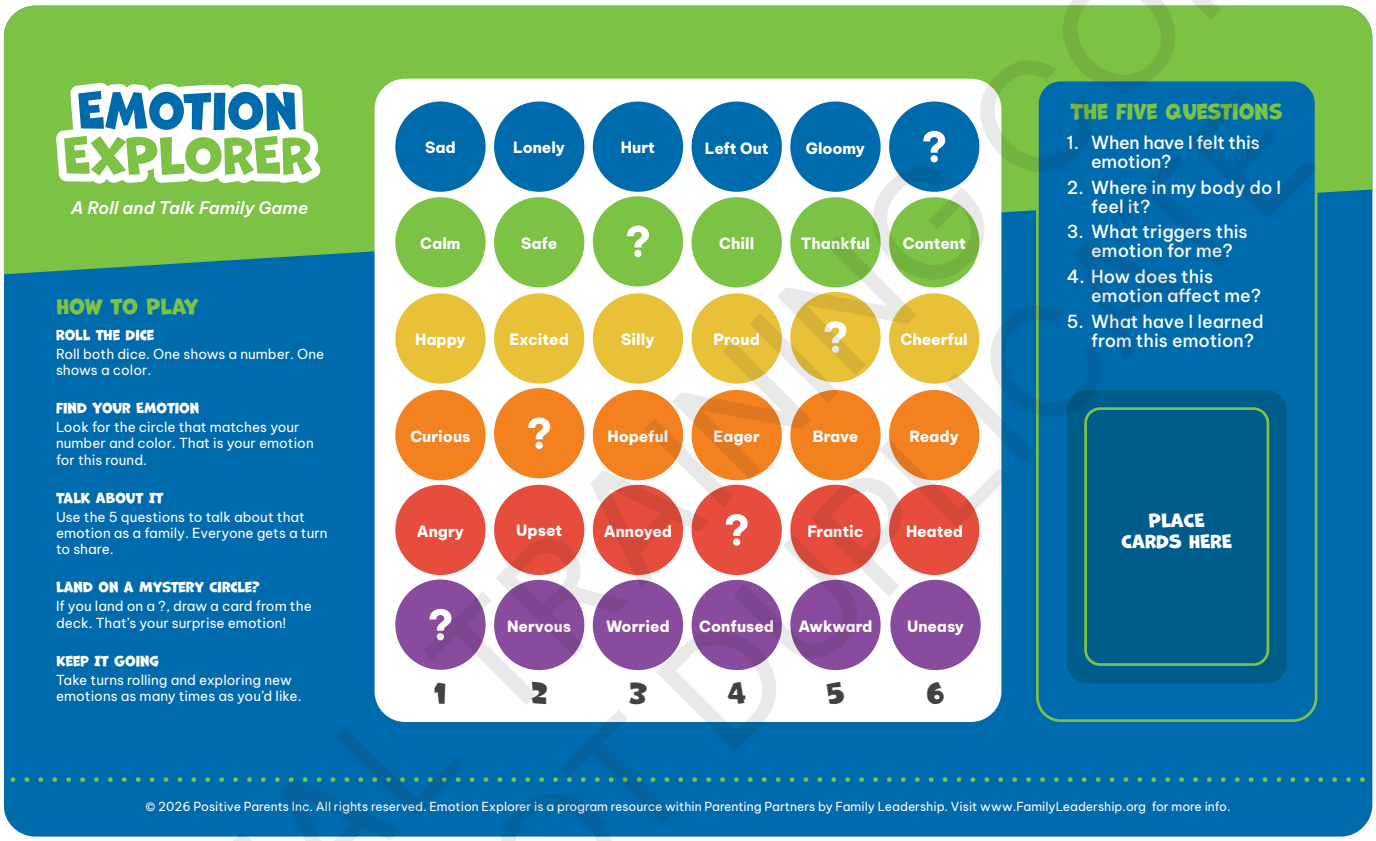
Explore Your Emotions Together

When parents name and explore their own feelings out loud, children learn that feelings are safe, normal, and worth talking about.



Take it home and play as a family.

Researchers have identified over 34,000 human emotions. There's a whole world to explore!

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Untangling Mixed Signals

Listening well is only half of effective communication. The other half is speaking clearly and consistently. When our signals are mixed, even the best listener gets confused.

Examples of Mixed Signals Parents Send

"It's not ok to yell." →	*"Get in here!!!" (YELLING)*
"Go ask your father." →	*"Well, what did your mother say?"*
"We don't lie in this house." →	*"Just tell them you're younger so we get the discount."*

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Mixed Signal	Result	Best Practice
Being inconsistent	*Arguments*	*Be consistent and follow through*
Having double standards	*Confusion*	*Follow your own rules*
Bouncing between parents	*Manipulation*	*Parents discuss together first*
Coaxing and pleading	*Power Struggles*	*Give clear, direct instructions*
Saying "maybe" instead of "no"	*Uncertainty*	*Give honest answers*
Mixing praise and criticism	*Discouragement*	*Let praise stand on its own*

Which of these is hardest for you to avoid?

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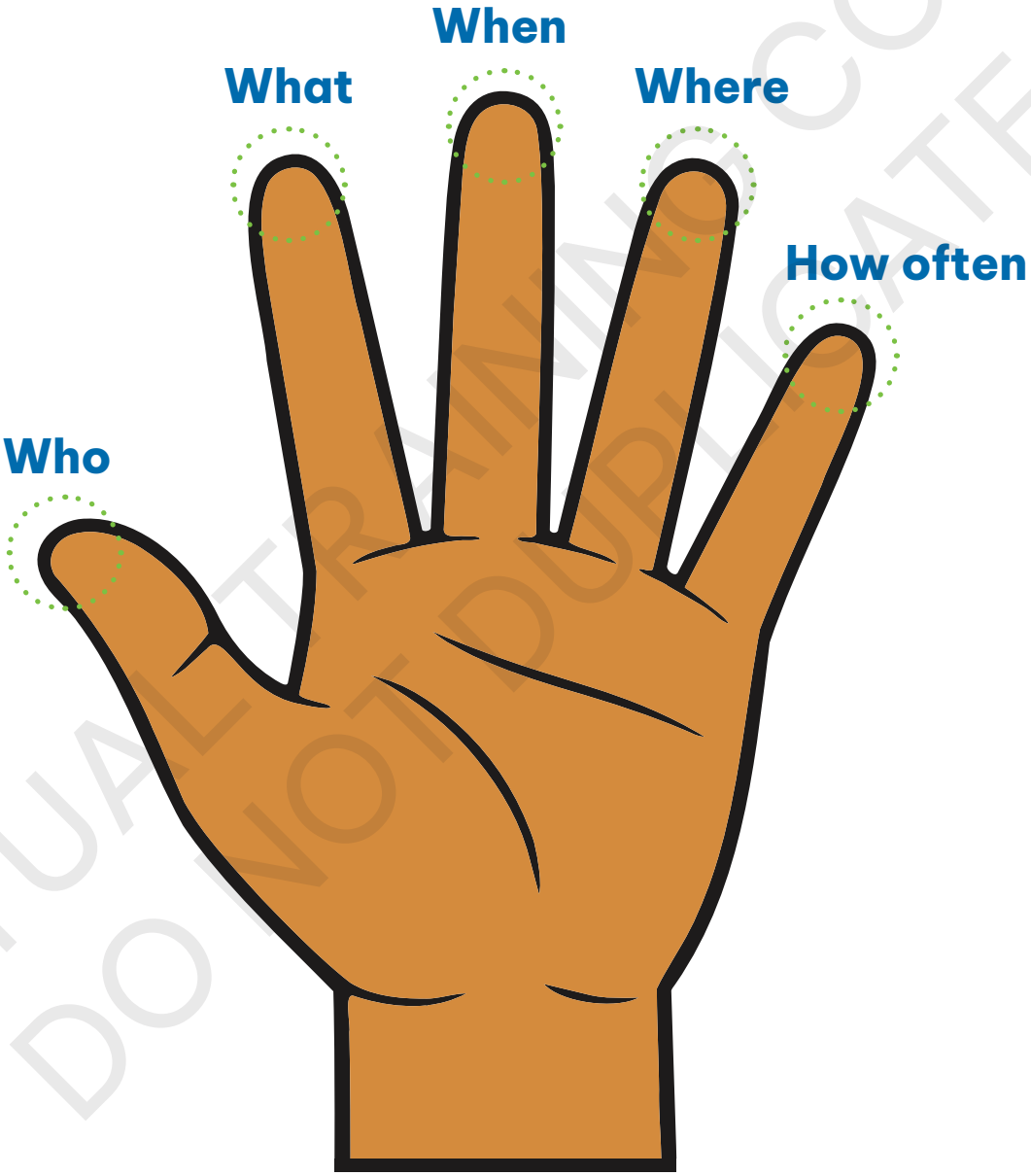
Clear Instructions

“Clear instructions prevent confusion, arguments, and frustration for everyone.”



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1 **Who** *(say your child's name)*

"Marcus..." / "Sophia..."

2 **What** *(be specific about what you want done)*

"...put your backpack away" / "...take out the trash" / "...turn off the TV"

3 **When** *(tell them exactly when)*

"...now" / "...right when you get home" / "...before dinner"

4 **Where** *(be specific about where)*

"...in the closet" / "...in the bin by the back door"

5 **How often** *(daily? weekly? just this once?)*

"...every day after school" / "...every Thursday"

Put It All Together

"Marcus, put your backpack in the closet right now — and every day after school."

Now You Try It

Think of one instruction you need to give this week.

Write it out (who, what, when, where, how often):

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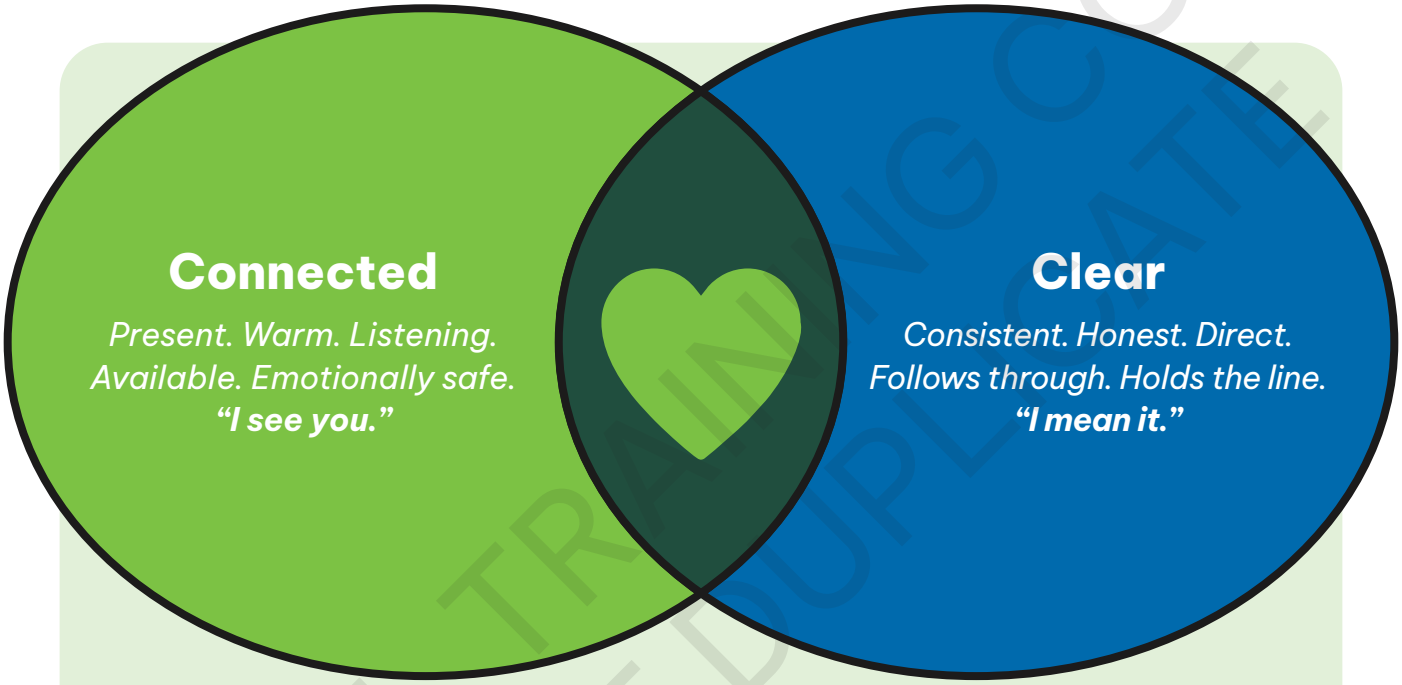
Clear and Connected

We want to be connected with our kids: present, listening, emotionally available. We also want them to have clear expectations. Our kids need both.



Connected, Not Clear	Clear, Not Connected
Kids feel loved but confused.	*Kids feel controlled but not seen.*
"I don't know what you expect."	*"I know the rules but I can't talk to you."*

When kids have both, the message is clear:
I know what you expect, and I know you are for me.

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WORKSHOP FOUR

Avoiding the Argument Trap

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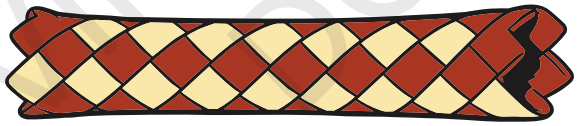
The Argument Trap

Even when our expectations are clear, our children don't always listen. And when they push back, the argument trap is easy to fall into. The more we argue, the more we lose.

What arguments do you tend to get pulled into with your child?



Kids want to be in charge, but parents are the leaders. Every time we argue, we hand them control. We are not leading and they are not learning.

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Five Reasons Kids Argue

Understanding why kids argue helps us stop taking it personally and start leading more effectively.

1. **To avoid or delay a task.**
   As long as they argue, they don't have to do what you asked.

2. **To wear you out.**
   They'll keep going until you give up out of exhaustion.

3. **To distract you.**
   An argument redirects your attention away from the original instruction.

4. **To get your attention and reaction.**
   Your reaction is the reward. The more animated you get, the more interesting the argument becomes.

5. **To have control.**
   If they can derail your instructions, they are in charge.

Which of these do you recognize in your child?

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Common Conflicts

Most arguments don't come out of nowhere. They happen around the same situations, at the same times, over and over. When we recognize our patterns, we can choose a different response.

Common Conflicts with Kids

- Homework and screen time
- Bedtime and morning routines
- Chores and responsibilities
- Eating and mealtimes
- Getting ready and out the door
- Brushing teeth or taking baths

Common Conflicts with Teens

- Curfews and whereabouts
- Phone and social media
- Choice of friends
- Earning money and using the car
- School attendance and grades
- Spending time with family

What are the most common conflicts in your home?

When do arguments most often happen? Morning, after school, evenings?

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The Escalating Argument

Think of a recent argument or one that keeps repeating in your home. With your group, fill in the volcano as you talk through it.

What is the result?

Child

What does your child do or say?

Parent

How do you usually respond?

Every time we engage, we add *heat*.

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How Kids Escalate

When kids argue they follow predictable patterns. Learning to recognize them means you won't take the bait.

Avoiding and Delaying

Putting off the task for as long as possible: *"I'll do it right after this show."*

Reasoning

Arguing why the instruction isn't fair or necessary: *"No one else's parents make them go to bed this early."*

Bargaining

Negotiating for a better deal: *"I'll clean the bathroom next week if you let me skip it today."*

Pleading

Using guilt or emotion to wear you down: *"The only thing I want for my birthday is that new phone."*

Persisting

Coming back again and again after you think it's settled: *"But it's not fair, you never let me do anything."*

Temper Tantrums

Escalating to yelling, slamming doors, and stomping out: *"I hate this family!"*

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Which of these does your child use most often?

How Parents Escalate

Our responses feel reasonable in the moment. But when we engage the argument we hand over control.

Questioning

Asking rhetorical questions instead of repeating the instruction. *"Do you think I'm your personal maid?"*

Reasoning

Trying to convince them why they should care: *"If you don't do your homework, you'll never get into college."*

Bargaining and Bribing

Negotiating or offering rewards to get cooperation: *"I'll buy you the toy if you stop throwing a fit."*

Pleading

Asking for cooperation instead of expecting it: *"Please, I'm only asking for a little help."*

Prophesying

Making predictions you both know won't come true: *"At this rate you'll be grounded forever."*

Threatening

Warning of consequences you don't follow through on: *"No screens for three months!"*

Which of these do you recognize in yourself?

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The Shield

Instead of engaging the argument, use the shield. When your child pushes back, respond with "nevertheless" or "regardless" and calmly repeat your instruction. Don't explain. Don't negotiate. Just stand your ground.

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The Keys to Using the Shield

Use Few Words | Don't Engage | Repeat Calmly | Stand Strong

With younger children, try "even so" instead of nevertheless.

Why the Shield Works

The volcano erupts when we engage. By staying calm, holding your boundary, and refusing to take the bait, you eliminate the fuel that keeps the argument going.

Why Kids Argue	How the Shield Responds
To avoid or delay a task	*They still have to do it*
To wear you out	*You're not engaging so you're not getting tired*
To distract you	*There's nothing to be distracted by*
To get a reaction	*You're giving them nothing to react to*
To be in control	*You're the one holding the shield*

The Power of Boredom

The less dramatic you are, the better the shield works.
No reaction. No anger. Just calm, steady, and boring.

How did it feel to practice the shield?

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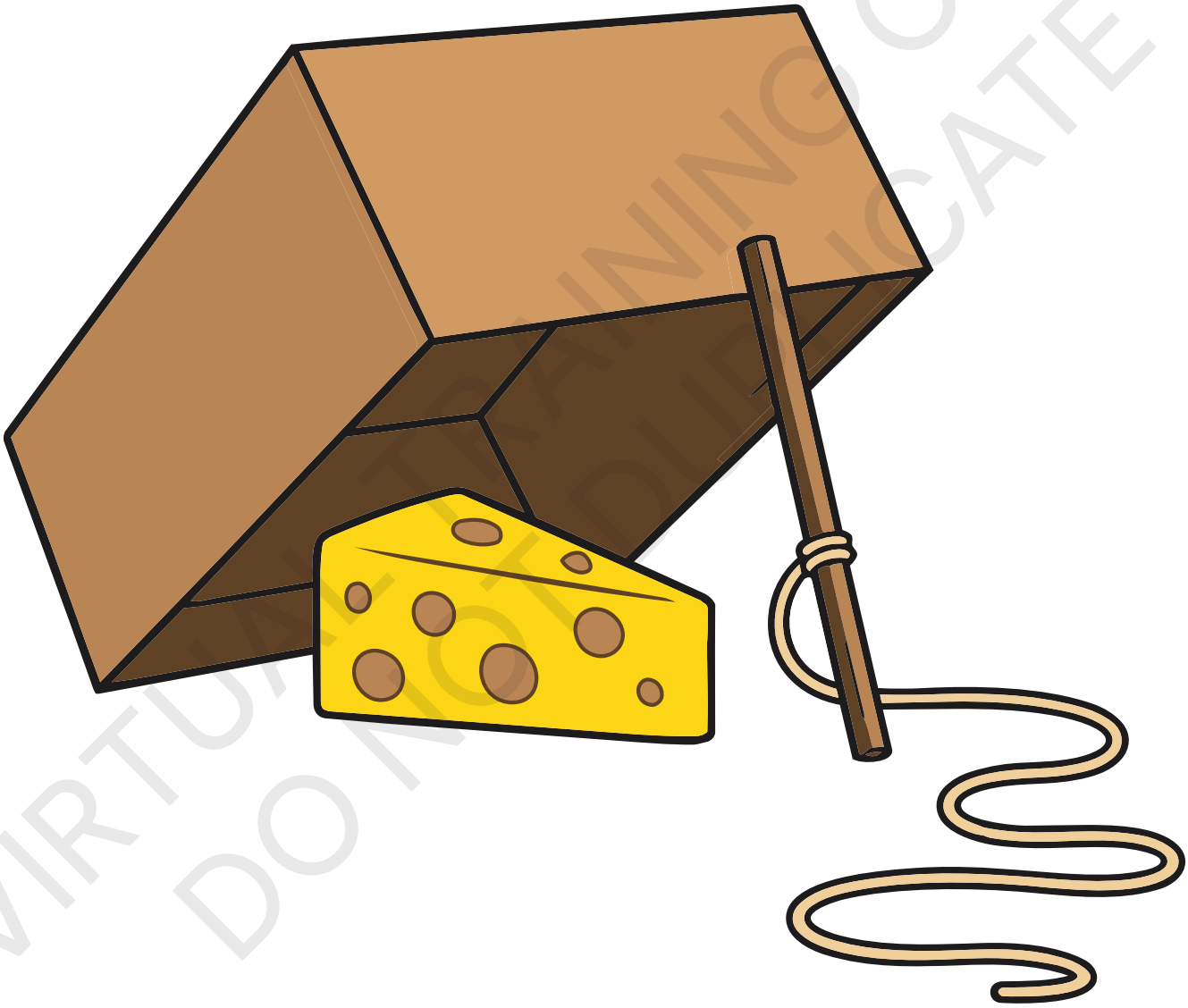
Don’t Take the Bait

When kids plead, bargain, avoid, or push back, they are testing to see if our boundaries will hold. The more we engage and escalate, the more fuel we add. Our job is to stay calm, hold the line, and refuse to take the bait.



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WORKSHOP FIVE

Positive Discipline: Practice for Success

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Punishment vs. Discipline

We correct our kids because we love them. How we do it shapes who they become. Punishment and discipline send different messages and produce different results.

Punishment

Imposing a penalty for breaking a rule, often out of anger or frustration.

Discipline

Training that develops self-control, helping children learn from mistakes and do better next time.

Every time we choose discipline over punishment, we send our children a powerful message: **I believe in you, and I am here to help you learn and grow.**

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Characteristics of Punishment & Discipline

	Punishment	Discipline
Approach	*Inflicts a penalty*	*Provides direction*
Attitude	*Anger and retaliation*	*Love and support*
Focus	*The past*	*The future*
Targets	*The person*	*The behavior*
Allows	*No room for mistakes*	*Learning from mistakes*
Creates	*Fear and anxiety*	*Security and self-control*
Investment	*Takes less effort*	*Requires time and care*

What Children Learn

Punishment

- *To fear mistakes and hide failures*
- *To lie and avoid getting caught*
- *To react without self-control*
- *A harsh inner critic and negative self-image*

Discipline

- *To learn from mistakes and try again*
- *To take responsibility*
- *To develop self-control*
- *Security, resilience, and a healthy self-image*

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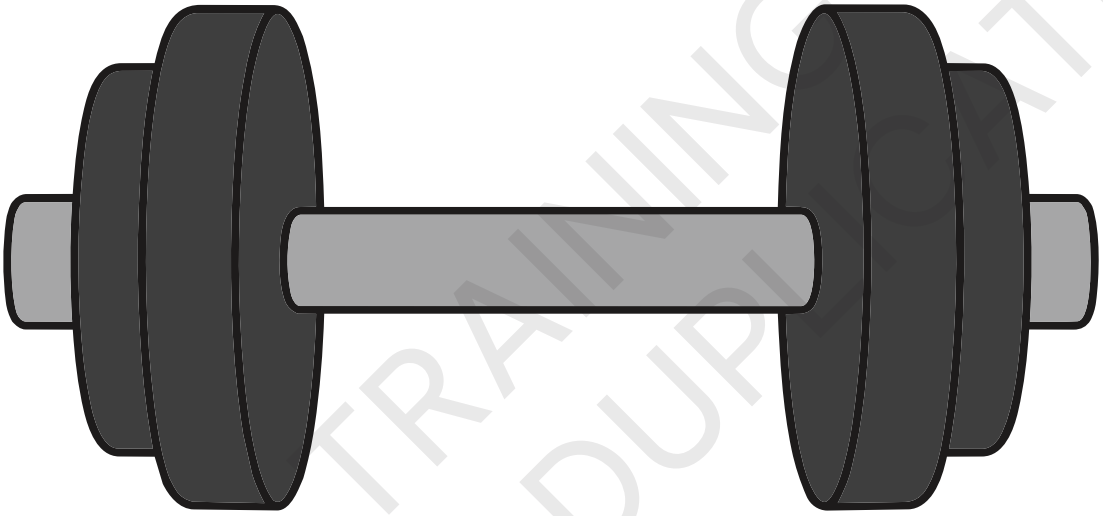
Discipline is Practice for Success

Discipline isn't punishment. It's practice. And practice is what helps us go from where we are to where we want to be. A parent is like a helpful coach, teaching and guiding our kids.



Discipline

- *Sports practice*
- *Music rehearsal*
- *Study habits*
- *Saving money*

Success

- *Great game*
- *Confident performance*
- *Academic success*
- *Buying what you want*

Think of something in your own life that required discipline. What was the payoff?

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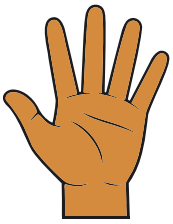
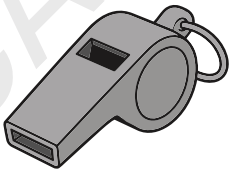
Positive Discipline: Three Tools, One Goal

Positive discipline starts with connection. Clear expectations and strong boundaries build on that foundation. When consequences are needed, they teach the lesson.





	Clear Expectations	Strong Boundaries	Consequences
What you do	*Teach what to do*	*Hold the line*	*Follow through*
What they learn	*What is expected*	*You mean it*	*Responsibility*

When the foundation is strong, consequences are not needed for every situation.

But when they are needed, they are not punishment. They are how children learn to make wise choices.

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Two Types of Consequences

Natural and logical consequences are both powerful tools that teach responsibility. Together they help children learn from their choices.

Natural Consequences

- Happen on their own without parent involvement
- Parents step back and let nature take its course
- The situation itself does the teaching

Logical Consequences

- Set up intentionally by the parent
- Connected to the behavior and communicated ahead of time
- Parent follows through calmly and consistently

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Natural Consequences

Natural consequences happen when we let the situation do the teaching. No lecture needed. The hardest part is resisting the urge to rescue. When we step back, our children experience cause and effect.

What would the natural consequence be?

Situation	*Natural Consequence*
Child refuses to wear a jacket on a cold day	*Gets cold and wishes they had brought it*
Teen stays up too late on a school night	*Tired and struggles to focus the next day*
Child forgets their lunch at home	
Child spends all their allowance right away	
Teen doesn't study for a test	
Child leaves their bike outside overnight	
Teen is rude to a friend	
Child rushes through homework	

Important: Natural consequences must be safe and age appropriate.

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Six Guidelines for Logical Consequences

Natural consequences happen on their own. Logical consequences are set up and enforced by the parent. These six guidelines make them effective.

Logical Consequences Must:

1. Be carried out calmly, without anger

The consequence does the teaching. Your emotion gets in the way.

2. Be communicated ahead of time

Children need to know the expectation and consequence before it happens. No surprises.

3. Matter to the child

The child must care about what they're losing, or it won't teach them.

4. Relate logically to the misbehavior

Connect the consequence directly to what happened.

5. Be age appropriate and reasonable

Match the child's age and the seriousness of the behavior.

6. Be manageable for the parent

If you can't follow through on it, don't threaten it.

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Practicing Logical Consequences

Listen to each scenario. The parent has given a consequence. Check each guideline the parent failed to follow.

Scenario	1	2	3	4	5	6
Homework Before Screens						
Teen Breaks Curfew						
Preteen Leaves Bathroom a Disaster						

What's the Logical Consequence?

Read the scenarios and discuss: what would be a logical consequence that follows the guidelines?

Child is repeatedly disrespecting a sibling

Teen keeps ignoring screen time limits

Child is late for school...again!

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Be the Parent Now or Later

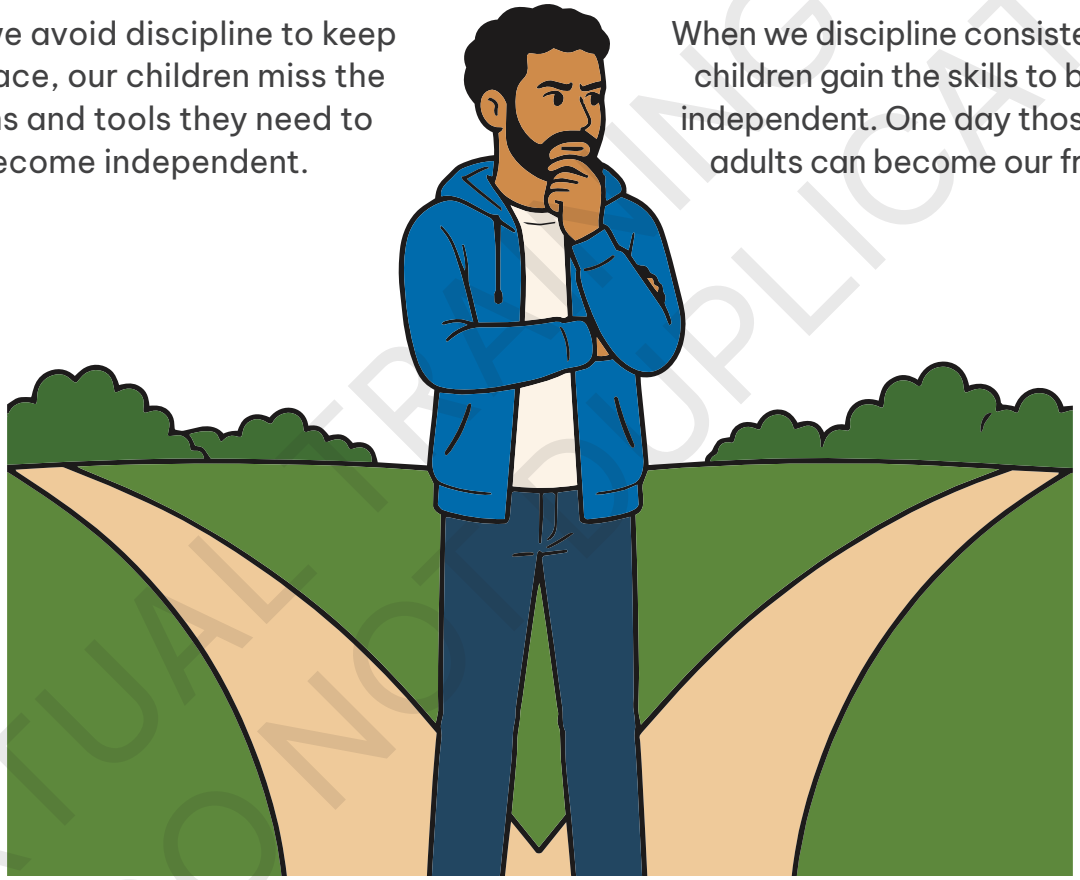
Following through isn't always easy. We all want to be liked by our children, but our primary responsibility isn't to be popular. It's to be the parent.

Be the *buddy* now.
Be the parent forever.

When we avoid discipline to keep the peace, our children miss the lessons and tools they need to become independent.

Be the *parent* now.
Be the buddy later.

When we discipline consistently, our children gain the skills to become independent. One day those young adults can become our friends.



Positive, consistent discipline is one of the greatest gifts you can give your child. It isn't always popular but it's always worth it.

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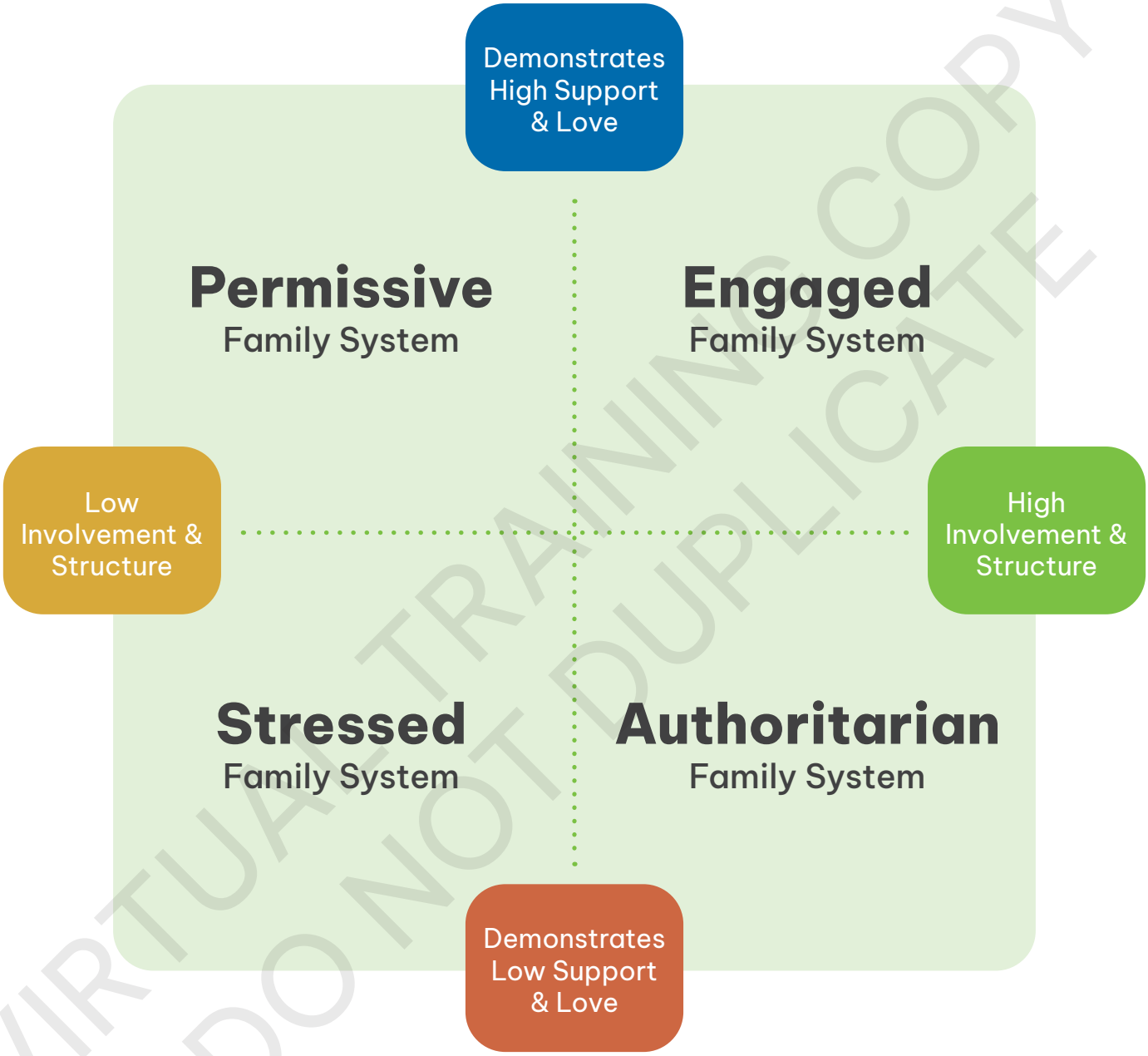
The Family System[5]



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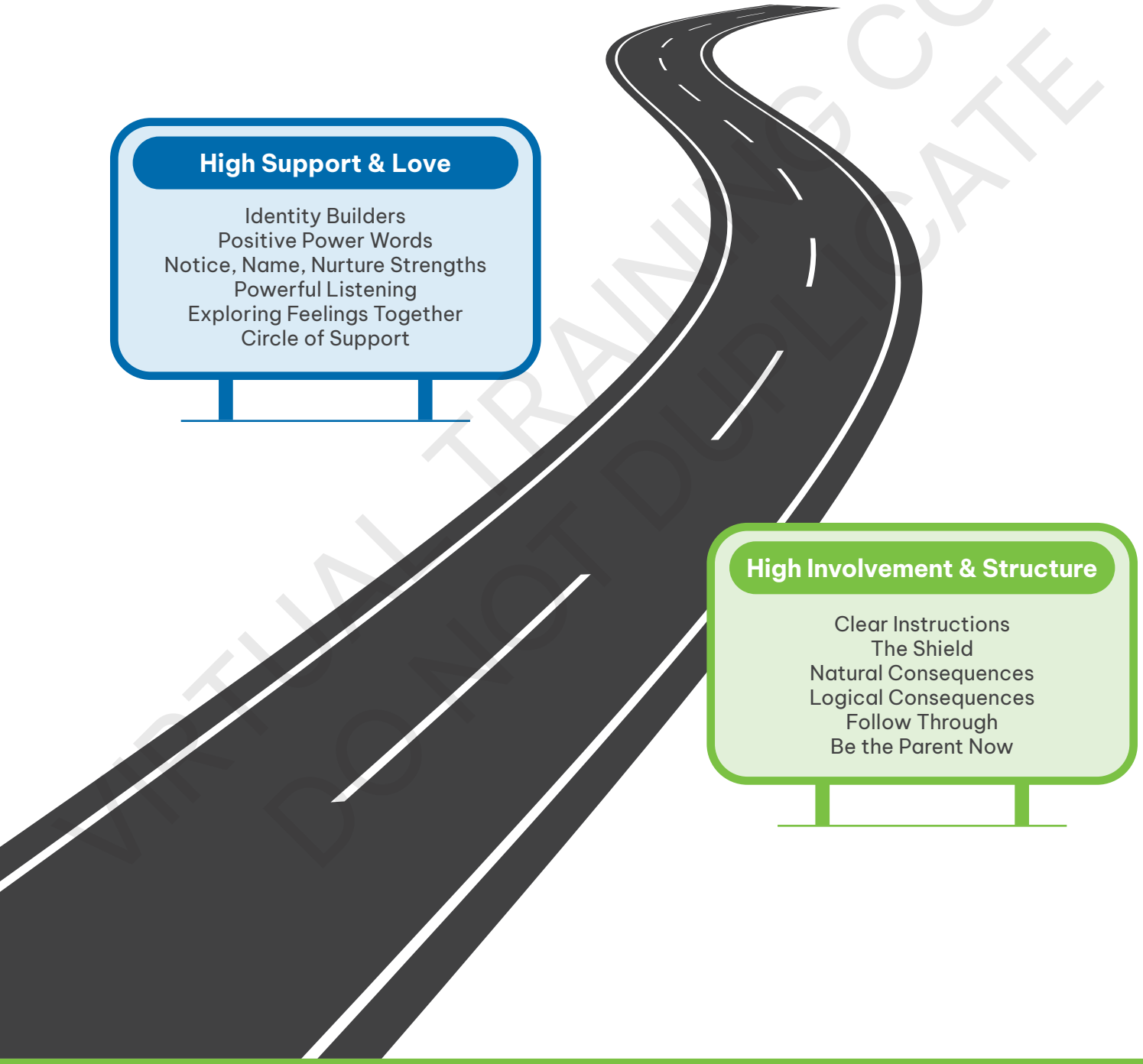
Which family system did you grow up in?
Which one do you want to build for your children?

Highway to Success

Every tool on this highway is something you learned in Parenting Partners. When you apply them consistently, you are already building an engaged family system!



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Congrats, Parent Graduate!

You showed up and did the work. You are a Parenting Partners Graduate!

We Want to Hear from You

Please complete the survey before you leave. Your feedback helps us measure impact and improve the program for future parents.

Next Step: Become a Parent Champion!

Share your Story

Your words inspire other families. It might be exactly what another parent needs to hear.

Spread the Word

Parents listen to other parents. Know a parent who needs this? Tell them.

Get Involved

There's a place for you at your school. Bring snacks, welcome families, help set up, or facilitate. Ask your facilitator how.

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Works Cited

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2. Weiss, H. B., Lopez, M. E., & Rosenberg, H. (2010). *Beyond random acts: Family, school, and community engagement as an integral part of education reform*. National Policy Forum for Family, School, & Community Engagement. Harvard Family Research Project.

3. Jeynes, W. H. (2012). A meta-analysis of the efficacy of different types of parental involvement programs for urban students. *Urban Education*, 47(4), 706–742.

4. Califano, J. A., Jr. (2005). *The importance of family dinners II*. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

5. Pinquart, M., & Gerke, D. C. (2019). Associations of parenting styles with self-esteem in children and adolescents: A meta-analysis. Journal of Child and Family Studies, 28(8), 2017–2035.
   Note: This study uses "authoritative" (high warmth + high structure) for what Parenting Partners calls the Engaged Family System. We use "Engaged" to avoid confusion with "authoritarian" which describes high structure low warmth.

For Further Exploration

Bergman, E., & Riddick, Z. (2026, March). *The engagement advantage: Findings from a mixed-methods study on family-school partnerships*. Learning Heroes & TNTP. bealearninghero.org/research

Reckmeyer, M., & Robison, J. (2016). *Strengths based parenting: Developing your children's innate talents*. Gallup Press.
Goes deeper on the strengths concepts in Workshop 2.

Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to lead*. Random House.
On the idea that clarity is a form of kindness — see Workshop 4.

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