

Knowledge of Parenting and of Child Development

By: Bright Tomorrows Staff, from: www.ParentsKnowKidsGrow.org/strengthening_families

Who knows a child best—their likes and dislikes, the things that interest them and the things they can do really well? Parents do! But no parent is an expert in everything about their child's development and the best ways to help their children manage social and emotional behaviors.

Research links healthy child development to effective parenting. When parents provide safe boundaries, affection, good listening skills, and consistent rules and expectations, children thrive. Successful parenting helps children succeed in school, feel loved, get along with others and have a sense of belonging. Parenting skills must change as children grow and mature. Parents must also be able to adjust to each child's individual needs and unique circumstances.

Knowledge of parenting and child development changes over time. For example, laying children to sleep on their stomachs is now known to contribute to SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) when it was standard practice a number of years ago. Parents need the latest information on health and safety practices, what is taking place in a child's social world, learning expectations in school and many other aspects of a child's life. All parents have questions about raising their children and they need answers and support from someone they trust. Another way to think about this is, "Parenting is part natural and part learned."

There are no cookie-cutter families. All families have a set of values, cultural norms and beliefs that need to be respected and acknowledged. Parents can help one another find many resources to answer questions about child development and many tips to reduce stress in the child's life. Striking a balance between reducing a child's stress while protecting the child from harm will promote their coping skills and resilience. For more information about child development and parenting tips go to: www.childdevelopment.com .