

Create Happiness and Well-being in Kids

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Happiness and well-being are learned. Raising happy kids is certainly not easy in this fast-paced, tech-filled world we now live in. Most parents or grandparents, when asked what they want for their children or grandchildren's lives, respond: happiness. We want this for our kids so they can have adulthoods of meaning, purpose and satisfaction.

Finding that right and perfect path can be mind-numbing. The idea of happiness, how to get it or make it, has filled decades of studies and research. Tips are plentiful, just ask Google. Fortunately, there is a road map parents can use to guide children towards emotional well-being. From all the research, the "science of happiness" has identified several habits that help make happiness a likely outcome for kids (and adults, too).

1. Attitude of gratitude. Gratitude feeds our soul, making us happier and healthier. Encouraging kids to share what they are grateful for is a great idea. Even the kid who is in the "crabby pants" stage can get better at gratitude with practice. Encourage them to create their own gratitude wall with Post-it notes. Every day, have them write or draw a picture of two things they are grateful for. Pick a place where you spend a lot of time, like the kitchen, to display them. The visual is a reminder of the good things in your life, and seeing it frequently, will help your gratitude will grow.

2. "Screens are dessert." To have healthy and happy kids, research has shown that excessive screen time leads to an unsettledness and a less focused brain. Think of the connection of diet and health. Is it OK to feed children cookies, soda or ice cream all the time? Ahh...No! Let's think about screen time as dessert as



well. Inspire them to have a healthy balance of reading, exercise and being outside.

3. Practice kindness. Kindness is like a muscle—with practicing kindness, our happiness and the quality of social connections improves. Have your kids pick a neighbor or friend to bake cookies for. Kids (the younger ones in particular) love to be kitchen staff. They will return again and again, especially if they can be the quality control sampler.

4. Feed their creativity. Those who spend time and have time to create tend to be happier and less stressed. Encourage them to create their own storybook words and pictures, dinner ideas, silly skits with a friend, happy dances or songs. Don't forget building forts on bad weather days—dining room tables and couches can become a works of art.

5. Be curious. Find something new to learn. We're happier when we are learning something new and learning to grow as people. As we learn more, we become more creative. Pick a county or favorite state to learn about, or look into ancestry. Have your kids plan a trip that includes topics of culture like food, music or sports that they relate to.

Now you can take these few tips and add your own to help create those happy and well kids by being involved in the process. It is doable, but it does take patience and humor. Pay attention, look at yourself (parent), and give.

Resources: Mike Ferry - happinesandinnovation.com
The Australian Parenting Website children.net

Reiki, Healing Touch, Consults, Reading, Classes

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