



Effective versus Ineffective Parenting Know the Difference?

Are you the best parent you can be?

ANNOUNCEMENT:

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Ineffective Parenting has become a major area of concern in the Metro Atlanta area. I think it is a telling fact that when the Director of Programs for the Salvation Army took an informal survey of Social Workers the number one need was parent education. Also, both the United Way and Fulton County F.R.E.S.H. (Fulton Roundtable Expanded Services Headquarters) Grant Programs have made ineffective parenting a priority of grant applications. Ineffective parenting is an illusive concept.

Many parents feel that ensuring that children have food to eat, a safe place to sleep and clothing then they are being parented well. However, this is only meeting the basic needs of children. Parenting is a much more in-depth and committed relationship. The danger of ineffective parenting is that children are left at the mercy of life, predators and childhood inexperience.

Because ineffective parenting is difficult to define we will use effective parenting as a plum line to discuss the concept. Effective parenting is defined as the ability to interact and engage with children in such a way that they learn and grow into a remarkable adult. Effective parenting takes daily effort to connect with children on a meaningful and personal level. The major reason that most parents have become ineffective is because parents have relegated their children to quality time. Effective parenting demands both quality and quantity of time spent with children. Many people often go to the other extreme by making children their #1 priority. Children can not handle the pressure of that kind of commitment. It is better to keep things in balance and to put children in line after self-care and important adult relationships.

It is important for parents to realize that effective parenting is seen both in childhood and in the adults their children become. However, the most effective determination of good parenting is that children in turn become good parents. Thus, effective parenting is best scene in what kind of parents the children become. Children of effective parents are more likely to have an understanding of the world and what is expected of them as adults. The children of ineffective parents rarely have the skills needed as they enter adulthood. They find themselves on a steep learning curve as they leave high school and move into the adult world. Are you an effective

parent? The following six questions will give you a snapshot of your parenting tendencies.

1. Can your child predict with 100% accuracy what will happen as a result of their misbehavior?
2. In your arsenal of parenting tools do you have light, medium and heavy consequences?
3. Do you spend time each day with your children engaging in meaningful activity or conversation?
4. Do you take time to talk through misunderstandings and misbehaviors when you are calm and level headed?
5. Are you focused on helping your children become adults who can face the world in a competent and remarkable ways?
6. Are you being a living the example that you want your children to meet and exceed in their future life?

If you answered yes to four or more of these questions then you are moving in the right direction to become an effective parent. If you answered yes to three or less then your parenting needs work. Ineffective parenting is detrimental to children because it hampers them from moving into adulthood fully prepared. Most parents love their children and have no intention of hurting them. Yet many children lack the intimate and personal interactions needed to support future development. The issue is understanding what is and is not effective. Looking at the six questions above let us compare how effective and ineffective parents tend to behave.

1. Can your child predict with 100% accuracy what will happen as a result of their misbehavior? Effective parents discuss the rules with their children and make sure that they understand the expectations. They also make sure that consequences are understood and follow through with them no matter how they are feeling. In addition, effective parents help children to see that they chose the consequence with their behavior.

Ineffective parents tend to assume that children understand expectations. Parents often forget the rule themselves or enforce them sporadically. Children often walk on eggshells afraid to make a mistake and it can affect both self-esteem and self-confidence.

2. In your arsenal of parenting tools do you have light, medium and heavy consequences? Effective parents keep a variety of tools at hand. They recognize that children make mistakes and that this is different from willful deliberate disobedience. These parents use mistakes as teaching tools to help children remember what is expected. They also see willful disobedience as needing to be met head-on. They do not allow children to overtly challenge their parental authority; however they recognize that children challenge these rules as a way to test the boundaries. Therefore, the punishment while certain and swift is also loving, kind and sympathetic to the plight of the child.

Ineffective parents tend to see any kind of misbehavior as willful and manipulative. They often feel that the child is somehow trying to deliberately do something to hurt them. They fail to see degrees in misbehavior and only discipline their children when they have had enough of their “mess”. These parents tend to want to make their children feel bad about what they have done and browbeat their children into negative feelings. They can fail to realize that many of these negative feeling become how children see themselves; creating poor self-images and an inner

sense of failure.

3. Do you spend time each day with your children engaging in meaningful activity or conversation? Effective Parents tend to make time each day to make meaningful connections with their children. It becomes a priority to be a part of their children's everyday world. It is very important for them to have loving and nurturing activities and conversations with their children whether they are playing a board game, reading together, making dinner or just hanging out. Effective parents enjoy spending time with their children.

Ineffective Parents tend to let days go by without any meaningful contact between them and their children. Parents interact with their children by a series of orders and correction. The time of loving and fun interactions is rare and often laced with disappointment for both parent and child. These parents often feel guilty about not taking time with their children and tend to ply children with gifts of an extravagant nature to soothe their own feelings of guilt.

4. Do you take time to talk through misunderstandings and misbehaviors with your children when you are calm and level headed? Effective Parents take the opportunity to use times of misbehavior and mistakes as teaching tools. They discuss the expectation and help kids to step back and look at their motives and hidden reasons for their misbehavior. They keep responsibility for the actions with their children and help children come up with strategies to prevent future problems. Their goal is for their children to develop inner control.

Ineffective parents tend to blame themselves for their children's issues. If a child misbehaves it becomes about their lack of parenting skills and not about the child's mistakes or hidden reasons for the misbehavior. These parents tend to come down on children based on their feelings about the incident and not about helping their children develop skills in self control.

5. Are you focused on helping your children become adults who can face the world in a competent and remarkable ways? Effective Parents recognize that the true test of parenting is in the adults their children become. Keeping that in mind children tend to take detours along the path, parents make allowances. They stay focused on helping children learn from mistakes and help them to use the new learning. They are more concerned with the final person their children become rather than the bumps in the road.

Ineffective Parents have difficulty separating their children's behavior with who they are. Believing that it is imperative for children to behave and show that they are good parents. Many parents are concerned with how their children's behavior reflects on them. They demand that children toe the line and behave. Yet, the parent's authority and power are the motivators of good behavior and not the children's own inner sense of control. Parents are more concerned with the here and now and fail to realize that their children spend time in late teens and early adult years being wild and out of control because they have not developed a sense of inner control.

6. Are you being a living the example that you want your children to meet and exceed in their life? Effective Parents recognize that they are the example their children will base their lives upon. They also know that behavior speaks louder than words. They live out each day the person they want their children to be in the future; recognizing that their children will often

exceed them in lives.

Ineffective Parents fail to recognize the example they are setting with their behavior. Saying things like “Don’t smoke” as they puff on a cigarette; or don’t drink while they sip vodka straight up. These parents think that telling children the right thing to do is an effective tool. Yet they know that their parents did the same thing and they are worse at drinking and smoking as their parents were. In failing to live the life they want for their children they are dooming them to live their life or worse as the years go by.

I hope that you can see the extreme differences in these two polar parenting styles. Most parents about 80% fail somewhere between the two extremes. However, the more you strive to be an effective parent the more it will benefit your children. Parenting is the toughest job you will ever love and hate. Recognizing your tendencies and making plans to overcome them is a great first step in becoming a more effective parent. Whether you find that your tendency is to be an effective or an ineffective parent the truth is this is one place where there is always room for improvement. So in the words of Nike “Just Do It”!!

OTHER INFORMATION:

Are you a philanthropist looking for an organization to support? Are you a professional looking to put your skills to work helping to form a stronger leadership program? Are you a retired teacher, counselor or therapist looking to put your skill to work? PT&A is seeking community Support. We need office and classroom space, independent donors, corporate Sponsorship, Board Members, and Volunteers.

Parents, Teachers and Advocates, Inc.'s Mission

PT&A is dedicated to helping parents in Alpharetta and Metro Atlanta to inspire, motivate and raise children who become remarkable adults.

People who support our mission can participate in a variety of ways:

Independent Donors and Corporations who believe in our mission but cannot donate volunteer hours or participate on the board. They offer their support through funding our programs and operations.

Board Members who believe in our mission are dedicated to supporting the organization by using their time, talents and treasure to support organization and help it move forward.

Volunteers who believe in our mission by donating their time and work experience helping the organization with a variety of tasks. Volunteer positions include office work, educational materials compiler, parent education assistant, child care, and event speakers.

If you believe in our mission and would like to support us, please contact Barbara Harvey for more information at 770-298-2169 or educatepta@gmail.com.

