6 Ways to Ruin Your Children

by Kim Droze

A must read for anyone who cares about kids.

Kids don't come with an instruction manual, and there's no such thing as a perfect parent. You can read as many books as possible, talk to all the moms on the playground and pay for weekly therapy sessions, and you still might feel like you don't know what you are doing. However, with the all DOs out there, ever wish you had a breakdown of the DON'Ts? Even if you think you're trying your best, it might not be enough. Take a look at this list of six sure-fire ways to create a ruined child.

1. Give In - No matter what your children want, they got it. Whether it's the toy in line at the supermarket, or the video game console that will cost you a week's pay, giving them everything they ask for is breeding ground for a brat. Many parents believe that denying a child their requests will make them seem like the enemy. However, kids need realistic expectations about how to earn things and the value of money and hard work. Handing over your wallet with every whine or whimper will give the impression that money and materialistic items are more important than emotional and meaningful experiences and that you do not have to earn or work for things you want.

   What to do instead: Limit your children to one new toy or purchase a month with a set spending limit. If they want more items or something more expensive, they have to earn it by doing chores or saving their own money.

2. Lack of Discipline - If your child acts up, throws a fit or bullies another child, you do nothing. Lack of discipline in parenting often stems from not wanting to look "mean." Many parents don't always know the correct way to discipline a child, so they choose to do nothing instead. This type of ghost parenting lead to serious problems, like delinquency. Children thrive with boundaries and rules for interactions with others. Without consequences, the line between good and bad can become blurred or even non-existent.

   What to do instead: Set clear and consistent rules and consequences for your children. If they act out in school or public, take away a privilege such as television or dessert at dinner. Use timeouts for misbehaving at home and explain why the undesired behavior is unacceptable.

3. Always Take Their Side - When a teacher or other adult reports an act of behavior, you don't believe them and always side with your child. While we all want to believe our kids are little angels, turning a blind eye to their transgressions or living in denial is not the answer. Some parents have the impression that their children can do no wrong and that authority figures are bullies. It's vital to emphasize the important role of teachers, police and other adults. Make your kids understand that they are not above the rules and that mistakes have repercussions.

   What to do instead: If your child's teacher or caregiver suggests a certain act of discipline, follow it as long as it is not dangerous or unreasonable. Explain to your kids why it is happening, and that you still love them, but need them to do what is asked of them in order to be responsible.
4. **Fight in Front of Kids** - Calling your spouse terrible names, getting in screaming matches and threatening him or her in front of your children can have negative physiological effects. Kids who witness this may act out in fear, run away, seek dangerous coping techniques like drugs or alcohol and may think it’s acceptable to treat your spouse or other people in this manner.

*What to do instead:* Keep it civil in front of kids and take arguments into another room or outside. Set up an appointment for your children to speak with a therapist to help get them through a divorce or family problems. Instill in your child that name calling and violence are unacceptable ways to deal with conflict.

5. **Set a Bad Example** – Cutting in line, lying, saying curse words and stealing in front of your little ones sets a bad example. Parents are the first teachers for children, and their actions make the biggest impressions. Bad behavior while your children are present can alter the perceptions of what is right and wrong. You’re wrong if you think kids aren’t paying attention. Children are extremely impressionable and will begin to mimic bad behavior if exposed to it frequently.

*What to do instead:* Resolve to be a model citizen in front of your child. Of course, we all make mistakes, and you should explain to your children why what you did was wrong and what you can do to fix it.

6. **Not Being Present** – Working late, choosing happy hour over a soccer game or just plain ignoring your kids. Kids need to feel loved and needed and that they are worthy of attention and affection. A child may seek comfort from inappropriate people or suffer from depression if neglected.

*What to do instead:* Even if you’ve gotten a packed work schedule or need a break from parenting duties every now and then, aim to have one day or night a week dedicated to them. Watch a movie together or spend an afternoon in the park.

Source:
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