

# John Sommers-Flanagan

## Tip Sheets

Below are 10 tip sheets you can use for yourself or give to parents. If you like these and find them helpful, you might want to consider getting the book, "How to Listen so Parents will Talk and Talk so Parents will Listen" because there are many more tip sheets and parent homework assignments included.

### Tip Sheet 1: I've Got a NEW Attitude

**This tip sheet is for parents who have children or teens who often have tantrums or temper/anger problems.**

Here is some crazy-sounding advice: The best first step for stopping your child's tantrums is for you to *begin looking forward to your child's next tantrum*. This advice is true whether you're the parent of a one-year-old or a 16-year-old.

Children are smart. They can sense your fear and your worries. And if they sense you're worried about their next tantrum the result will be more and bigger tantrums.

Many parents feel like they're *walking on eggshells* . . . fearing their child's next tantrum. If this true in your home, then your child has too much power!

*Looking forward to your child's next tantrum* (or your teen's next angry outburst) is an excellent tool for re-balancing power in your relationship with your child. To deal with your child's tantrums, you must stop feeling afraid of them.

John Gottman, Ph.D., a great parenting and marriage expert, has explained that children's tantrums are an irreplaceable opportunity to:

- Show empathy and compassion for your child
- Make an emotional connection with your child
- Teach your child not to be afraid of her strong emotions
- Help your child solve his emotional problems
- Teach your child emotional self-control

To get over your dread and begin looking forward to your child's next tantrum, you need a clear and positive plan for how you want to deal with the tantrum. Then, you need to practice the plan. And finally, you need to look forward to your chance to implement the plan—because you're confident that it's not only okay to face your child's anger directly—it's healthy and good for you and your child.

Consider the message in this Tip Sheet. Are you willing to try looking forward to your child's next tantrum or your teenager's next angry outburst? Can you really start believing that it's okay for your child to be angry and that it's good to face that anger directly? Can you embrace the positive possibilities linked to your child's anger?

The next time you ask your child to do a chore or to stop playing a computer game, imagine doing it with positive expectations. Imagine facing your child's anger and being strong and showing empathy. And to help with your limit-setting plan, be sure to read Tip Sheet 2.

### Tip Sheet 2: A Practical Guide to Setting Limits

**This tip sheet is for parents having trouble setting firm and compassionate limits..**

Unfortunately, children are not born knowing how to deal with frustration, anger, and disappointment. This means it's our job to teach them how to deal with these difficult and sometimes unpleasant emotions.

One way to teach your child about how to handle frustration and other difficult emotions is through limit-setting. If you let your child do whatever she wants anytime she wants to, she'll have trouble learning how to cope with frustration. This can happen if parents always give their children whatever they want.

Many parents mistakenly think that when they set limits, they need to be mean or especially tough. Don't make that mistake. Good limit setters are firm, but kind and compassionate. Try to be the kind of boss you'd like to have yourself.

An effective limit-setting strategy includes the following:

1. Set a clear limit or clear expectation
2. If your child appears upset or resistant, show empathy for your child's frustration, disappointment, or anger
3. Repeat the limit in clear language (you could also have your child repeat the limit or plan back to you)
4. Give your child a reasonable choice or timeline (this is especially important with strong-willed children; see below for examples)
5. Show more empathy by joining in with your child's unhappiness (this might include telling a story . . . if there's time)
6. Enforce the limit on time and with a logical consequence
7. Stay positive and encouraging

#### A Limit-Setting Example

1. Set a clear limit: "Dinner will be ready in five minutes, so it's time to turn off your computer game."
2. Show empathy by using feeling words: "I know it's hard to stop doing something fun and you're feeling very upset."
3. Repeat the limit: "But you know it's time to stop playing computer games."
4. Give a choice and a timeline: "Either you can stop playing in the next two minutes, or I'll unplug the computer."
5. Show more empathy by joining in with your child's unhappiness: "I hate it when I have to stop doing something I love."

6. Enforce the limit on time and with a logical consequence: (Say what you'll do and then do what you said: If you said it will be two minutes, wait two minutes and enforce the limit; don't wait three minutes or one minute)
7. Stay positive and encouraging: "Even though I had to turn off your computer in the middle of your game tonight, I'm sure you'll be able to plan for this and turn it off yourself tomorrow."

Remember, although it's your job to teach your child how to become more responsible and how to cope with the frustrations of life, you won't be able to do this perfectly; no one does this perfectly. Just keep the principles in this tip-sheet in mind and practice them when you can.

### Tip Sheet 3: Backwards Behavior Modification

One amazing thing about parenting is how easy and natural it is to do things backwards. For example, imagine your 7<sup>th</sup> grader comes home with a report card that has five As, one B, and one C. If you're like most parents, you'll take a quick look and say something like, "Why'd you get that C?" or, "How can you raise that B up to an A?"

Even though these questions make excellent sense, they're in direct violation of a very basic principle of human behavior. That principle is: *Whatever you pay THE MOST attention to will tend to grow and what ever you ignore will tend to shrink*. Despite this powerful principle, our human and parental tendency is almost always to pay close attention to the Fs and Cs in life, while only offering a passing glance to the As.

Another version of the same problem happens with parents who have two or more children. Your children may co-exist very nicely together 60% of the day and fight like cats and dogs for the other 40%. Unfortunately, in that situation, the natural tendency is to give *almost all* your attention to your children when they fight and *very little* attention to them when they're playing nicely.

The consequence of violating this basic principle is:

- Your 7<sup>th</sup> grader feels his efforts are underappreciated and becomes less motivated
- Your children, understanding they can get more of your attention by fighting than from playing together nicely, may begin fighting *even more*.

Our FIRST point with this Tip Sheet is to reassure you that it's perfectly natural to pay more attention to "bad" behavior than "good" behavior. But, it's equally true that even though paying too much attention to bad behavior is natural—it's NOT helpful because it can become a reward for bad behavior.

Our SECOND point is that you should work very hard to:

***PAY MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR CHILDREN WHEN YOU LIKE WHAT THEY'RE DOING THAN YOU DO WHEN YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT THEY'RE DOING.***

Or, better yet, try this:

***WHEN GIVING OUT CONSEQUENCES, BE BORING,  
BUT WHEN GIVING OUT REWARDS, BE PASSIONATE.***

I had this lesson driven home to me many years ago. While doing therapy with teenagers who were in trouble for delinquent behavior, they started telling me how much satisfaction they got from making their parents angry. When I asked about this, they said things like, "I love it when my dad's veins start

sticking out of his neck” or “It’s cool when I can get my mom so mad that she spits when she talks.”

Keep these images in mind the next time your child does something that gets under your skin. Then, instead of a long lecture complete with bulging veins and spitting, be short and boring. Use a monotone to say something like: “I don’t like it when you do that.”

Then, when your child comes home on time, or gets an A, or plays nice with her brother, or makes an intelligent comment about virtually anything—that’s when you should launch into a passionate and positive lecture—complete with bulging veins and spittle.\*

\*These rules may not hold perfectly for your unique child. Some teens may not like much positive attention. That’s why you’re the best judge of whether a particular parenting strategy will work with your child. We’re also kidding about the spittle; that’s hardly ever a good thing to see.

#### Tip Sheet 4: The Goals of Your Child’s Misbehavior

*Your telephone rings. You answer it. You begin a conversation with a friend. Suddenly, your son, who had been playing quietly, begins pestering you. Or, perhaps, as soon as she recognizes you’re on the phone, your daughter climbs into the cupboard where you keep candy.*

It’s good to think about why children act the ways they do. At Families First Boston (a parent education center), parents are taught to “Get curious, not furious.” If we take time to reflect on why children misbehave, we’ll be more understanding and better able to come up with solutions to their misbehavior.

Many years ago, Rudolf Dreikurs identified four main psychological goals of children’s misbehavior.

1. To get attention
2. To get power or control
3. To get revenge
4. To display inadequacy (and get help)

Dreikurs believed that if children had a sense of belonging and being useful contributors to their families, they wouldn’t misbehave much. But, if they didn’t feel a sense of belonging and usefulness, they would try to gain attention, power and control, revenge, or to prove themselves inadequate.

In the opening example, the boy who began pestering his parent after his parent answered the telephone may be seeking attention. Often, attention-seeking behavior causes parents to feel irritated or annoyed.

The girl who climbed up for candy during the phone call may have been waiting all day to exert her power and control. When children seek power and control, parents often react with anger.

Many other examples of misbehavior fit this theory. Children who refuse to get out of bed for school in the morning may be trying to obtain much-needed power. Or, they may be displaying their sense of inadequacy and trying to get their parents to take care of all their needs. When children show inadequacy, parents usually feel desperate, exhausted, and worried.

Consider sibling rivalry. The boy who slaps his sister may be seeking revenge. He’s tired of hearing everybody talk about his cute little sister. His parents probably feel scared and threatened; they don’t know if their beautiful daughter is safe from her mean brother.

There are no perfect solutions to children’s misbehavior. But here are a few ideas:

- If you feel annoyed about attention seeking, pay positive attention to your child *before* she starts annoying you. Try Special Time (Tip Sheet 8), pay attention to her positive behaviors, and try ignoring her annoying behaviors.
- If you feel angry and think your child is seeking power and control, find ways to give him power and control. Again, do this *before* the manipulative behavior begins. It's also a good idea to give choices: "Would you rather clean your desk now, or in 20 minutes?"
- If you feel threatened or hurt by your child's revenge behaviors, do what you can to address the roots of her revenge feelings. Active teaching and limit-setting may be needed (see Tip Sheet 2).
- If you feel worried because your child is displaying inadequacy, take less responsibility for him and think about what small things he can do to feel useful. This situation might call for counseling or a consultation with school personnel.

Children don't just misbehave for psychological reasons; they also misbehave for physical reasons. If your children misbehave, check to see if they're hungry, tired, or in physical discomfort—after checking these essentials, you can move on to evaluating the underlying psychological reasons for your child's misbehavior.

### Tip Sheet 5: Problem Polarization

Families often show peculiar dynamics, especially when it comes to motivation. For example, if your daughter loves computer games and plays them all day, sooner or later, you may begin hating computer games. Your daughter probably has enough love for computer games in her little pinky to accommodate the whole family. Similarly, if your son shows no motivation to do homework, you may suddenly find you've got all the motivation for his homework, while he has none. This particular family dynamic is called *problem polarization*.

Problem polarization is a tough nut to crack. This is because it's perfectly natural for parents to become obsessed with the very responsibilities that their children avoid. For example, when your child stops showering, you will undoubtedly become more committed to his personal hygiene. The same is true when children neglect virtually any basic responsibility (think about keeping rooms clean, writing thank-you notes, etc).

The solution to this problem always involves getting your children to take more responsibility for their basic family and personal responsibilities. Of course, you've probably already tried twisting yourself into pretzel shapes trying to get your child motivated to perform these basic tasks. And if you're reading this tip sheet, may be permanently pretzel-shaped and yet your children are still unconcerned about their personal hygiene, homework, chores, and grades.

Although you probably want to deliver one more lecture to get your message across—the truth is you need to let go of your motivation to get your child to behave appropriately. Your best new approach is to get more carefree about your child's personal responsibilities than your child. This is, of course, easier said than done. After all, you're a wise and conscientious adult and you know all too well the dangers of irresponsibility.

The answer to your dilemma is wrapped up in the following question: How can you (without using lectures or punishments) get your child to experience greater distress over his/her personal irresponsibility?

A direct approach might include saying something like,

*“You’re a perfectly intelligent young person and so I’m going to stop nagging you about your homework. My new policy is to remind you one time every evening and then I’ll go off and have some fun myself. Then, if you flunk, it’s all you. If you want help, I’m there for you, but I’m not getting hung up on this anymore. I’m a new and improved parent who knows you’ll do better with your homework if you take more responsibility for it yourself.”*

After making your “I’m backing off” speech, you should sit down, relax, and see what happens. Even better, you might need to distract yourself with something fun and interesting because, no doubt, your child will have a greater tolerance for a few failures than you.

### Tip Sheet 6: Character Feedback

Most parents want their children to develop positive character traits. These traits or virtues typically include things like:

- Honesty
- Self-control
- Respect for others
- Generosity
- Courage

However, in an odd twist of reasoning, most parents use negative feedback to teach children these positive character traits. For example, Marcus wants his son Bruce to be honest and so whenever he notices Bruce bending the truth, he corrects him. He says things like: “Bruce, you know that wasn’t the truth” or “You need to stop lying!”

Despite Dad’s positive intentions, his negative comments may shape Bruce’s character. Bruce may notice his father’s displeasure at his dishonesty. Eventually, Bruce’s character or identity will take on a negative spin. He may think, “I’ve got a problem with honesty” or “I’m a guy who doesn’t tell the truth.”

Character feedback is a means through which parents can help their children recognize and develop positive attributes. It’s a strategy that leads children to think of themselves differently, as illustrated in the following example:

By the time she was 6 years old, our youngest daughter (Rylee) had developed a passion for sweets. Recognizing this, Rita, John, and Rylee’s older sister (Chelsea) all began commenting, “Rylee has a sweet tooth!” Very quickly, Rylee, when eating candy, stuffed it in her mouth, proclaiming, “I’ve got a sweet tooth!” It didn’t take us long to see that labeling Rylee with this character trait was a very bad idea.

Huddling up, we made a new plan. There was, in fact, minor evidence that Rylee liked broccoli. She would eat broccoli dipped in ranch dressing. The three of us adopted a new mantra. We said things like: “Rylee likes her broccoli with ranch dressing. Rylee is the kind of girl who knows she’ll grow up strong and smart if she eats her vegetables.”

In less than a week, Rylee affirmed our character feedback. While eating broccoli with ranch dressing, she exclaimed, “I’m a girl who eats my broccoli.” At the time of this writing, Rylee (now 21-years-old) still enjoys her broccoli.

The lesson for parents is that since we make statements about our children’s character anyway, we might as well consciously and intentionally make these character statements in a positive and hopeful direction. For instance, in the opening example, what if Marcus had taken a positive approach with Bruce?

What if he consistently noticed and commented on Bruce's truth telling? What if he said things like, "I love it when you tell me the truth" or "You're the kind of son who I can trust to be honest with me" or "It was so cool when you told the truth about what happened at school."

This doesn't mean that parents should never point out their children's negative behaviors. Sometimes children need direct and critical feedback. The problem is that if we do that too often, we may unintentionally contribute to the development of negative character traits.

### Tip Sheet 7: Choice Theory 101

**This tip sheet is for parents who get in repeated and destructive power struggles with their children, especially with their preteens or teens.**

Choice theory was developed by William Glasser (1998). Glasser wants everyone to understand the first rule of choice theory: *"The only person whose behavior we can control is our own."*

Although it's normal for parents and children to occasionally engage in a battle of wills, when these battles become too frequent or too intense, the parent-child relationship usually suffers. According to choice theory, parents who are too invested in controlling their children will begin using unhealthy methods to get control. These controlling behaviors can become what Glasser refers to as the seven deadly habits:

1. Criticizing.
2. Blaming.
3. Complaining.
4. Nagging.
5. Threatening.
6. Punishing.
7. Bribing or rewarding to control.

Think about these habits. Are they common in your family? Do you use them more than you'd like? If so, according to choice theory, your children may distance themselves from you and focus instead on freedom, friends, and fun. Unfortunately, when young people react to parental efforts to control them, freedom, friends, and fun usually translate into drugs, sex, and trouble.

To practice choice theory in your family you need to embrace the first rule. But because the cultural norm in the United States is for people to try to control each other, it may help to say this rule out loud: *"The only person whose behavior I can control is my own."*

You may be wondering: "If I can only control my own behavior, then how can I be a positive influence on my child?" This leads to choice theory's second big rule: *"All we can give another person is information."*

Consider that statement. All you can provide is non-criticizing, non-blaming, non-complaining, non-nagging, non-threatening, non-punishing, and non-rewarding to control information. So . . . what information is left?

You CAN provide your child with information about the world, about what you want, and about your concerns and fears and hopes and dreams. For example, you can say:

- I need help with the dishes. I'd like it if you'd take some time to help me
- I want you to be safe and sober and happy

- I am afraid that if you drink too much or use drugs that you'll damage your body
- I know if you use drugs you can become addicted for life and it can ruin your chances for a happy and healthy life.
- I want a good relationship with you.
- I'm your mother. I can't stop loving you. I can't stop myself from being concerned about your safety. And so I'd like to talk about how you can keep yourself safe tonight.

Some parents complain that choice theory is too soft and takes away parental authority. We believe the opposite. If you focus on what you can control (yourself) and then give your children clear and passionate information about what you want, what you fear, and your personal convictions, you'll be providing them with a strong foundation for positive behavior . . . and very little reason to rebel.

### **Tip Sheet 8: Special Time**

Special time gives your child brief experiences of having 100% of your attention and nearly complete *control*. The rules include:

1. Identify when and how long you'll be doing special time (we recommend 15-20 minutes 2-4 times a week). Select these times in advance because you cannot and should not provide 100% attention during the rest of the day.
2. Tell your child you've decided to spend special play time with her. Say something like, "During our play time, you get to decide what we'll do." Set a timer or watch so you both know when the time is up.
3. For more aggressive or impulsive children, you may need to introduce rules by saying, "Even though you're in charge during our play time, there's no hitting or hurting, no breaking things, and no spending too much money or eating candy. If you do any of those things, our special play time will end and we'll try again next time."
5. During special time, practice reflective listening skills and follow your child's lead. If he's playing army and the soldiers get killed, say something like: "It looks like these soldiers all got killed." Do this even if your child behaves unusually (as long as he's following the rules). Avoid making judgments or suggesting feelings, because doing so will lead your child in a particular direction (and there's plenty of time to be a leader during the other 23 hours and 40 minutes of each day). For example, it would be leading to say, "Oh no. I don't like seeing soldiers killed. Aren't their families going to be sad?" This is your child's time to lead and your time to follow.
6. At the end, help your child deal with the fun having ended. Your child may be disappointed or angry or refuse to help clean up. If so, show empathy ("It's hard to stop having fun and I see you're upset"), but be firm in enforcing the end of play. If you have time and want to continue playing, tell her "Our special time is over. But I still have time to play. So now if we keep playing, we'll just play like we usually do. You won't be in charge anymore." If your child refuses to clean up, don't get into a power struggle. Clean up on your own and act like you're having lots of fun while putting stuff away. Special time is not for active teaching. You can be more forceful during the rest of the day and week. For this 20 minutes, keep an accepting attitude.
7. Special time is guaranteed time and shouldn't be withheld as a punishment. If it's scheduled, don't take it away because of misbehavior.



## Observing Your Child During Special Time

Special time is great for observing your child. If you're nondirective during special time, your child may act out her main emotional and behavioral struggles. We remember a 6 year-old girl who had her father pretend to be her little brother and run away from home because their parents forced them to clean their room too much and didn't allow them to eat candy. Her father wanted to tell her she had it easy and that she got too many desserts as it was. But to argue would have invalidated her internal experience of struggling with cleaning up and eating healthy foods. By observing children in free play, you can see what issues they're trying to master.

### Tip Sheet 9: Mutual Problem-Solving

Mutual Problem-Solving brings family members together to solve problems collaboratively. It works best if your child is at least 4-years-old. It also works well with strong-willed children who like to challenge parental authority. It includes five steps.

**Step 1: Identify the problem together.** Present the situation in a way that your child will agree that something is a problem.

Let's say your 6 year-old is very stubborn and won't share his toys with other children and so they don't want to play with him. Here's how you could proceed: (a) discuss this behavior with your child when he's in a good mood . . . like when you're drawing or eating ice cream together; (b) describe the situation in a way that makes it so your child will likely agree that the situation presents a problem for him (e.g., "I noticed that when you play with Matt sometimes he gets mad when you don't share your toys and then he stomps off and goes home, and then you're usually upset, because you like playing with Matt. Don't you hate it when that happens?"). Your child will probably agree and say something like, "Yeah, I don't like him doing that" and then you're free to problem-solve together.

**Step 2: Identify potential solutions.** Say something like, "Okay, since we both agree that you don't like it when Matt gets mad and leaves, let's come up with some ideas to solve this problem."

When coming up with solutions, let yourself (and your child) be creative. Encourage him to take the lead, but if he doesn't, throw out suggestions to get things rolling. Examples include: "We could send Matt home." or "We could practice how to deal with Matt before he comes" or "I could pay Matt \$1.00 to stay and play with you?" or "I could be toy-keeper and time-keeper and keep track of who gets to play with which toy for what length of time" or "If you guys fight over the toy, the toy goes in time out."

Track all ideas on paper. Be prepared for your child's first idea to be very bad. Even if he suggests something ridiculous, "He should pay me to share!" just nod your head, repeat what he said, and write it down. Don't criticize his suggestions or he might stop giving them.

As you generate possible solutions, remember that eventually you'll have to agree to try out one of these potential solutions.

**Step 3: Rate and rank potential solutions.** After you've generated at least 3-4 options (hopefully more) rank the possible solutions. Together, select one to try out for a while. This procedure is mutual and you should agree to check back on how well the solution is working. That way, you can let him try out a less-

than-perfect strategy, knowing you'll get to talk about it and encourage a better solution next time. With a 15-year-old daughter who violating her curfew, your solution list might look like this:

<u>Angie's Rank</u>	<u>Possible Ideas if Angie violates curfew</u>	<u>Mom/Dad Rank</u>
#1	Nothing should happen; Angie's parents are so uncool	#10
#6	Angie is grounded for 2 weekend nights	#1
#5	Angie loses her weekly allowance	#5
#4	Angie has to help cook dinner and do dishes for a week	#2
#7	Angie loses her telephone privileges for a week	#3
#8	Angie is fined \$1.00 for every minute she's late	#9
#3	Angie writes an apology note	#6
#10	Next time, Angie's mom (dad) goes out with her and her friends	#8
#9	Angie and mom (dad) go for family counseling	#7
#2	Angie gets 15 extra minutes out if she gets home on time	#4

To calculate the most agreeable solution, add the rankings and select the lowest number. In this case, there's a tie between: Having Angie cook dinner and do dishes for a week (total = 6) and giving Angie 15 extra minutes out for getting home on time (total = 6). If there's a tie you can try both solutions at once.

**Step 4: Try out the most agreeable solution.** Do this for a predetermined period of time. After agreeing on a proposed solution, say, "Let's try this out for 3 weeks and then meet again to talk about how things went."

**Step 5: Evaluate how well the solution worked.** The solution may work perfectly or you may have to go back and try this again, but either way, stay positive. It's nice to have your original brainstorming sheet to use as a reference for what you thought of last time.

Mutual problem-solving probably won't produce magical solutions. The process is more important than the outcome. The main goal is to give your child the message: "We work on our problems as a family." This message models the continuous use of a positive problem-solving family strategy.

### Tip Sheet 10: The Rules of Spanking

Spanking or corporal punishment is a common parenting method, with somewhere between 50% and 80% of American parents at least occasionally spanking their children. We should emphasize up front that most parents who spank their children are good and decent people who use spanking to teach important life lessons (e.g., "You shouldn't lie to your parents" or "You shouldn't hit your sister" etc.).

Most parents who spank, do so for one of the following reasons:

- o "My parents spanked me and I turned out okay."
- o "I believe in the Bible. If you spare the rod, you spoil the child."

- “I spank because it works—my kid stops misbehaving.”

Despite these justifications for spanking, research on corporal punishment is clear and negative. There are many potential harmful consequences from spanking, but only one clear benefit (it stops misbehavior in the short term). Nearly all professionals agree that corporal punishment is not a good parenting strategy. Both the American Association of Pediatricians and the American Psychological Association have stated that corporal punishment (spanking) should be avoided.

Research on child rearing indicates that, in some cases, spanking can lead to child abuse. The research also indicates that spanking is associated with children having lower self-esteem, less self-control, and increased aggressive behavior. Spanking can also have negative effects on parent-child relationships. As a consequence, more parents than ever are trying to be careful about spanking and some parents have chosen not to spank their children.

Almost all parents who come to us for parenting advice are interested in alternatives to spanking; they never come to learn to spank more. Then again, some parents insist on their right to spank. We agree that whether parents spank or not is really their own business (unless they're leaving welts or bruises, in which case they've crossed the border into child abuse and into the realm of the government's business).

Out of respect for parents' right to spank and in an effort to reducing child abuse, we've developed *the rules of spanking*. We hope they're helpful.

1. Never use a weapon or object to spank or inflict physical pain on children
2. Never spank when angry, because angry spanking can lead to excessive spanking or child abuse
3. Always spank with an open hand on the child's buttocks
4. Never pull the child's pants down to spank on bare skin
5. Always limit yourself to one or two swats because repeated swatting is linked to parents losing control
6. Always explain, before and after, the reason for the spanking (the negative behavior)
7. Always explain, before and after, how your child might have avoided the spanking (the positive behavior)
8. Whenever possible and reasonable, use alternatives to spanking
9. Remember, because children grow up, spanking can never be a long-term parenting strategy

Note: For a comprehensive review of corporal punishment research, see: Gershoff, E. T. (2002). Corporal punishment by parents and associated child behaviors and experiences: A meta-analytic and theoretical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128 (4), 539 – 579.

## 18 thoughts on “Tip Sheets”

1. **Jackie Saulmon Ramirez** says:

FEBRUARY 12, 2014 AT 8:36 AM

I received a link to your article from a friend and wanted to give feedback. I love the method with tips for parents. They are logical and easily understood by most every parent. I also like that you denounce spanking because it can cause damage to self-esteem and it does not work long-term. I wish you had cited the research stating that child abuse can lead to actual changes in DNA.

By the way, I am following your blog and will read your posts. Thank you for this post.

1. ★ **johnsommersflanagan** says:

FEBRUARY 18, 2014 AT 6:09 PM

Hi Jackie.

I'm happy to hear that you discovered my blog and that you are following and liked the post. Also, if you happen to have the citation for the research on DNA changes linked to child abuse, I'd love to have it so I can read it.

Thanks for the comment and I hope you're doing well.

John SF

1. **Jackie Saulmon Ramirez** says:

FEBRUARY 18, 2014 AT 6:20 PM

I gather information for parents, specifically to combat abuse. I volunteer with Parents Anonymous and online support. I am not a professional so I rely on scientific information from reliable sources. I believe both of these articles are about the same study. If those links are broken now, let me know and I will e-mail them to you. This study in particular is quite disturbing.

From: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/139938.php>

From: <http://psychcentral.com/news/2009/02/23/child-abuse-alters-brain-gene/4283.html>

2. ★ **johnsommersflanagan** says:

FEBRUARY 18, 2014 AT 8:34 PM

Thanks Jackie. I will check these out and appreciate the resources! I am happy to hear of your dedication to educating people about abuse and to preventing it!

3. **Jackie Saulmon Ramirez** says:

FEBRUARY 19, 2014 AT 7:02 AM

You are welcome. And thank you for your work.

2. Pingback: [I've Got a NEW Attitude - Christy Graham, LPC](#)

1. ★ **johnsommersflanagan** says:

JUNE 27, 2015 AT 4:53 PM

Thanks Christy!

Sorry for the slow response.

John

3. Pingback: [Why Children Misbehave — The Adlerian Perspective | John Sommers-Flanagan](#)

4. **Aneesa Moidoo** says:

DECEMBER 10, 2017 AT 12:57 PM

Thank you for the tipsheets. It's reinforcing my practice skills with more examples and scenarios.

1. ★ **johnsommersflanagan** says:

DECEMBER 10, 2017 AT 7:18 PM

Hi Aneesa. You're welcome. I'm glad to hear they're helpful. Have a great week. John

5. **Crystal Thompson-Tower** says:

MARCH 18, 2019 AT 11:33 AM

Hi John! I just gave out your tip sheet for Special Time. Thanks for being a great resource. Crystal T.T.

1. ★ **johnsommersflanagan** says:

MARCH 20, 2019 AT 6:21 PM

Thanks right back to you Crystal for all you do! JSF

6. **Rochel** says:

JUNE 9, 2020 AT 12:04 PM

Very informative. Thank you.

One issue I couldn't find was when siblings are not nice to each other or protective of one another.

And it's the constant bickering from both sides. Especially during this pandemic.

I especially worry about the "not protecting each other". From others or parents.

1. ★ **johnsommersflanagan** says:

JUNE 10, 2020 AT 7:32 AM

Thanks Rochel. Are you familiar with the old book, siblings without rivalry? It's old, but it still has good ideas. All my best to you in your parenting challenges! John SF

7. **Mark Nicoll** says:

JUNE 22, 2020 AT 11:29 AM

Thanks for these John. Are there pdf versions available by chance? It would be great to have them as handouts.

1. ★ **johnsommersflanagan** says:

JUNE 24, 2020 AT 10:42 AM

Hi Mark,

I guess I should make and post pdf versions! I haven't yet. Just now I posted a piece to address your last question about individualizing risk factors. I hope it helps. Be well!

8. **Geri** says:

OCTOBER 1, 2020 AT 9:36 AM

Great tips! I'm including them in the school newsletter, thanks!

9. Pingback: [Tips for Quickly Engaging and Influencing Parents: The One-Page Handout | John Sommers-Flanagan](#)