

Positive Guidance

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Brain Info

The **best predictors** of long term success:

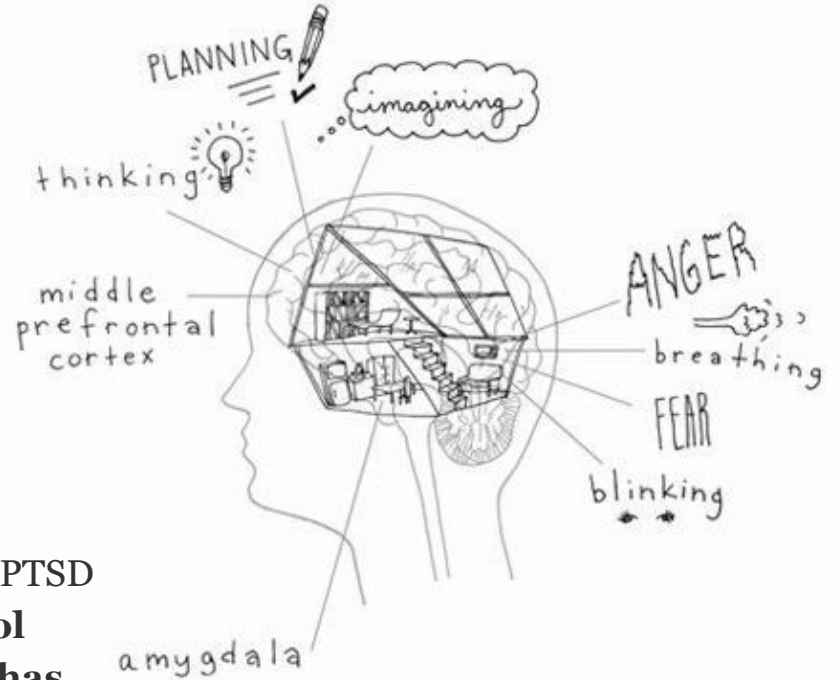
Self-Control

Self-Regulation

Self-Awareness

Rachel Yehuda at Mount Sinai found that people with PTSD have low levels of the stress hormone cortisol. **Cortisol triggers the ‘all clear’ message that the danger has passed, and the stress response can be called off by the body. This message doesn’t get sent in people with PTSD.**

<https://www.mountsinai.org/profiles/rachel-yehuda>



[The Yes Brain Dr. Dan Siegel](#) (2018)

Triggers

- What makes you feel off balance?
- When you can, be aware of triggers for you and your children.
- Help your child become aware of their triggers and create ways to make them easier to manage. However, avoid eliminating all triggers completely because learning to manage them builds resilience.

Disorganized space?

Hangry?

Itchy?

Too many choices?

Being late or tardy?

Hormones?

Too loud?

Need more fresh air/outdoors?

Too hot or too cold?

Too many questions?

Thirsty?

BUSY?

Too much news?

Bathroom break?

Too much screen time?

Too much work or deadlines?

Pain?

Sleep?

Build Relationships

Balance

independence

helping others

accepting help

working together

- 1) Work towards independence by allowing children to have more control along the way. Try to think of tasks in small steps instead of all or none. (Think of a toddler putting on a jacket)
- 2) Provide children with opportunities to take care of you, other family members, their friends, pets, the environment, and their space.
- 3) Just because children can do something independently, it doesn't mean they have to *every* time. Help them learn relationship skills, and how to ask for and accept help from others.
- 4) Strong respectful relationships are more likely to motivate children to want to follow directions. Consciously build relationships.

[Gottman Institute](#)

[Love Languages of Children](#)

*Remember to have
fun, laugh, & love!*



Help create awareness of situations

- Try **asking questions** instead of giving directions when you can.
- When you help create awareness you are teaching children to regulate themselves instead of only knowing what to do when they are given directions.
- Also, when giving directions be clear, concise, and specific. You can also make lists for routine tasks.
- Try using a lower voice instead of a louder voice. A quiet, face to face discussion is more likely to help a child be able to listen and reduce stress and conflict.

For example:

“What can you put away in this room?”

“Look at your body head to toe, what else do you need to do to get ready?”

“What is under your feet?”

“What do you have to do today?”

Natural Consequences

Remember the *goal* is to help develop self-sufficient adults who have healthy relationships. They are more likely to get there by **learning** from mistakes.



Ex. If you spill it, you help clean it up



Even if you accidentally hurt someone, ask if they are ok, get them ice, or a bandaid.

If you raise your voice or say something hurtful, own up to it and talk about it.

Also, remember the rules apply for grown-ups too:

Expecting, teaching, and modeling this behavior is one of the greatest gifts you can give children.

Acknowledging and Affirming Emotions

Even if you don't agree with how someone is feeling you can acknowledge that it is the way *they are feeling*.

There are great examples in the work by [Dr. Siegel](#)

You can help curb or redirect behavior that is unsafe or uncomfortable, but you will be much more likely to nurture that if you *acknowledge* feelings first.

In so many situations in life, people are *loudest* when they *don't feel like* their "voice" is being heard.

It is so very, very true in parenting.

Positive Guidance Strategies

1) Awareness, Physical Presence, and Positioning:

- Get close to the child instead of yelling across a room, get on their level
- Be **present** and paying attention to the children (turn off the TV, put down the phone, etc.)
- Uses **positive body and facial language**
- Get on the child's level

2) Set limits well: **state expectations** for desired behavior and **clarify boundaries or limits**

- Limit your expectations to include important matters that are **developmentally appropriate**
- Involve children and give choices when appropriate
- Tune in, help children focus on task, and give good verbal and modeling cues
- Use concrete words and **short, natural sentences**
- Tell a child exactly **what to do** instead of what not to do
- Give them time to carry out the limit
- Restate limits when necessary and appropriate
- Provide a rationale for the limit

Positive Guidance Strategies

- 3) Give **meaningful feedback** to children: give helpful information that will **increase skill and competency**.
 - ❑ Avoid empty praise such as "Good job"
 - ❑ Give positive feedback and suggestions for change when appropriate
 - ❑ Express appreciation directly related to a child's **effort or interest**
 - ❑ Give positive unconditional feedback

- 4) Treat children with **respect**: Help children preserve their **dignity**
 - ❑ Take the child's perspective
 - ❑ Think of how you would want to be treated
 - ❑ Once you are finished with the positive guidance strategy, end the interaction quickly, simply, and gracefully
 - ❑ Help the child **engage and manage emotions**
 - ❑ Avoid flaunting power

Positive Guidance Strategies

5) **Redirection:** to **divert or distract** a very young child or to show a somewhat older child a more acceptable way to perform an activity (substitution)

- Risk vs. Hazard
- Act quickly
- Specify the activity needing a substitution
- Develop a similar activity or the same activity done more safely
- Present the substitution for the child
- When appropriate, share your expectations with the other caregivers
- Be prepared for the child to test your substitution

6) **Listen actively:** Careful and accurate listening to a child and his/her feelings, which communicates adult's trust in the child's ability to work through a problem.

- Wait until a child is finished speaking
- Try to understand the message
- Listen to what a child may be feeling
- Suspend judgment
- Reflect your perception of the child's feelings

Positive Guidance Strategies

7) Recognize **signs of distress and teach calming techniques**: Look beyond visible behavior and help get the autonomic nervous system under control.

- ❑ Observe signs of stress or anxiety
- ❑ Decide whether to use active listening, to decrease stimulation, or to teach/carry out a calming technique
- ❑ Decided whether to change something about the situation to decrease stress (i.e., decrease the number of transitions)

8) Manage strong emotions responsibly: **Support children in recognizing and learning** responsible ways to **manage strong emotions** such as anger.

- ❑ Model responsible anger management
- ❑ Allow children to **acknowledge feelings** while firmly, **but kindly not permitting them to hurt anybody**
- ❑ Help children **understand their triggers**
- ❑ Teach children **how** to deal with stress
- ❑ Share your expectations for responsible emotion management
- ❑ Help children **label their feelings** and expand their vocabulary about feelings

Positive Guidance Strategies

9) Support and **extend children's play and learning**: Learn and how to scaffold children's play and social interactions. Be a facilitator.

- ❑ Observe children
- ❑ Use questions appropriately
- ❑ Help children enter, sustain, and expand play ("I think your sister is trying to tell you something.")
- ❑ Build on children's prior experiences/knowledge/vocabulary

10) **Teach conflict resolution**: Achieve a mutually agreeable solution to a problem (rather than punish children for fighting)

- ❑ Identify and define the problem
- ❑ Invite children to participate (if developmentally appropriate)
- ❑ Generate possible solutions with the children
- ❑ Examine each idea for merits and drawbacks
- ❑ Put the plan into action
- ❑ Evaluate how well the solution worked

Some of my favs

[CASEL](#)

[Dr. Dan Siegel](#)

[Julie Lythcott-Haims](#)

[The Gottman Institute](#)

[Love and Logic](#)

[Marion, M \(2014\). Guidance of Young Children \(9th edition\) ISBN: 978-0133427226](#)

[Motherly](#)

[The Thoughtful Parent](#)

[30 Questions to Ask Your Child](#)