

WebParentTips – The Online Parenting Newsletter
vol.1 no.1 29 November 2000

<http://parentkidsright.com>

<a href="<http://parentkidsright.com>">Parent Kids Right

WHAT I WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

I well remember all the dumb parenting mistakes I made even though I was a board-eligible pediatrician when my kids were born. I made these mistakes mostly out of ignorance about:

- 1) child behavior and development
- 2) myself, especially what pushed my buttons
- 3) parenting techniques that worked

The bad news is that even a pediatrician can make dumb parenting mistakes. The good news is that the skills and strategies you need to become a good parent can be taught and learned.

Fortunately I managed to learn a lot over the years as a doctor, mother, and parenting educator. Much of what I learned came from parents themselves - their questions and comments highlighted what parents are going through today. I also read widely in the child development and behavior literature and browsed through just about every parenting book out there.

The most important things I learned was WHAT WORKS! Now I know the parenting skills and strategies that will work - not instantly (growing up human takes a while), not every time (but most of the time) and not with every child (but almost every kid).

Let me share with you what I would do differently if I were starting out as a parent today. This glimpse into ME is a good introduction to my philosophy of parenting.

o I would LEARN ABOUT CHILD BEHAVIOR AND DEVELOPMENT. Parents don't have to commit to memory at what age a child develops what motor skill. But you do need to grasp the relationship of the child's needs, the parents' deeds, and the developmental stage of the child. Plus when you understand that your child will grow out of a stage, perspective is possible!

o I would LOOK WITHIN and learn to recognize what it feels like to be at the end of my rope. I now know there are two direct pathways to the end of one's rope. One is fatigue; the other, anger. Today I use the slogan, "Before you explode or drop, STOP!" to help parents realize that it isn't only children who need a time-out.

o I would TAKE TIME TO THINK. Too often I spoke or acted hastily. I assigned a punishment that was too strict or I let a child off too easily because I engaged my mouth before my brain. Where is it written that a child needs an immediate answer to all questions? Some requests require deliberation or consultation. I would create a repertoire of temporizing comments like, "Hmm, I'll let you know later." or "Let me think about that."

o I would concentrate on ENJOYING PARENTING. I loved my children and cherished every moment I could spend with them. But I often worried about my clumsy ineptitudes and my parenting "errors". I brooded over what I did wrong yesterday and how my children were going to turn out tomorrow. Now I know that children are resilient and I understand the importance of enjoying each day without worrying about yesterday or tomorrow.

o I would SLOW DOWN THE PACE OF FAMILY LIFE. If your schedule is hectic on weekdays, be leisurely on weekends. Take time to smell the roses--and teach your children how to slow down.

o I would perfect the art of THINKING LIKE A CHILD but ACTING LIKE A GROWN-UP. I would have empathy for how small children feel, surrounded by bigger people constantly trying to make them do something or stop doing something. But I would always act like a grown-up imparting to the child I love, warmly yet without hesitation or apology, the greater knowledge and experience I possess.

o I would ACCEPT THE ROLE OF PARENT: being the one in-charge, not my child's buddy, not a misguided clown trying to make my child happy all the time (as if that were possible!) Being in-charge means accepting the role of parent as well as learning non-violent discipline skills.

Do what I would have done differently and Happy Parenting!

Marilyn Heins, M.D.

For more ParentTips, see

<http://parentkidsright.com>

Parent Kids Right

=====
Dr. Marilyn Heins is a Tucson pediatrician, parenting columnist for the Arizona Daily Star, author of the book, ParentTips, as well as a mother, stepmother and grandmother.

She is available for workshops and lectures to groups of parents, teachers, and grandparents. See:

<http://parentkidsright.com/index-lectures.html>

Parent Kids Right

=====
To subscribe to WebParentTips see:

<http://parentkidsright.com/index-newsletter.html>

to subscribe to WebParentTips.

For comments, suggestions or requests for future topics please write <mailto:info@parentkidsright.com>

info@parentkidsright.com

To stop receiving WebParentTips e-mail newsletter, see:

<http://parentkidsright.com/index-newsletter-stop.html>

to

unsubscribe.

--

Marilyn Heins, M.D.

For parenting information, a free monthly newsletter, a personal answer to your parenting questions, or to order my parenting book, "ParentTips" visit my website, <http://www.ParentKidsRight.com>.

You can find Dr. Heins on Twitter where she will post website updates:

<http://twitter.com/drheins> and on her parenting blog at Dr Heins' Post:

<http://www.drheins.blogspot.com/>