

Pointers For Parents

Our Top Ten “Nanny 911” Commandments

by *Deborah Carroll
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(NAPSA)—If there’s one thing we’ve learned as nannies, it’s that parents need to be parents so children can be children. Following that basic rule will help families get along in a happy and healthy way.

Establishing consistency, consequences and helping children establish routines can all go a long way toward nurturing their development.

To help parents get a handle on these and other parental tasks, we’ve come up with what we call “nanny commandments.” Here are some tips:

- **ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.** Good behavior is rewarded. Bad behavior comes with penalties.

- **ESTABLISH A ROUTINE.** For example, at bedtime we have the four “B’s” routine: bath, brush teeth, book, and bed. Parents can even make the routine fun by singing a song and by giving their kids toothbrushes such as Oral-B Stages. These are specifically designed for various stages of your child’s growth and development with features such as handles that fit their smaller hands, softer bristles and cartoon characters they recognize.

- **SAY WHAT YOU MEAN AND MEAN IT.** Think before you speak or you’ll pay the price.

- **PARENTS WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM.** If you can’t be on the same page, your children are not going to know whom to listen to—and they’ll end up not listening to anyone.

- **DON’T MAKE PROMISES YOU CAN’T KEEP.** If you tell the kids you’re going to Disneyland, better get ready to pack your bags.

- **BE CONSISTENT.** No means no. Yes means yes. Don’t bend the rules for a short-term emotional gain.



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- **LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN.** Acknowledge their feelings. Say “I understand” and “I am listening”—take the time to understand what they are going through.

- **RESPECT IS A TWO-WAY STREET.** If you don’t respect your children, they are not going to respect you.

- **POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT WORKS MUCH BETTER THAN NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT.** Praise, pleasure and pride accomplish far more than nagging, negatives and nay-saying.

- **DEFINE YOUR ROLES AS PARENTS.** It is not your job to keep your children attached to you. It’s your job to prepare them for the outside world—and then let them go.

Deborah Carroll and Stella Reid—Nanny Deb and Nanny Stella—are the stars of the hit television show “Nanny 911” on the Fox television network.

Their tips are taken from their book, “Nanny 911: Expert Advice for All Your Parenting Emergencies” (HarperCollins, \$15.95).