

# EXCELLENT HABITS EQUAL SUCCESS

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We all want our kids to be honest, sincere, truthful, trustworthy, loyal, courageous, faithful, and patient...by default. However, this only comes about by developing good habits. Habits are the result of acts that are repeated so many times they become automatic. It is said that if we repeat acts for long enough they wear a track in our brains.

Habits are developed in early childhood. It is imperative, therefore, to train our kids to develop good habits so the habits will become foundational in their later life and lead to success. Negative habits such as procrastinating, having no routines, not putting best efforts in, overeating and not exercising all lead to a lesser quality of life.

There are a number of ways to encourage good habits in our kids. The first is to become great parent role models to show our kids the benefits that good habits bring. Personally, from the time our children were preschoolers, we were both doing university study. They were used to seeing books on the kitchen table, late hours of study along with our assignment deadlines and exams. They could see the effort that went into the study and the excitement we experienced when the results came in. They also saw how good study habits and tenacity helped us both feel more positive about life, and also get better jobs. Not surprisingly, they were also successful in their studies. Now we enjoy their successes.

Routines help kids learn good habits quickly. If there is a process they go through every day, they don't have to think about it. Parents first need to explain the routine, show their children what is expected, and then help them until they get the processes down themselves. It involves getting up promptly when the alarm goes off, getting dressed without complaint, making the bed, sitting at the table to eat breakfast, and hugging Mom or Dad goodbye. It means getting onto homework promptly, helping get the dinner ready, sitting at the table and contributing to family conversation. It means helping clear the table, thanking Mom or Dad for the meal, and going to bed when asked. It includes doing tasks without being asked. When kids do not follow instructions willingly they can let their attitude affect their later life.

Although it is never fun going through difficult patches in our lives, our kids can learn by watching how we deal with failures and frustrations. We should not shield our kids from difficulties. If they don't develop a habitual process on how to best deal with problems appropriately and in a timely manner in the early years, they can easily default into blaming others, not taking responsibility, and rarely experiencing self-improvement.

We have habitual thought patterns. When these are positive we are much more likely to see the half-full glass instead of the half empty one. When the coach tells Ronald that his game needs more work, Ronald can see this as an opportunity to improve his running and ball handling, or he can see it as a sign of failure, remembering that his Dad had once told him he was never any good at sports either. I remember being devastated when I got a grade of 3 out of 10 for one of my early university assignments. My husband told me to go and ask the lecturer what I had done wrong. It seemed to impress the Professor that I was willing to learn from my mistake and he allowed me to re-write it, giving me a 7 out of 10 instead.

Developing good habits at an early age saves us time. Think of all the wasted hours that go by because of indecision, poor choices and lack of direction that leads to feeling frustrated with our life. Good habits make us conscientious, safe, healthy, happy, successful individuals, who positively influence our society. Success or failure in life depends on the habits we choose, and the habits we teach our children.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.