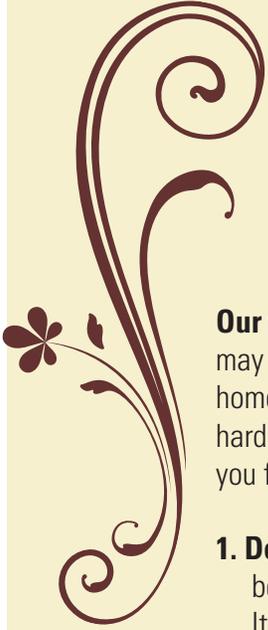


# 10 Ways to Encourage Your Kids

Marilyn Boyer



**Our time with our kids is so short.** Psalm 90:12 says, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Purpose to realize that your days with your kids living in your home are numbered. They grow up so fast. Remind yourself of that when they day seems long and hard. Everyone needs encouragement. Be your kids’ biggest cheerleader! Here are some tips to help you focus.

1. **Don’t complain.** Proverbs tells us “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.” You can actually be a healing balm to your children by maintaining a merry heart. Griping brings discouragement. It surely does to everyone—the griper and those listening. Your cheerfulness will make your kids want to be around you and later listen to what you have to say.
2. **Acknowledge their attempts to do well.** Yes, I mean their attempts. Maybe they wanted to help you clean up but spilled the lemonade on the floor while carrying it to the kitchen. Oops. It’s just a mistake. Acknowledge their attempt to be helpful. When they find something difficult—maybe long division—and finally get a problem correct, praise them. It’s been a long, hard road, but hey, here is a small success! Encourage them.
3. **Ask their opinions.** We as parents know we don’t have all the answers. Our kids know it too. Ask them for their input in different situations. Place value on their thoughts and insights into a matter.
4. **Compliment their achievements,** especially their character that shines forth in what they do—the diligence in practicing the piano, the heartfelt emotion that is communicated in their solo, the careful precision with which they drew you a picture, the compassion and kindness in dealing with their younger siblings, etc. Positive words go a long way!
5. **Give them the benefit of the doubt** until proven otherwise. “Mommy, Josh hit me as hard as he could on purpose, for no reason at all!” Sure, it’s easy to go correct Josh for his misbehavior. Get the whole story first. It may be that the reporting child was the instigator in the matter and both of them need correction or it could be that he/she isn’t reporting correctly what actually happened. If you can’t straighten out the stories, I’d always just let it go rather than correct unwisely and believe me, the offending party will offend again before too long!
6. **Don’t jump to conclusions,** which is easier said than done. So many are the frustrations of teaching kids to do right, that when you see a problem, it’s easy to assume they did something on purpose when instead it may be pure childishness, or something you’ve failed to teach them.

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- 7. Never correct in anger.** Yes, kids need parents to correct them. That's part of our job description: guiding them in making wise choices; and part of that is failing and learning from their failures. Go away to your room and get control of your anger and let them know that's what you're doing—talking with God to get your life right; then when you are done, correct for their good, not because they irritated you.
- 8. Ask forgiveness when you blow it**—and you will! Watching you work through your character faults is a powerful lesson for them even more than your instructions. When they see how you deal with personal failures, it will guide them to deal correctly (or incorrectly) with their own struggles.
- 9. Verbalize that you love them.** We expect them to just know that we love them—after all look at what we sacrifice for them. You know, honestly, kids can't appreciate what you do for them until they are older and begin to take on adult responsibility themselves, especially when they start their own families.
- 10. Make time for what is important to them,** whether it be time to listen, or time to go watch the ants with them, or read to them something you don't find fascinating, or helping them to gather supplies for a special project they are attempting, or just playing dollhouse or a board game with them.

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