



Stop, Wait, Go

FACTSHEET

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RAISING EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY CHILDREN

The key to emotionally healthy children is in knowing how to maintain a family environment that meets the child's five critical needs.

There are five essential elements to raising emotionally healthy children. The key is that children feel:

- Respected
- Important
- Accepted
- Included
- Secure

How do we ensure that these elements are present in our home?

A child feels respected when they are treated in a respectful manner. Talking about this at a recent workshop for parents, one mum said, "I have just realized that I would never talk to people at work in the same way that I ask my children to do something."

Children treat others with respect when they are treated that way themselves. When they make a mistake correction occurs through teaching, not punishing. Say "I don't like the way you are acting" and walk away. When the behaviour is respectful, encourage it, feed it, reward it with your positive attention. Behaviour that is given praise and encouragement is likely to be repeated.

Listen to your child's opinions

Include them in discussions about family issues, decisions, history, daily events. Make them feel like they belong in your family, both near and far, their school and in our community. All these activities make them feel like they are valued, are important and that they are capable of making a contribution to the family group. That doesn't mean that you always have to do what they have suggested. Parents are older, more experienced and wiser than their children, so they maintain the right of veto when making decisions are needed. But it is a valuable learning experience to be asked to take part in conversations about decisions rather than being told as an afterthought.

Security comes when we are listened to, get our needs met, we are guided, helped, encouraged and belong to our family group and our community. This high quality support enhances our emotional health, builds a strong self esteem, aids resiliency and it lasts lifetime.

You may like to read more, see [How to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children: Meeting the Five Critical Needs of Children ... And Parents too!](http://www.emotionallyhealthychildren.org) Gerald Newmark. U.S.A. www.emotionallyhealthychildren.org or www.stopwaitgo.com.au for more information.

