



MONTHLY PARENTING TIP FROM THE ACFC

March 2010



The Beauty of Problems

Effective problem-handling skills are key to success in our daily lives and showing our children how to accept and work through problems is a trait that will benefit them for a lifetime. Problems present a wonderful teaching opportunity, so when a problem does occur, the active parent will take advantage of the opportunity to develop this essential skill. All families have problems. The difference between a successful and an unsuccessful family is how they handle their problems. Rescuing our children from their problems sends the message that we don't think they can make good decisions on their own. We rob them of the opportunity to think of alternatives to handling the problem and the courage to try and fail until they find the right solution. Providing support and being an active listener will encourage your child to talk openly with you about their problems, without fear of criticism or embarrassment. Of course, when health or safety are involved, parents do need to provide discipline.

The Problem-Handling Model below gives some guidelines for determining "who owns the problem" and what type of action should be taken. So the next time your child misbehaves or comes to you with a problem, take a moment to apply the Problem-Handling Model and use this as an opportunity to teach this invaluable skill to him/her.

The Problem-Handling Model

To determine who owns the problem, ask yourself:

- Who is the problem behavior directly affecting, the parent or the child?
- Does the problem involve health, safety or family rules or values?
- Is the problem within reasonable limits for your child's age and level of maturity?

Once you've determined who owns the problem you can apply discipline or support:

- If the parent owns the problem (your child repeatedly gets up late in the morning)
: Provide discipline (move his bedtime up an hour earlier until he can get himself up in the morning)
- If the child owns the problem (your child complains that a classmate picks on her)
: Provide support (offer suggestions on what they could do to stop this, but let them work through a solution unless they are being physically harmed)
- If shared (your child is not keeping up with their schoolwork)
: Provide discipline and support (both the parent and the child have ownership in this problem. Try establishing an agreed upon schedule for getting homework done.)

Learn more about problem handling and other ways to develop courage, responsibility and character in your children by joining an Active Parenting Online Group. This six-week, video-based interactive class is being offered free to CWA represented employees in DE, MD, PA, NJ, VA, WV, Washington, DC, or can be purchased at a discounted rate for non-CWA represented employees.

Visit ACFCcares.com for more information and to register for the next available group.