



# MONTHLY PARENTING TIP

May, 2009



## Building on Strengths—The BANK Method of Encouragement

One of the struggles with parenting is knowing how and when to let your children know they have done something wrong, or something that you are unhappy with, without hurting their feelings or showing disappointment. After all, we all know that to be successful we must take risks, fail, and try again. On the other hand, we want them to use mistakes as an opportunity to learn and not let them sidestep the consequences of their actions. "Building on Strengths" vs. "Focusing on Mistakes," is an important part of creating a success cycle in your children. Let's see how the "BANK" Method of Encouragement can be used to help your child build their personal assets and grow into a successful human being.

**B** for Baby Steps - The key to building on strengths is to break the learning down into baby steps. Remember, you didn't learn to walk all at once. Whether you are helping your child learn to complete his homework, or teaching them to be honest, you can systematically build on strengths to help your child develop skills, values and character.

**A** for Acknowledge what your child does well - Once you have identified a goal for your child, get an idea where they are on the path to reaching their goal. Acknowledge what they can already do well in order to build the confidence and motivation to the next step. It's important to "catch 'em doing good," and to encourage their successes.

**N** for Nudge the child to take the next step - Learning requires many steps and gradual improvement. There are times when fear of failure may paralyze our children, making it difficult to take the next step, and there are times when frustration may undermine their courage to persevere. This is when an encouraging nudge from a parent can give the child the courage to take the next baby step.

**K** for Keep encouraging improvement and effort - Since a key to encouragement is to break the process into baby steps, it's important to offer encouragement along the entire route. Any improvement, no matter how small, is a step in the right direction and should be noticed and acknowledged. If the child falls back a step, you can be there to encourage them to keep at it and not give up.

So whether it's learning to ride a bike, completing nightly homework, cleaning their rooms or being honest, using the BANK method of encouragement is a step-by-step way to build on the strengths your children need to succeed.



Learn more about the BANK Method of Encouragement and other "Active" parenting skills 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 [www.ACFCcares.com](http://www.ACFCcares.com) for more information and to register for the next available class.