



Advisory Council on Family Care

Monthly Parenting Tip from the ACFC

July 2021



FREE ONLINE COURSES THAT IMPROVE YOUR FAMILY LIFE

In these video-based, interactive classes—available 24/7—you'll learn a consistent, encouraging style of parenting that will benefit you and your children for a lifetime. As a self-study course, you have the option of when to participate, based on your own schedule and at your convenience. Gain additional insight from your online group leaders as they provide support and feedback.

Four available classes:

- **Active Parenting: First Five Years**—for parents of children from birth to age 5
- **Active Parenting 4th ED**—for parents of children ages 5 to 12
- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce**—for divorced and divorcing parents
- **Active Parenting of Teens**—for parents of preteens and teens

Continue your experience as an “active” parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

Visit [ACFCcares.com](https://www.acfccares.com) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.

Navigating the Disability Maze*

Almost every family faces the struggle of dealing with a disability or illness at some time. Whether it is a child or parent, it's important to face the problem directly and use your best educational efforts to learn all you can. Knowledge is a powerful ally in helping your children deal with the challenges of their own disability or illness, or that of a family member. It is important for parents to understand their legal rights and to find the support and help they need to guide their family successfully through this difficult time.

1. **Know your disability or illness.** Medical and educational specialists are your first line of communication. Become knowledgeable about the challenges, treatments and coping strategies of the particular disability or illness with which you are dealing. Find a support group where you can interact with other families who are facing the same challenges, or who have walked this same path. Support groups are a way to learn what has worked and not worked for these other families and can help you avoid the same trials and errors.
2. **Know your rights.** Great strides have been made in ensuring the rights of Americans facing a disability. Knowing these rights is paramount to ensuring that you or your children are not discriminated against because of a disability and that they receive the education to which they are entitled. Find the information you need at [idea.ed.gov](https://www.idea.ed.gov) and [napcse.org](https://www.napcse.org).
3. **Know your child's teachers and other professionals.** The positive relationship you build with your child's teachers, doctors and therapists is an important part of their success. You must rely on their expertise but you also know your child best. There may be times you will have to aggressively express your opinion of what you think is best for your child. It's important to be your child's cheerleader and advocate.
4. **Help your child build courage.** Overprotecting or overindulging a child with a disability can rob them of the opportunity to develop and build their strengths. It's important to allow them to take risks to develop the courage to master new skills and experience successes. Help your child face their problems courageously as obstacles to overcome, not as barriers. Avoid doing on a regular basis what the child can do for themselves. Overprotection robs children of the courage and self-esteem that comes from struggling and succeeding. And, of course, show acceptance and love. Letting them know that you are glad they are your son and daughter and that you love them unconditionally shows them your acceptance of who they are and that they are a wonderful part of your life. This can be expressed through words and actions, such as a kiss, a hug or play time together.

We all know the story of Helen Keller and the tremendous accomplishments she made in her life, despite her disabilities. Her story is an example of how when a disability or illness strikes a family, it is a challenge that can make a family stronger when they face it head-on and find the strengths in each other.

*Excerpt from “*Getting Through to Your Kids*”, by Michael Popkin, Ph.D.
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Be sure to click on the Kid's Essentials tab on the [ACFC website](https://www.acfc.org) for resource provided by Bright Horizons for parents with children who need extra help. Get information via the online resources, webinar series, and expert advising to help you understand and respond to your child's unique, individual needs.

Helpful videos and online classes are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. To access more invaluable parenting resources, just go to the [ACFC website](https://www.acfc.org) and click on the Active Parenting tab on the left-hand side of the home page.