

Getting in the Way: Parents Acting as Filters

In Active Parenting, we believe that it is the responsibility of parents to “get in the way.” Parents can act as “filters,” screening out their children’s negative influences. Children today are exposed to media condoning behavior that violates many of the values and qualities parents try to instill in their children. *So how can parents become “filters” and positive influences in their children’s lives?*

- Hold a family meeting to discuss the values that are important in your family and what types of behavior are acceptable and what’s not acceptable. It’s important for your children to know what is expected of them so they can understand the consequences of violating family guidelines.
- Set logical consequences for when your child violates a rule or limit that you have established. Be sure the consequence is logically connected to the misbehavior. For example, if a child violates the limits set as to how much time can be spent on the computer each day, a logical consequence would be to reduce the amount of allowable time for the next day.
- Allow children to help set the consequences for violating a family guideline. When children have a say and are clear what the consequences are, you create an opportunity to discipline or “teach” them responsibility for their actions. These consequences can also be discussed during a family meeting.
- Talk with the parents of your children’s friends and encourage them to be vigilant also. Kids will often seek out homes where the restrictions are lax, so support each other.
- Try not to be judgmental of your children’s friends, but let your child know that if they and another child get into trouble together, then they must not be having a good influence on each other. A logical consequence would be to separate them for a time, until they can demonstrate better judgment.
- View, play or listen to what your child is doing from time to time to stay on top of what messages are being communicated. Don’t be afraid to limit things that are too sexual, violent, or run counter to your values. Discuss your reasons with your child and listen actively to theirs.
- Role play with your children to help them feel confident in their response when peer pressure encourages them to take part in activities that violate family values. Not knowing how to defend their position can put them in an uncomfortable and dangerous situation.

Most importantly, be open to talking about sensitive issues with your children. This can be difficult for a lot of parents, but it’s essential that children feel comfortable discussing their experiences and feelings about topics such as sex, violence and drugs. Do research so you can answer their questions informatively and with the knowledge they will need to make wise decisions when they are confronted with these issues.

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the **ACFC website**, click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.

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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.

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