



Monthly Parenting Tip from the ACFC

JANUARY 2026



FREE LIFE-CHANGING ONLINE PARENTING COURSES

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. With this 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.

Choose from four available courses:

- **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
- **Active Parenting of Teens:** For parents of preteens and teens
- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce:** For divorced and divorcing parents

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 for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.

As we step into 2026, many of you are thinking about resolutions—eat healthier, exercise more, spend less time on screens. But what if the key to a happier, more meaningful year isn't about what you do for yourself, but what you do for others?

A six-year [research study out of Cornell University](#) uncovered a surprisingly simple route to happiness: **community contribution**. The study found that people who actively contribute to their communities—through volunteering, mentoring, or supporting others—report higher levels of life satisfaction and purpose.

New Year, New Intentions: Community-Focused Resolutions

The start of a new year is the perfect time to set intentions that go beyond personal goals. Instead of focusing solely on self-improvement, consider resolutions that strengthen your community:

- **Join a parenting class** to share or gain knowledge and support other families.
- **Volunteer as a family**—choose a cause that matters to you and involve your kids. To find family volunteer opportunities, check out sites like [Idealist](#) (formerly known as VolunteerMatch) and [Doing Good Together](#).
- **Create a “Circle of Encouragement”** at home to foster kindness and empathy.

The Golden Spiral of Success: Belonging, Learning, and Contributing

The Cornell findings on contribution and happiness align perfectly with a key tenet taught in our Active Parenting programs: the **Golden Spiral of Success**. This powerful model states that the foundation of high core self-esteem and success is built on three pillars: **Belonging, Learning, and Contributing**.

- **Belonging** comes first—the secure feeling of being loved and valued.
- **Learning** follows—acquiring the skills and knowledge to navigate the world.
- **Contributing** is the ultimate step—using those skills to make a difference in your family, school, or community.

When you contribute, you reinforce your sense of belonging and the value of what you've learned, sending your self-esteem spiraling upward toward success.

The Happiness Ripple

When parents feel supported, families thrive. When families thrive, communities grow stronger. And when communities grow stronger, everyone benefits—including you. That's the happiness ripple Cornell researchers observed: contribution leads to connection, and connection leads to purpose.

So, as you write your resolutions for 2026, ask yourself: *How will I contribute this year?*

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.