

SUCCESS DEPENDS ON GOOD HABITS

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Habits are the result of acts that are repeated so many times they become automatic. It is said that that if we repeat acts for long enough they wear a track in our brains. That is a pretty scary thought! Habits are developed in early childhood. It is really important therefore to train our kids to develop good habits that will become foundational for their later life and help create success.

There are a number of ways to encourage good habits in our kids. The first is to demonstrate good habits ourselves and show our children the benefits that good habits bring.

From the time our own kids were preschoolers, we were both doing university study. We all lived around books on the kitchen table and were affected by assignment deadlines. Our kids could see the effort that went into the study, and the excitement we experienced when the results came in. They also saw how good study habits and tenacity helped us get better jobs. Not surprisingly, they were also successful in their studies. Now we enjoy their successes.

Although it is never fun going through difficult patches in our lives, our kids can learn by watching how we deal with failures and frustrations. We should not shield our kids from difficulties. If they don't learn how to best deal with problems from the time they are small they can easily default into blaming others, not taking responsibility, and rarely experiencing self-improvement.

Routines help kids learn good habits quickly. If there is a process they go through every day, they don't have to think about it. First the parent has to explain the routine, show them what is expected, and then help them until they get the processes down themselves. It involves getting up promptly when the alarm goes off, getting dressed without complaint, making the bed, sitting at the table to eat breakfast, and hugging Mom or Dad goodbye. It means getting onto homework promptly, helping get the dinner ready, sitting at the table and contributing to family conversation. It means helping clear the table, thanking Mom or Dad for the meal, and going to bed when asked. It means doing tasks without being asked. When kids do not follow instructions willingly, they can let their attitude affect their later life.

We all want our kids to be honest, sincere, truthful, trustworthy, courageous, faithful, and patient - by default. They say it takes an adult 21 days of repeated positive behavior to change negative habits. We have habitual thought patterns. When these are positive we are much more likely to see the half full glass instead of the half empty one. When the coach tells Ronald that his game needs more work, Ronald can see this as an opportunity to improve his running and ball handling, or he can see it as a sign of failure, remembering that his Dad had once told him he was never any good at

sports either. I remember being devastated when I got a grade of 3 out of 10 for one of my early university assignments. My husband told me to go and ask the lecturer what I had done wrong. It seemed to impress the Professor that I was willing to learn from my mistake and he allowed me to re-write it, giving me a 7 instead.

Good habits make us conscientious, safe, healthy, happy individuals, and also make us good friends to have. Success or failure depend on the habits we choose, and the habits we teach our children.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.