



5 Ways to Raise Joyful Kids

Raising joyous children is easier than you might think. An "all is right with the world" kind of happiness is deeper and more penetrating than a new toy or a bag of gummy worms. Genuine joy nurtures your children's spirits now and gives them the ability to access that joy for the rest of their lives.

The following 5 tips can help you foster joy in your children's lives:

1. Discover what makes your own spirit sing: Take time to engage in a long walk at the end of the day, a hot soak in the tub, a good novel, knitting by candlelight, laughing with a pal on the telephone - whatever it might be for you. By engaging in self-care, you show your child how everyday joy is spun. You are the mirror for him or her and reflect an adult who knows how to create happiness no matter what is going on in your world. When Mama or Papa is happy everyone's happy.

2. Praise the process not the product: If kids find their joy solely through their parent's approval, they set themselves up for a lifetime of disappointment. Make sure to be authentic with your kids and encourage them to take risks and try new things rather than only praising the outcome of a class, project, race, or game. Love them for who they are, not what they achieve and then watch their authentic joy unfold.

3. Help your children experience the delight in giving:

Kids long for connection with others more than another new toy or trip, as hard as that might be to believe. Reach out with kindness as a family and watch the joy bubble back into your lives. What one kind deed might you do today with your child? Bake an extra loaf of banana bread for an elderly neighbor, write a thank you note to the bus driver for always smiling in the mornings, invite the child who is new in town over for a play date?

4. Make time to laugh together:

The average family spends far too little time engaged in humor and way too much time engaged in complaining. Leave a book of tasteful jokes lying around the house or tuck a funny cartoon in your child's lunch box. Create a Funny Family Movie Night and watch classic family comedies. Surprise your child and turn an ordinary day into a celebration.

Who knows, you might begin a tradition.

5. A healthy body can better express joy:

Make sure your child gets enough sleep, eats healthy foods without a lot of sugar and has plenty of opportunities for quiet time, as well as wholesome exercise in their day. Doing so will help regulate moods so joy is a fluid ongoing experience whirling around a balanced mind, body and spirit.