

# PRINCE Leadership MONTHLY



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## Parenting is Hard

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I was in my 30's before Mandy and I met, married, and had children. I had worked with students of all ages as a teacher, coach, and administrator. During that time, I had the opportunity to interact with many different parents, and I developed many opinions about parenting. I knew the "right" way to parent - what to do and what not to do. I had all the answers. Then when we had children, I discovered something. Not only did I not have all the answers, I was not even sure what the questions were. I discovered a great truth – parenting is hard. Parenting does not have a perfect "how to" manual. While there are many books and websites that will tell you how to be a good parent, none of them have all the answers. Parenting is an ongoing journey in which you must constantly make decisions that affect not only your life, but the lives of your children. You will make mistakes and no one gets everything right all the time. Our goal is to minimize our mistakes and develop children that are ready for the place God has for them in his ministry.

Most of the tough times in parenting are brought on by decisions. As you make decisions regarding your children, consider the following:

### *Help – but not too much*

Our children will always need our help. Sometimes our help can actually hinder the development of children long term.



Do you remember the first time you allowed your child to feed themselves? It was probably messy, and most of the food went somewhere other than their mouth. For most of us, the second time was better but not by much. It was only after many patient attempts that they learned to feed themselves. We had to be patient knowing they would master it but wanting so much to help them just a little bit.

We must help some, but we must also allow our children to learn to do things for themselves. It is easy to see that we must let them learn to feed themselves, clothe themselves, tie their shoes, etc., but the same applies to classroom learning too. We must let them become responsible for knowing what they have for homework, bringing home all the books they need, and turning in assignments. As they grow older, we must let them take on the responsibility of communicating with teachers, gathering all the materials for a project, and studying the right way for assessments. We may believe that if they do not study our way their grades may be lower. However, learning these lessons in middle and high school the hard way will be beneficial in college and beyond.

### *Doing the hard stuff – sometimes do nothing*

Sometimes the hardest thing for us to do as a parent is nothing. We often see a child about to make a mistake and we want to rush in and stop them. If there is physical danger, we should. Otherwise, it may be best in the long run for them to learn by experiencing the consequences. A low grade because they forgot their homework or did not study for a quiz may teach an invaluable lesson for the future.

### *Make them do the hard stuff – take responsibility*

Every child experiences setbacks at certain times. The usual response to a poor grade is to cast blame on others. As parents, we want to help them through this and we often minimize the situation by saying something like, "You will do better next time." Work with your child to understand that the responsibility ultimately lies with them. Accepting responsibility for their actions allows the student to see that they have control of the situation and that they ultimately can improve.

### *Never stop parenting*

No matter the age, children need their parents. Pray for them. Provide them with age-appropriate support. Sometimes just listen and do nothing. Teach them to take responsibility for their actions.

Parenting is hard. God gave you the children you have for a specific reason. I encourage you to continually rely on Him throughout your parenting journey.