



12 messages for raising a healthy child

1. **The first years last forever.**
Wiring a brain is like wiring a house—it works better if you start from the very beginning. Talk, laugh, sing, touch, hold and comfort from the first moment of life, and never stop.
2. **Love & affection cannot spoil a baby.**
Crying means something. Use the baby's sounds, movements & expressions as cues to what she wants. Be warm, loving & hold your child to see what he or she needs – whether it is discomfort, pain, loneliness or over-stimulation.
3. **Talk, read, & sing to your child.**
You are your child's first teacher. What you do in the first years of life matter.
4. **Maintain a regular schedule.**
Children find comfort in the same routine every day.
5. **Play is the work of the young child.**
Encourage safe exploration & play. Don't lead - just encourage and participate.
6. **Pay attention.**
Be aware of how, where & with whom your child spends time. Choose TV, videos & internet sites carefully. Communicate with your child's caregivers.
7. **Take care of yourself.**
You cannot take care of your child, if your own basic needs are not also being met.
8. **Discipline to teach - not to punish.**
Most misbehavior in the early years is a misunderstanding of expectations. Use discipline as an opportunity to teach appropriate behavior. Never hit, spank, slap or shake a child
9. **Choose childcare carefully & stay involved.**
Call us. We can help.
10. **Children develop at different rates.**
Celebrate each child. Don't worry if your best friend's son walks at 10 months or if the little girl next door can talk a blue streak while your child is still using one and two word phrases.
11. **Give your child a childhood.**
Children need unstructured time. More is not better. Don't over schedule a child with activities. Choose toys that are more unstructured so your child can use his or her imagination when deciding how to play with them.
12. **Your child needs to know she matters.**
Show your child she is loved for who she is. Praise her accomplishments, empathize with her pain, and celebrate her happiness.

