



Skills for bringing out the best in your children

Training children in good habits

To teach children to:

- follow rules and instructions
- use self-control
- handle their feelings
- consider other people's feelings
- look for solutions, develop strategies for dealing with problems

Set up opportunities to practice the above skills by playing sport and other games. (This also provides opportunities for positive time with your children which contributes to a positive relationship with them, improves their motivation to please and increases their self-esteem.)

1. Before the game starts ask your child what the rules are/ what they must do *in detail*.
2. Ask them what feelings they might have if they win or if they lose.
3. What might they feel like doing when they win/lose? What behaviour is required if they win or if they lose?
4. Empathise that they might prefer to skip this conversation and get on with the game.
5. During the game descriptively praise the behaviour you want to encourage – choose from: self-control, taking turns, stopping when a physical game gets too rough, not hurting physically or verbally, not complaining or storming off, kindness, consideration, tolerance especially re younger siblings, helpfulness, following instructions/rules and anything else that occurs to you.
6. Conspicuously model the desired behaviour (ie talk about what you're doing) eg *"Oh no I've picked up a bad card but I'm not going to make a fuss and I'm going to carry on playing the game. Maybe I'll get good cards next time."* Or *"Oops that*



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wasn't a good shot. I'm going to practice my goal shooting so I'll get better at it."

7. Acknowledge that it's hard when the game isn't going your child's way or he's not playing skilfully. (eg can't get the ball in the basketball hoop). *"It can be hard to keep going when it doesn't come easily at first. It takes self discipline."* Acknowledge that the child wants to win, that it feels important to win in order to feel good about himself.