

# 6 things your boss can teach you about being a great parent

Forget the parenting books.

When you want to improve your skills as a caregiver, look no further than that corner office. Because in a lot of ways, raising kids is a lot like being an effective manager.

Here are a few things your boss can teach you about being a great parent - from some great leaders right here in the Quad Cities.

## Listen.

"It's often our instinct to get to a resolution for a project or problem as quickly as possible," says Sharon Snawerdt, corporate communications supervisor at Modern Woodmen of America. "But if we don't listen thoroughly enough to truly get the full story, we may not be solving anything."

M. Linda Wastyn, Ph.D., president of Wastyn & Associates, agrees. "Give your undivided attention and listen both to what they say and what they aren't saying."



As caregivers, we want to have the answers for our kids. But sometimes we have to get to the heart of the matter before we try to "solve" anything.

## Respect.

"So often, I hear parents bark orders at their kids, with no consideration for asking them politely," explains Erin Hemm, communications manager. "I completely understand that some kids need very direct guidance, but what would happen if we ask nicely first? If we want kids to pick up the habit, we have to set the example."

Just like you expect to be treated with respect by your boss, your kids want a little respect, too. And just like you want them to grow up to be respectful, you can model that behavior now.

## Provide clear expectations.

"Employees have to know what is expected," says Mark Mathews, executive director of the Child Abuse Council. "It's the same with my kids. They must know the expectations and the consequences." Discipline is tough. But just like a great boss, a parent can make expectations clear. Which means that when discipline is necessary, it isn't a surprise. (And remember, setting boundaries can be one way to show your kids you love them.)

**now what? Keep Learning.**

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## **Empower.**

"Both great leaders and parents need to give their followers/children the tools and support they need to success and then get out of the way," says Linda. "The best leaders/parents stay on the sidelines." Mark agrees. "Once I know my team is doing it right, they'll have my full trust."

Give your kids the support and tools they need, but also give them the freedom to succeed. It isn't always easy to let go - to let your kids succeed (or fail) on their own. But it's an important part of growing up.

## **Trust.**

"Be honest, open, transparent and real," says Marika V. Jones, president of Trinity Health Foundation. "Always be true to your word and follow through on what you say you are going to do."

As a manager, being honest is an important part of building a strong team. And as a parent, it's even more important to be open with your kids. It will make them feel secure - and it will set a living example for them as they grow up.

And while you must be honest as a parent, it's just as important for your kids to earn your trust, too. "Just like in the workplace, when my son lies, he has to earn my trust back," explains Mark.

## **Recognize.**

"At work we often recognize employees in team meetings and in front of others," says Erin. "It's a great way to enhance engagement and help co-workers feel valued. Let's try this with our kids! They love to feel valued and usually want to help even more."

Celebrating the great things your kids do doesn't only have to happen one-on-one. (Although it will happen that way, too.) Try encouraging your kids to others - their siblings, friends and family members. Showing how proud you are can really make your kids shine.

now  
what?

**KEEP LEARNING.**

Being a great caregiver means constant improvement. But you don't only have to rely on the wisdom of other parents.

Try looking to the workplace to see what great managers do everyday. Chances are, some of those skills could also help you become an even better parent at home.

**now what? Keep Learning.**

