

11. Good Parents harm their children when they. . . . Don't get involved in their education and school

The education of children should be a team effort between the parents of the child and the teachers and school of that child.

If you have a question or concern with anything that has to do with your child's teacher, take the appropriate steps to resolve it for the benefit of your child's future and to give the teacher the benefit of the doubt.

- Talk to him or her privately – and document
- If no satisfactory resolution is reached, speak with the immediate supervisor – principal – and document
- If there is still no satisfactory resolution, ask to speak with the chairman of the school board.
- The next step may be the school board.
- In a church school, maybe the next step is to speak with the pastor of your church to see if he/she can mediate.

12. Good Parents harm their children when they. . . . Don't protect them from others – including family members

- Teach and warn about the dangers in today's society
- Know where they are and who they are with
- Teach them that there should be no secrets – much of sexual abuse is perpetuated because children are told to keep it secret.

One Last Thought. . . .

Parents, you are the ones to decide whether the minds of your children shall be filled with ennobling thoughts or with vicious sentiments. You cannot keep their active minds unoccupied; neither can you frown away evil. Only by the inculcation of right principles can you exclude wrong thoughts. Unless parents plant the seeds of truth in the hearts of their children, the enemy will sow tares. Good, sound instruction is the only preventive of the evil communications that corrupt good manners. Truth will protect the soul from the endless temptations that must be encountered.
{Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 410}



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Caring for Our Families



What Good Parents Do to Harm Their Children¹

¹Some of this material was taken from *The 7 Worst Things Parents do*, by John and Linda Friel

And now a word to you parents. Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice. Ephesians 6:4 TLB

1. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Leave their children's spiritual and emotional upbringing to others.

Whether it is the church, the daycare, baby-sitters or nannies, the school, television, their friend or their friend's parents, the internet. We are given the responsibility to raise our children, not leave the raising up to somebody or something else.

2. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Ignore their own spiritual or emotional life

In the same way, if we ignore our spiritual or emotional life and health, we will pay the price and our children will pay the price later – a very heavy, expensive price.

We're not just talking about practicing your religion but rather strengthening your spiritual life. We all need to make sure we are spiritually healthy for our own benefit, and, as a result, the benefit of our children.

Parents who take time for prayer or meditation create households where others know that this is being done. In these homes, spirituality is being demonstrated, encouraged, and supported. John and Linda Friel, the 7 Worst Things Parents Do.

Ellen White makes an interesting comment about Enoch which should serve as an example to all of us:

His faith waxed stronger, his love became more ardent, with the lapse of centuries. **To him prayer was as the breath of the soul.** He lived in the atmosphere of heaven. {GW 52}

And later she adds:

Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Well-spring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the

exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor. {GW 254-255}

3. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Baby their child

The reality is that children are happier and healthier when they have limits and structure. John and Linda Friel list a number of suggestions of things you can do to help your children grow up without babying them: (p.30-)

- Let them tie their own shoes.
- They won't break if they have to wait a few minutes.
- Let her tears do the healing – avoid giving her advice. Just listen, listen, and listen some more.
- Don't bail him out.

Then they conclude:

“All parents would like to completely smooth the ways for their children. It's only natural. Competent parents resist those urges because they know that over time, smoothing out all of life's rough edges will cripple their children and keep them from ever growing up. That's essentially the choice.” (p.32)

4. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Ignore or neglect their marriage

As damaging as it is to neglect your children, so it is to give them so much attention that you neglect your relationship with your spouse. We suggest you spend good, quality and quantity time to nurture and enrich the relationship with your spouse. Here's a simple formula: At least: Half an hour each day, one evening each week, one day each month, and one weekend each quarter – just for the two of you. These should not include the children, so some of them will require some appropriate planning and preparation.

5. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Get their child involved in too many activities and too soon

We have observed that children in general would prefer to spend some good quality time with their parents, and with their family, rather than into so many other activities. It seems like much of the time it is parents who sometimes push their children into a lot of these activities thinking that they will be good for them.

A good, quiet evening at home may be just what you and your children want and need. You may want to sit down and discuss with them the possibility of slowing down and cutting back on some of those activities. You may even take the steps necessary to cut back – for their sake.

6. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . are their child's friend

In his book, *A Father's Book of Wisdom*, author H. Jackson Brown writes, “Fathers are pals nowadays because they don't have the guts to be fathers.” (p.95). Children need parents to help them grow healthy, not friends who may not be able to confront them, challenge them, or oppose them when that's needed. Children need for you to be their parent, not their friend.

7. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Don't provide their child with a solid structure

Every home needs to have rules by which everyone who lives there regulate their lives.

8. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Expect their child to fulfill their dreams.

Some parents have very high aspirations of their children – sometimes because they didn't get to achieve those dreams for themselves. There's nothing wrong with having aspirations for their children. What is harmful is to not allow your children to dream their own dreams, to live their own life.

9. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Don't say “no.”

What we have to learn is that children need to feel frustration or anger sometimes so they can learn to handle those feelings in appropriate ways as they grow up.

10. Good Parents harm their children when they . . . Don't protect them from the media

Good parents protect their children from the influence and dangers of the media – TV, movies, the internet.

