

# PARENTING TOOLKIT

[Stoicare.com](http://Stoicare.com)





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# Focus on what you can control

- Parenting can be frustrating! We all want our children to behave in certain ways, and sometimes our kids just don't cooperate. When this happens, focus on what you CAN control in the situation: your own behavior.
- Remember, we don't actually control our kids—but we do have responsibility and influence over them. Think about what you can do to influence your child and the situation.
  - Use age-appropriate incentives.
  - Use positive and negative reinforcement (removing a toy or privilege, or adding extra privileges).
  - Talk with your child about his or her behavior and why you are doing what you are doing.
  - Be consistent.
- Be sympathetic toward your child.
  - Try to look at the situation from your child's perspective so you can understand what they're thinking.
  - Growing up is hard! Try to be supportive rather than critical.
- Don't worry about what other parents think. Sometimes the hardest part of being a parent is facing the judgment of other parents, or family members, or the person standing behind you in the grocery checkout line. Don't worry about them! You can't control them, and it's impossible to make everyone happy. Just focus on what matters to you and your child.

# Be a good role model

- Your child is watching you all the time, whether you know it or not. Children learn from their parents how to respond to the world and how to treat other people. What are you showing your child through your actions? Remember the old saying: children will do as you do, not do as you say.
- How do you want your child to remember you 30 years from now? Think about what kind of legacy you are leaving your child. When your child looks back on their childhood, how will they remember you? As sympathetic and understanding, or as reactive and angry?
- Look for your own role models. If you need inspiration, read Book 1 of Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*.
- Stoics strive to be excellent people: wise, fair, benevolent, courageous, and self-controlled.
  - Think about how you can demonstrate these virtues in your life. Over time, your child will notice a pattern to your actions.
  - Look for "teachable moments" when you can help your child apply these virtues in their own life.
- Be ready to admit when you mess up—and apologize. Everyone messes up sometimes. By admitting your mistakes and setting things right with your child, you are modeling this important skill for your child. And by owning up to your own imperfections, you are giving your child permission to accept themselves the way they are.

# Build a good relationship with your child

- Give your child attention and hugs. Stoicism isn't about being stern—so show your child as much love as you can! You can still teach your child to be resilient and courageous even if you give them lots of affection. In fact, studies show that children who are confident and secure in their parents' love become more resilient, brave, and ready to explore the world. You are helping establish a firm foundation of emotional stability for the rest of their lives.
- Talk to your child. Yes, it takes time and energy on your part. But it's worth it! Talk about anything and everything: tell them stories, explain how things work, answer their questions, ask them questions back. You are helping them understand the world and getting to know their quirky characters. And by showing interest in their lives, you let them know they can always come ask you questions. This is especially important as they get older and their questions (and lives) become more complicated.
- Talk to your child about their emotions. Help your child become aware of their emotions. Use the 4 Cs method, or refer to the page on Caring Wisely on the Stoicare website for more details on Stoicism and emotion.
- Remember, you're still the parent—you still have authority and responsibility in this situation. Stoicism is not about permissive parenting or allowing your child to do whatever they want. Instead, it's about working hard to cultivate a beautiful character in yourself and your child by focusing on what really matters in life.

# Applying the 4 Cs of Stoicism

- Remember the 4 Cs of Stoicism from Stoicare.com? Let's apply them specifically to parenting.
- Character
  - When facing a difficult situation with your child, think about who you want to be as a parent. Are you an impatient or overbearing parent? Remember, your actions create your character. If you want to be a calm and sympathetic parent, you must act with wisdom.
- Cosmos
  - Zoom out for a moment and think about all the other parents who are feeling frustrated right now. There are billions of parents in the world. Do you think you're the only one who has to deal with a misbehaving child? No way! You're in good company. Think about the big picture and feel connected to all those other parents who are going through exactly the same thing.
- Control
  - Remember to focus on what you can control: your own behavior. You can influence your child, but you don't control them. And you certainly don't control the rest of the world!
- Choice
  - You have a choice about how to respond in any situation. Make a choice that reflects your true character!

# Resources

## For Parents

- [Stoic Parents Facebook group](#)
- [Tranquility Parenting: A Guide to Staying Calm, Mindful, and Engaged](#)
- [The Stoic Mom](#)
- [Common Sense Mother](#)
- [Modern Stoicism](#) > search "parenting"
- [Best Books for Finding Your Bliss as a Parent](#)

## For Children

- [I'm Not as Fast as a Cheetah](#)
- [I Calm my Mind and Practice More](#)





# Inspiration

- "The sign of great parenting is not the child's behavior. The sign of truly great parenting is the parent's behavior." - [Andy Smithson](#)
- "Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." - Anne Frank
- "Your job is not to solve your children's problems but to help them learn to run their own lives." - [Bill Stixrud & Ned Johnson](#)
- "Encourage and support your kids because children are apt to live up to what you believe of them." - Lady Bird Johnson

