

JACKSON COUNSELLING and FAMILY THERAPY

Family, Couples, Individual & Adolescent Counsellor

Helpful Articles by Jenny Jackson



When Mum and Dad have Different Parenting Styles

By Jenny Jackson

Every family has to deal with this to some degree. Mum's really strict, Dad's much more laid back or Mum's more friend than parent and Dad's the bossy one or Mum yells and Dad says "don't worry – it's ok". It's because as Mum's and Dad's we come from different family cultures with different rules and expectations and we usually think our way is the right way.

So how do we combine these approaches so that we present a united front to our kids? And by the way, what's so important about a united front – both parents using the same strategies and philosophy? Well think how confusing it is for the kids when Mum says one thing and Dad says another – drive you crazy – parents and kids! Our kids are much less likely to learn what is appropriate behaviour – right and wrong, how to fit in socially, how to work together in a team because they'll be spending more time figuring out how to slip through the middle of Mum and Dad.

And what is the "right way" anyway? Well countless experts agree that the best way is to ensure that we have clear and reasonable rules, boundaries and expectations of our kids with lots of positive attention, praise, affection and fun – a combination of "I'm in charge", "I think you're great" and "Let me show you how to do that".

How do we decide on rules? Talk about what's important to you from both your families that you want to pass onto your kids (and what don't you want to pass on). What do you like that other families do? What are some ideas you like from books, articles and seminars? What do your kids think is important in your family? (Don't leave it all to them though!) And of course what's important in terms of keeping your kids safe? **Remember kids need to know you're in charge to feel safe.**

Check out your expectations of your kids – is what you expect reasonable for their age? Are you a perfectionist and they're not? Do you need to figure out some middle ground?

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What do I mean by positive attention? Well, looking a kid in the eye when you're not angry. Listening to them when they talk, maybe stopping what you're doing or asking questions to show you're listening. Affection can be a quick pat or rub on the back as well as hugs and kisses, or even just a smile or wink.

For **more information** on these ideas check out **books** like:

Kids are Worth It, Barbara Coloroso

Of Course I Love You...Now go to Your Room, Diane Levy

Before Your Kids Drive You Crazy Read This! Nigel Latta

Or Hot Tips **Seminars** or Toolbox Parenting Courses by Parents Inc, www.theparentingplace.com

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