

GOLD AWARD FOR 'EDUCARE' PARENTS

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Raising children is the toughest & most fulfilling job in the world! For this, we hereby reward 'Educare' Parents with Gold Award for Parenting (Childcare Discipline & Nurturing)...hmmm, on a second thought, are we not being generous? Unfortunately, yes! You must agree with me that there are some grey areas in this award category with reasonable room for improvement.

As parents, we may easily blame the Teachers, Minders & Housekeepers/Nannies for not getting things right as expected, whereas have we genuinely performed our roles as Parents? Is it all about paying for services & expecting all we deserve without putting in extra effort?

It is worth every parent investment of Time, Energy and Resources to raise healthy & disciplined children. Nobody can fulfill the role of parenting our children other than us, the parents. The bible in Proverbs 29 verse 17 says, '*Discipline your child and he will bring rest and give more pleasure to your soul.*' In our competitive and challenging modern world, we must take the extra pain to discipline & nurture our children so they grow to be the role models we desire in our society. The bible in Proverbs 22 verse 1 teaches us that, a good name is better than all riches while in verse 15 of the same chapter, it states '*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him*'. The rod may not necessarily be a cane, rather it refers to 'discipline', a process of helping children choose acceptable behaviours and learn self-control. What are we doing to ensure that our children exhibit good behaviours resulting from our discipline?

Have we set limits, consequences & consistent with discipline? Children for who they are, may test the limits we establish but they need limits to grow into responsible adults. For instance, House rules help children understand your expectations and develop their self-control. The rules may only have impact when there is a system in place – one warning, followed by consequences such as 'time-out' or 'loss of privileges'. As parents, we must be consistent with discipline.

While ensuring discipline, another area we should focus on is 'Nurturing our Children Self-Esteem'. Our words and actions as a parent affect our children developing self-esteem. We

should cultivate a habit of praising accomplishments to our children, as these makes them feel proud. Allowing them to do things independently also make them feel capable and strong.

Another area we must strive to improve on is to create time to observe & reinforce. Children who aren't getting the attention they deserve from their parents are often perceived to misbehave because they are sure to be noticed that way. Parents must schedule time to be with their children each week rather than solely depending on others. It is a tough call amidst our tight schedule, but take the pains to check the children lunch bags, flasks, homework. Also spend time to watch television and read storybooks with the children. We are bound to discover so much!

Is two-way communication with our children a Priority? Children deserve explanations as much as adults do. Parents who listen to their children allow them to understand and learn in nonjudgmental way. Make your expectations clear, allow them to express themselves and discuss issues with your children.

Are we good role model to our children? Children learn to act by watching their Parents. Before you act, think about this: ***'is that how I want my child to behave?'*** Model the traits you wish to cultivate in your children – respect, friendliness, honesty, tolerance. Learn to do things for people without expecting a reward.

Do we show that our Love is Unconditional?: As a parent, we are responsible for correcting and guiding our children. The manner we express our corrective guidance makes a difference on how a child receives it. When we confront a child, avoid blaming and criticizing. Strive to nurture and encourage when disciplining your children.

It is now time to make a u-turn; reassess ourselves to ensure we truly deserve the Gold Award. When we play our parts on parenting, then we can justly tag the Teachers, Minders & Housekeepers/Nannies when things are not done properly. In any case, we can't dispute the fact that we all deserve to earn our Gold Award for the Year!

