



Are You Looking Out For Your Kids?

As a parent, your first duty is to give your children the tools they need to build a successful life. Here are my 10 rules for effective parenting:

Show you have a strong interest in your child's life: Look at homework, ask questions about school, screen his or her friends.

Parents are the grown-ups and have to be patient, within reason, and remember that words can deeply wound a child.

1 A parent who is looking out for a child will make time for the child.

2 Discipline is essential, but no parent should inflict frequent physical or mental pain on a child.

3 A good parent will ensure that home is a refuge—a place where a child feels protected and loved. There will be no random violence, intoxication, sexual displays, uncontrolled anger or vile language at home.

4 A parent who is looking out for a child will provide a good education. That includes paying college tuition, if possible. Education comes before the vacation or the new car.

5 An effective parent will be available when a child has a problem. Ditch the meeting, get back from the mall, get off the phone. There is nothing more important than dealing with a child's crisis immediately.

6 A good parent will screen a child's friends, know his or her whereabouts, look at homework and ask questions about school daily.

7 An effective parent will enforce the rules and explain them. "Because I say so" can work when a kid gets stubborn, but first try connecting some dots with your child. It doesn't always work, but the effort is worth it.

8 A parent who is looking out for a child will be honest and lead by example: No lying, no cheating, no nasty gossip, no cruelty, no manipulation, no envy of your child.

9 A good parent will be respectful of his or her own parents. You can't effectively look out for your kids if you don't look out for your folks. (Even if your folks don't deserve it.)

10 Finally, an effective parent will not allow a TV or computer in a child's room. This is a dangerous world, and the danger is now inside the house. The exploiters want your kids. You must look out for them. Fight hard.

—Bill O'Reilly