

## 5 ways to “Be There” for Your Children

Parenting is not your typical “9 to 5” job — a parent’s work is never done and children’s safety and well-beings depend upon their parents being there for them. *Below are 5 ways in which parents can “be there” for their children:*

1. **Take care of yourself:** In order to be in position where you can support and take care of your child the way she or he deserves, you must take care of yourself first.
2. **Avoid being “present but absent”:** Being “present but absent” refers to being with your child but remaining unavailable, especially emotionally. Avoid being “present but absent” by reserving times to fully devote attention to your children.

Simple ways to remain fully present include:

- ✚ Specify times to **turn off** all **electronics** such as cell-phones and T.V.s.
  - ✚ **Ask questions** frequently and **LISTEN**. Taking the initiative to ask your child questions about how she/he is doing provides the child an easy opportunity to express her/himself and feel supported.
  - ✚ **Pay attention to your child’s strengths and accomplishments** and **offer praise** for those accomplishments. When children feel supported they are more likely to further engage in their dreams and endeavors.
3. **Work on giving up vices:** No one is perfect but as a parent, it’s important to try and not engage in risky behaviors such as abusing drugs and alcohol, especially when your child is present. These behaviors can jeopardize your child’s financial security, health, and safety. Additionally, if a parent does have unhealthy habits, it may be more likely that a child is put on the “backburner” and not afforded the attention and responsiveness she/he needs. Moreover, being there for your children requires you to be reliable and unhealthy habits can negatively affect your reliability.
  4. **Monitor your mood:** Check your mood throughout the day so you know if and why you’re feeling the stressed or angry so you don’t wrongly displace those feelings wrongly on your loved ones and children.
  5. **Provide love and affection:** Children need to constantly be reassured of a parent’s love, and children who rarely hear their parents vocalize that love may feel lonely and unsupported.