

# TINY BITS (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER) FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP  
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## Elements of Positive Parenting

Parents make mistakes and missteps, but what is most important is recognizing when things have not gone right and responding with love. In this month's Tiny Bit we want to talk about some elements of positive parenting that will help you keep the big picture in mind when dealing with everyday challenges.

**Imagine your child's point of view, especially during tough moments-** Sometimes it can be hard to keep our cool. It can be helpful to remember that your child's perspective is different from yours. She may be devastated that she cannot wear sandals when it is snowing but saying to yourself "she is only 2" can help remind you that she is still learning.

**Notice and celebrate your child's strengths-** Every child is different and it is important that you make a conscious effort to see your child's strengths. Maybe your daughter is a bold explorer, while your son may hang back and take time to get to know his surroundings. They both need to know that you love them for who they are.

**Delight in moments of connection with your child-** It is easy to get wrapped up in our day-to-day responsibilities and tasks, but it is important to stop and make simple connections with our kids. Smiling when she is trying to show you something or giving eye contact when you are strapping him into his car seat can make a world of difference.

**Respond with sensitivity to your child's cues-** While a tantrum in a public setting can be frustrating for a parent, it can also signal that your child is overstimulated. A baby turning away may signal she needs a break. Every child communicates differently and not all communication is verbal. It is important to tune into your child's cues as best you can to ensure he is getting what he needs.

**Provide consistent, age-appropriate, boundaries and guidelines-** Children need guidance on how to behave. Routine is very important to children and setting firm limits helps. Children are also more likely to listen if you crouch down to their level and give eye contact when providing instruction.

**Recognize and regulate your own feelings before addressing your child-** It is important to be as calm as possible when addressing your child. Strong emotions from parents when addressing children will lead to children responding with strong emotions. If needed, take some deep breaths before addressing your child.

**Know that parenting can be stressful, and missteps will happen-** Recognizing when you make a mistake and setting things right is part of building a good parent/child relationship.

**Work toward balancing your needs and your child's needs-** Do not forget about your needs. Parenting is demanding, but it is important to take care of your needs as well. Plan for breaks throughout the day even if it is just for a few minutes to breathe.