

What will you do to enhance your parenting in 2008?

The New Year is a time for forward planning. It is a wonderful opportunity annually to take stock of where your children are in their development and to think of what you, as a parent may need, to keep up with change as your child grows and matures. What changes have you noticed in your children over the last year? Is there something your children are doing that is challenging for you to deal with? Is there a parenting skill you would just like to know a bit more about?

Here are seven ideas to think about to enrich your parenting in the coming year, beginning with easy immediate things you can do, through to more intensive approaches, which can lead to meaningful and lasting change in your relationship with your child.

1. Read a parenting book or two this year. Read about issues that are relevant to you and your child or simply soak up information about the age-group of your child so you are prepared for the changes ahead.
2. Do some research on the internet. Government agencies often have terrific websites for parents including free downloadable tip sheets that can be very helpful. Other websites can be helpful too - but always be careful to check the authenticity of the site and its information.
3. Talk to your friends about parenting and your children's behaviours. This might seem a little obvious but it is a great way to understand whether your children are exhibiting normal behaviour for their age and to hear how other parents deal with it. This is something that mothers tend to do more than dads, so if you are a dad talk with your mates about what being a parent is like for you. It can be very reassuring to hear similar stories from other parents.
4. Join a support group. If your child has a particular special need, a support group can be very encouraging, while keeping you up to date with latest research and developments.
5. Attend some parent education classes. These classes offer interesting and up to date information about children or teenagers, particular parenting issues and how to handle them. Group workshops also have the advantage of parents linking in with other parents. This often allows parents to appreciate that what they are experiencing is normal.
6. Attend some parent-coaching workshops. Parent-coaching allows even deeper change for the parent because parents are encouraged to look at their way of being with their children and to make individual change for closer relationships. The best coaches ask really thought provoking questions and allow the parent to come up with their own solutions. Like parent education workshops, parent-coaching workshops also have the advantage of connecting parents with other parents.
7. Have some individual parent-coaching. This is a powerful way to make deep and lasting change in your relationship with your child. Coaching can be offered face to face or over the phone, which is a wonderful option for busy modern day parents.

Whether you try one of these seven options or other ideas you may have to benefit your parenting; there will be two winners in 2008: you and your children.

All the best for your parenting in 2008. May it be a year where you continue to learn and grow in your ever changing and vitally important role.