

## Parenting Your Child Effectively Look At The Whole Picture

Marilyn S. Fox, Extension Educator

This guide will help parents look past a single behavior to looking at behavior as a whole. This is a part of a series of 10 “Parenting Your Child Effectively” guides.

Sometimes we need something right now to help us calm an emotional discussion with our children. When things are difficult, we are most likely to “lose our cool” and say or do things that we wish later we hadn’t. We need something that settles the conflict without either the child or the parent feeling put down. There are a number of guidance principles that give us a way to discipline in stressful times.

### Guidance Principle

**Look at the whole picture.** The way a child acts often is related to what is happening in the family. Perhaps you or another family member are making a difficult change. If you

are married, take a good look at whether your partner relationship is working well. How you act often affects how your children act. Bad behavior may be a cry for help and attention. The child may be upset and confused by the changes made in other parts of the family and may need as much attention as you can give. Some people feel that giving children attention will spoil them. Most care providers make sure children get enough sleep, a drink of water when they want it or shoes that fit. We usually meet these needs. We need to do the same to make sure children get enough love and attention.

Look at children’s behavior as a whole. Do they have plenty of interesting activities so they aren’t bored? Do they seem to misbehave at certain times each day? Is this because they are tired or bored? Being too tired or getting sick seems to bring out the worst in all of us. If a child is often crabby and short on patience, have him or her checked by a doctor.

When do your children misbehave most often? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think this might be? \_\_\_\_\_

If this is a pattern, what changes can be made? \_\_\_\_\_

### Acknowledgment

This fact sheet contains guidelines to help parents interact with their children. It was reformatted from NebGuide G991 (Revised May 1997) written by Herbert G. Lingren, Extension Family Life Specialist.

UNL Extension publications are available online at <http://extension.unl.edu/publications>.

**Index: Family Life  
Parenting**  
Issued July 2007

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.