

Happy New Year

It's a new year, a new start, a new beginning. When I grew up there were posters that said "This is the first day of the rest of your life". They were everywhere. We all carry so much guilt that a new beginning is like a get out of jail free card. When it comes to parenting, guilt and blaming don't help anybody. They are barriers to moving forward, barriers to doing better. While I don't do New Year's Resolutions, it feels like too much pressure, I do see the new year as a fresh start. It's a chance to leave the past behind and walk forward with heads held high, to become more of the person I want to be.

Here are some practices to consider for the new year in regards to parenting:



Catch them doing good. Praise the behaviour you want to see them repeat. Give it a name. "Thanks for letting me have a turn. What a **sharing** person you are."

Delight in their presence. "I love being with you. I'm glad you're back. I missed you."

Follow your child's lead and join in the play. Spend time with your child. Do what they are interested in. Have fun. Children learn by doing and together you build a strong relationship, learning to work together, communicate, solve problems and trust each other.

Acknowledge their struggles. "Zippers are hard." Offer to help out. "Would you like me to start it for you?"

Connection before compliance. When you are going to ask a child to do something, take a moment to connect with them first. "Wow, you've put a lot of work into that house. You like building with lego. It'll be supper time in five

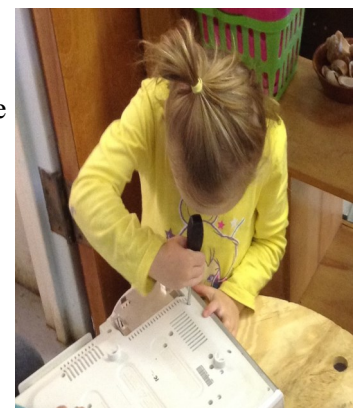
minutes. Where should we put it to keep it safe?"

Step in and take charge when you need to. Pick your battles. When you need to take charge, acknowledge their feelings and follow up with clear expectations stating what you need them to do. Model what that looks like if needed. "I can see you're angry. You are upset we can't leave yet. You can sit and read your book or you can colour. I need you to be patient for 10 more minutes." Empathize and keep your sense of humor even while you insist.

When in doubt, tell them you love them and vow to figure this out together. We may not like the behaviour but we do love the child. The message we want to send out is that we are a team. Sometimes we disagree or get upset, but we are in this together. "I can see you are upset. You are angry with me. I need you to know I do love you and once we have cooled down, we'll figure out together what to do."

Redirection and Distraction. When a child is under three these are still the first strategies to try. Pick a new activity and move on. Engage their interest in something different. If they are throwing or hitting for fun, redirect them to a place and a way to do it properly. "Blocks are not for throwing. If you want to throw something, throw this ball into the laundry basket!" Join in their play and show them how to do it.

Have fun!! Play hooky from your chores and head out to play. Enjoy your selves! Toboggan, make snow angels, head to the local pool, makes muffins, rough house, make newspapers into snowballs and have an indoor snowball fight, play hide and seek. Fun is a stress reliever and builds relationships. Kids are always learning. Teach them to have fun!



Understanding Learning Styles

Focus on Next Time

When children break a rule, whether on purpose or by mistake, do you dwell on the details of the fault...and all the other times it has happened in the past? Or can you concentrate on telling them what they should do instead next time?

If you emphasize past mistakes, you could be missing out on a chance to teach children how you expect them to behave. When you look to the future, you can turn mistakes into opportunities for learning. In fact, in her book *Wonderful Ways To Love a Child*, author Judy Ford calls mistakes “the cornerstone on which we build our successes.”

Anger keeps us stuck in the past

When children misbehave, we tend to feel impatient, disappointed, frustrated and/or discouraged; often, this mix of emotions explodes into anger. Anger gives us a lot of energy (we raise our voice, we feel like hitting out), but it generally clouds our judgment.

It's hard to keep a calm focus when you can't think logically. In that state, it's much easier to yell about what just went wrong, rather than discuss what could be improved in the future. It's easier to scream about the toys that are

lying all over the floor (again!) than to figure out how to get them put away on a regular basis.

Discipline is teaching

Real discipline is oriented to the future. It involves teaching children to behave appropriately, according to their growing abilities and according to our expectations and our values. We are trying to give our children tools for successful living.

Remembering that goal can help us keep our emotions in check so that we can express our frustration and shift our focus to the future. Use those empowering words: “*Next time*, how could you do better?” or “*Next time*, I expect ...!”

Finding a solution

Persistent misbehavior often signals an underlying difficulty that has to be dealt with before the behaviour will disappear. By carefully examining what is going wrong, we can find clues to a solution to the problem.

For instance, when the toys are all over the floor, are our expectations realistic given the age of the child? A two year old can be expected to put a few toys back on a shelf with help, but we can't expect perfection. Is there a place to put things away that is easy for

the child to reach? If not, maybe low shelves are called for. Is the tidy-up job too intimidating? Sometimes, a young child is overwhelmed by the complexity of the task and really doesn't know where or how to start. This is the perfect opportunity to teach the skill of breaking a big project up into manageable pieces; begin in one corner and work to the middle, or begin by putting all the blocks into a box.

Skills for life

Don't expect instant results. Skills like these take a long time to master, but will serve children all their lives. Knowing how to get going on a job that looks enormous will always be a valuable ability — whether it's applied to picking up toys, doing math homework, researching a school assignment, or taking on a new project at work.

When parents or providers make mistakes

Parents and providers can apply the same approach to their own errors. When we do something or say something to a child that we wish we hadn't, instead of thinking we're bad parents or caregivers, we can make a plan for how we'll react better ... next time.



Workshops

TBA February 2017 - Winter/Spring Parent Support Calendar.
Check our website at www.crowlanark.com

Staff Directory

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This months featured program or service in Lanark County:

Lanark County Planning Council for Children, Youth and Families

The Lanark County Planning Council (LCPC) provides leadership and coordination to enable optimal development and healthy living for Lanark County children, youth (0 – 18 years of age), and their families.

The Lanark County Planning Council for Children, Youth and Families came into existence in 2007. The mandate of this council is to provide leadership and coordination to enable optimal development and healthy living for Lanark County children, youth (0-18 years of age), and their families. The geographic community of Lanark County includes both the rural areas and town centres that make up the County of Lanark, including the separated Town of Smiths Falls.

For more information: www.lanarkkids.ca





Children's Resources on Wheels

Playgroups

Please Note: In inclement weather conditions if school buses are cancelled all CROW playgroups and programs are also cancelled.

Day	Location	Time	Staff	Dates
Monday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Linda	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Monday	Baby Talk Group at Almonte Library	2 - 3:00 pm	Linda	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Monday	Carleton Place - Carambeck Community Centre	9:30 am - 11:30am	Issie	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Monday	Perth - Taycare Senior Centre, 100 Wilson St.	9:30 - 12:00 noon	Cindy	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Monday	Intergenerational playgroup Smiths Falls — Willowdale Retirement Home	9:30 - 10:30 am	Andrea	January 9
Monday	Intergenerational playgroup Smiths Falls —Van Horne Retirement Home	9:30 - 10:30 am	Andrea	January 23
Monday	Baby Talk Group at OEYC - Smiths Falls	1 - 2:00 pm	Lori	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Monday	Smiths Falls - Trinity United Church	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Lori	January 9, 16, 23, 30
Tuesday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Linda	January 10, 17, 24, 31
Tuesday	Carleton Place - Arena, 75 Neelin Street	9:30 - 11:30 am	Issie	January 10, 17, 24, 31
Tuesday	Montague - Montague Centennial Hall	9:30 - 11:30 am	Andrea	January 10, 17, 24, 31
Tuesday	Perth - Taycare Senior Centre, 100 Wilson St.	9:30 - 12:00 noon	Cindy	January 10, 17, 24, 31
Tuesday	Smiths Falls - OEYC	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Lori	January 10, 17, 24, 31
Wednesday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Linda	January 11, 18, 25
Wednesday	Carleton Place - Carambeck Community Centre	9:30 - 11:30 am	Issie	January 11, 18, 25
Wednesday	Baby Talk Group at Carambeck Community Centre	12:30 - 1:30 pm	Issie	January 11, 18, 25
Wednesday	Lanark - Maple Grove School	9:30 - 11:30 am	Andrea	January 11, 18, 25
Wednesday	Perth - Perth & District Union Library	10:00 - 12:00 noon	Cindy	January 11, 18, 25
Wednesday	Smiths Falls - Trinity United Church	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Lori	January 11, 18, 25
Thursday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Linda	January 12, 19, 26
Thursday	Carleton Place - Arena	9:30 - 11:30 am	Issie	January 12, 19, 26
Thursday	Lanark - Maple Grove School	9:30 - 11:30 am	Andrea	January 12, 19, 26
Thursday	Perth - The Dance Studio	9:30 - 12:00 noon	Cindy	January 12, 19, 26
Thursday	Baby Talk Group at The Dance Studio - Perth	1 - 2:00 pm	Cindy	January 12, 19, 26
Thursday	Smiths Falls - Lower Reach Park	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Lori	January 12, 19, 26
Friday	Smiths Falls - OEYC	9:00 - 12:00 noon	Parent Run	January 13, 20, 27
Friday	Intergenerational Playgroup — Perth at Carolina Retirement Suites	10:00 - 11:00 am	Cindy	January 13, 27

