

Grooming Your Child for Greatness:  
Strategies That Work



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Agenda

- Questionnaire
- Theme
- A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words Exercise
- Developmental Strategies
- Helping Your Child Succeed Academically
- Conclusion
- Homework
- Q & A

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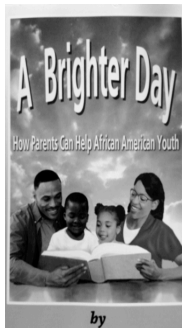
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Theme

As a parent or guardian, you are powerful, because you have been entrusted with the care of a precious child.

The ways in which you use your power on a daily basis will have a huge impact on the type of adult your child becomes.

If you use your power wisely, your child can have a great future.

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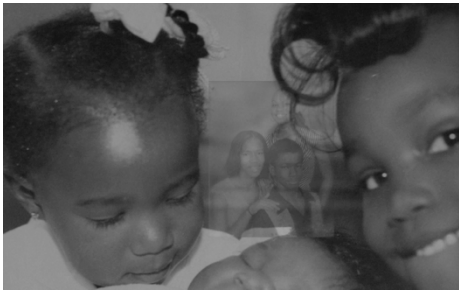
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Strategies



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1. Know that loving your child and merely being involved in his/her life are not enough.

“Every child needs and desires to be loved. But love isn’t enough.”

“As parents, we must love our children enough to do the right things, the things that are in our children’s best interests.”

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2. Deal with and get help for any personal issues that will cause you to engage in negative parenting behaviors.

A parent can't help his or her child grow up to become an emotionally and psychologically healthy individual if the parent is full of self-hatred, low self-esteem, and has no self-respect.

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3. Deal with your mental baggage.

- Negative beliefs about yourself
- Negative beliefs that will cause you to hinder versus help your child
- Negative beliefs about your child's potential
- Beliefs that cause you to see failure instead of potential
- Beliefs that cause you to use negative words instead of words of encouragement to build your child's self-esteem
- Negative beliefs about your child's hair texture, skin tone, and physical features

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4. Make sure that you have the right attitudes and beliefs about your child.

"Every child is gifted and talented."

Find out what your child is good at and encourage him or her to develop those talents.

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5. Know the difference between discipline and abuse.

"Any type of mistreatment can be considered to be child abuse."

The most common types of abuse are:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

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Abuse is damaging and destructive and can lead to many negative consequences.

A high percentage of abused children grow up to become adults who:

- end up in prison,
- attempt suicide,
- use illegal drugs and/or abuse alcohol,
- suffer from depression, and
- become involved in abusive relationships.

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Discipline is corrective.

It teaches the child an important lesson about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, without destroying the child's spirit, and self-esteem.

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6. Know how to “engage” your child when he or she is an infant.

According to the CDC, from ages zero to one year old, babies need parents to do the following:

- Talk to them so they can learn language and be soothed by the parent’s voice.
- Read to them.
- Sing to them.

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- Play music for them to help them develop an appreciation for music and math skills.
- Praise them.
- Give them lots of loving attention.
- Cuddle and hold them to help them feel safe.

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7. Know how to engage your child when he or she is a toddler.

The CDC recommends that parents of toddlers do the following:

- Have a regular time to read to your toddler.
- Play games with your toddler.
- Teach your toddler children’s songs.
- Take walks with your toddler.

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**8. Know how to engage your child when he or she is a preschooler (ages 3-5 years old).**

According to the CDC, parents should:

- Continue to read to preschoolers.
- Take them to libraries and bookstores.
- Encourage them to play with other children in order to learn the value of sharing and friendship.
- Help them develop good language skills by using complete sentences when speaking to them and teaching them to use the correct words and phrases.
- Be clear and consistent when disciplining them, and model behavior that you expect from them.

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**9. Know how to help your child during the elementary school years.**

According to the CDC, parents should:

- Spend quality time with your child.
- Talk to your child about his/her friends, challenges, and commend your child for his/her accomplishments.
- Attend school events and get to know your child's teachers.
- Encourage your child to participate in sports and other activities.
- Help your child develop a sense of right and wrong.
- Discuss peer pressure.
- Have your child do chores, and teach him/her how to spend money wisely.
- Teach your child to treat others respectfully.
- Talk to your child about what to expect during puberty.
- Be consistent in enforcing rules.
- Be affectionate and honest.
- Get to know the family members of your child's friends.

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**10. Know how to help your child during the pre-teen and teenage years.**

Recommendations from Dr. Jwanza Kunjufu:

- Find a support group to discuss problems and concerns with other parents.
- Help your child to recognize and develop his/her talents.
- Expose your child to careers that are related to his/her talent.
- Help your child find non-violent solutions to problems.
- Teach your son how to become a decent man.
- Help your child to improve his/her self-esteem and self-image.
- Help teens understand the importance of spiritually.

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Pre-teens and teens cont'd

Drs. James Comer and Alvin Poussaint recommend that you:

- Treat your teenager respectfully.
- Allow your teenager to become more independent as he/she becomes more responsible.
- Avoid giving commands.
- Become aware of negative behaviors that might be cries for help.
- Make peace whenever possible.
- Use praise for good behavior.
- Be actively involved and interested in your teenager's hobbies.
- Avoid spanking and yelling.
- Only withdraw privileges when talking and explanations have failed to produce the desired behavior.

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Helping Your Child to Succeed Academically

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Don't give your child mixed messages about education.

- Make sure that your child understands the short-term and long-term benefits of a good education.
- Don't promote negative stereotypes about "educated" people.
- Don't "teach" your child that it's not "cool" to be smart.

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- Emphasize the importance of education by making learning activities, academic skill-building exercises, and educational games priorities at home.
- Don't allow your child to pick on, tease, ridicule, or bully high-achieving students.
- Don't permit your child to walk, talk, and dress like a thug or gang member, or permit your child to wear revealing and age-inappropriate clothing.

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**Teach your child how to deal with "haters" and the "Mean Girl and Mean Boy Syndrome."**

**Kids can be vicious.**

**Just as some adults have a "spirit of jealousy" and "hateration," the same is true of some children, teens, and young adults.**

**Mean girls and mean boys tend to travel in packs.**

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They are jealous-hearted insecure individuals who will:

- ridicule your child for being smart,
- accuse your child of "acting white," and
- accuse your child of thinking that he/she is better than other children.

In other words, they are bullies who will try to make it difficult for your child to focus on getting a good education.

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Help your child develop good reading skills.

**Decoding** (pronouncing words correctly)

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**Comprehension** (Understanding)

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**Reading**

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Research has shown that children who grow up in print-rich (lots of reading material is available at home) environments have better reading skills than children who do not.

Remember that books are valuable gifts for birthdays and holidays. Buying books and taking your child to the library to check out books will enable your child to have a print-rich environment at home.

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- Encourage your child to check out books from the school library or classroom library on a regular basis.
- Read to your younger children daily or ask older children to read to them. Ask your child to read to you on a regular basis. (This can take place while you're cooking dinner, doing the laundry, or some other household chore.)
- Encourage your child to read to his/her younger brothers and sisters.
- Create personalized books with your child.

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- In order to ensure that your child is understanding the reading material, ask him/her to tell you what the story or reading assignment is about.
- If your child does not know a word in the story or textbook, ask him/her to look up the word in a dictionary and write the meaning on an index card. The child can keep a box of index cards of new words and review them periodically.
- Model reading by letting your child see you read books, newspapers, and magazines for pleasure.

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- Make sure that your child is getting homework several nights a week.
- Check your child's homework.
- If you can't assist your child with the work, ask the teacher or principal to assign a peer tutor to help your child.

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**Know the Signs of Dyslexia**

- poor spelling,
- word substitution,
- over relying on context clues,
- slow or choppy oral reading,
- avoiding oral reading,
- poor handwriting, and
- difficulty completing homework

from *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Dr. Sally Shaywitz

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**Help your child develop good math skills.**

- If your child has weak math skills, you can help him/her improve them by using elementary-level math workbooks, and then, higher level math books.
- By the time that your child is required to do algebra, make sure that he/she knows the "order of operations": parentheses, exponents, multiply, divide, add, and subtract, and make sure that he/she knows how to *perform each operation*.

(Children who don't know how to multiply or divide will have trouble doing algebraic equations correctly).

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- Make sure that your child learns all of the rules about adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers that have positive and negative signs.
- Be diligent about making sure that your child has high enough math grades in order for him/her to be prepared to go into the college-preparatory high school math courses.
- Learn the difference between the college-preparatory high school math courses and the non-college preparatory courses.
- During summer, winter break, and spring break, insist that your child spends part of the time reading for recreational purposes, and improving his/her math skills.

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**Help your child develop good writing skills.**

- Make sure that your child knows how to write a basic sentence that consists of a subject and a predicate.
- Make sure that your child knows how to write a basic paragraph: topic sentence, supporting details, closing statement
- Make sure that your child knows how to write an essay: introduction, body, conclusion

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- Familiarize yourself with the writing standards for your child's grade level.
- Make sure that your child spends an adequate amount of time on writing assignments, instead of waiting until the last minute.
- Remind your child to proofread his/her work multiple times before he/she gives it to the teacher.

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- Make sure that your child understands school and classroom rules.
- Read the "Cradle to Prison Pipeline" report.
  - Read the "School-to-Prison Pipeline" report.
  - Talk to your child about bullying, fighting, and "Zero Tolerance Policies."
  - Teach your child to treat adults and other children respectfully.

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- Teach your child the difference between an "inside" voice and an "outside" voice.
- Teach your child not to talk back to teachers, school administrators, or other individuals who are authority figures, even when the adult-authority figure appears to be wrong.
- Teach your child to use his/her time wisely when the child finishes class work early.
- Never condone inappropriate behavior.
- Teach your child non-violent ways to resolve conflicts.

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Start to develop a college-going mindset in your child as early as possible.

- Explain why attending college is important.
- Take your child to visit local colleges and universities.
- Expose your child to college-educated individuals who are down-to-earth.
- Enroll your child in college-preparatory and summer enrichment programs.

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- Make sure that your child takes the required number of courses and the correct math, English, and science courses that are necessary to enroll in college.
- Help your child learn how to navigate the college admissions process, find out about application deadlines, how to get applications, how to apply for financial aid, etc.
- Use the Internet, bookstores, college graduates, and school counselors as resources.

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Surround your child with individuals who value education.

- Encourage your child to select friends who have the same values that your child has been taught.
- Protect your child from negative family members who can become bad role models.
- Protect your child from organizations and individuals who have an anti-education agenda.
- Protect your child from individuals who will ridicule, disparage, or undermine the values that you are instilling in your child.

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Know how to deal with educators effectively.

- Always try to be polite and respectful.
- Plan what you are going to say ahead of time by making an outline consisting of your main concerns and outcomes that you would like to see.
- Be persistent and unwavering in serving as an advocate for your child.

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- Don't use put downs, profanity, insults, or a condescending tone or language.
- Don't point your finger, roll your eyes, yell, put your hands on your hips, roll your neck, or engage in behaviors that are viewed as combative, hostile, or threatening.
- Don't let educators' degrees, credentials, level of education, or big words intimidate you or make you feel dumb or inferior.

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- Don't be embarrassed or ashamed to ask educators to repeat, re-explain, or give examples to make what they are saying easier to understand.
- Keep a "paper trail," consisting of names, dates, and a description of all meetings and telephone conferences with school personnel.
- Put your concerns in writing and keep copies of any letters, notes, etc. that you send to school personnel.

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- Contact the “big guns”—school board members, the school superintendent, local politicians, the State Board of Education, and even the media—if your concerns are repeatedly ignored.
- Be aware that some teachers may retaliate against your child if you have complained. In this case, you must document everything and contact the “big guns.”

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- Keep empowering yourself.**
- Read the parenting tips on my website.
  - Visit libraries and bookstores on a regular basis to find new information about parenting tips, and how to improve the quality of your child’s life.
  - Visit your child’s school as often as you can.
  - Stay in touch with your child’s teachers to find out how your child is doing academically.

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- Use the Internet to Find Additional Resources**
- National PTA: Contains Parent Guides and Tips  
[http://www.pta.org/topic\\_getting\\_involved.asp](http://www.pta.org/topic_getting_involved.asp)
  - Parents Association: Contains Links for Parents and Teens  
<http://www.parentsassociation.com/>
  - Reading Rockets: Contains Strategies, Reading Guides, and Research for Teachers and Parents  
<http://www.readingrockets.org/audience/parents>
  - Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read: A Parent Guide from the National Reading Panel  
<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/helpingread.htm>
  - Read, Write, Think (International Reading Association) Contains Valuable Information for Parents and Teachers  
<http://www.readwritethink.org>

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**In Their Own Words:  
Video Clips from  
Educator and Film Maker Nicole Franklin**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q0eY7xLWkY>.

***LITTLE BROTHER is a series of 15-minute documentary films dedicated to giving Black boys a unique voice. Beginning in 2010, filmmakers Nicole Franklin and Jasmin Tiggett started taking an annual look at Black boys as young as nine years old for a one-on-one conversation demystifying what society tends to rob them of: LOVE. A conversation that will save a generation. [www.LittleBrotherFilm.com](http://www.LittleBrotherFilm.com)***

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**Conclusion**

As a parent or guardian, you are powerful, because you have been entrusted with the care of a precious child.

How you use your power on a daily basis will have a huge impact on the type of adult your child becomes.

If you use your power wisely, your child can have a great future.

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**Homework**

In order to strengthen your parenting skills, use the following scale and statements to measure your weekly progress:

Good   Satisfactory   Needs to Improve

I spent quality time with my child/children.  
 I made sure that my child/children arrived at school on time.  
 I made sure that my child/children attended school each day this week.  
 I read to my child/children or had my child/children read to me or siblings.  
 I encouraged and complimented my child/children.  
 I hugged my child/children.  
 I told my child/children "I love you."  
 I asked my child/children to tell me about what happened at school.  
 I made sure that my child/children completed homework.  
 I disciplined my child/children in appropriate ways when necessary.

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