

## Parenting as a Team

Parenting may be one of the toughest jobs in the world. One of the challenges of raising children is parenting with a united front with your spouse or partner because people are different, and everyone has different backgrounds, needs, behaviors and parenting styles.

When caregivers form a united front, children get the consistency they need. Lack of consistency from parents can lead to children feeling confused about expectations and having problems linking a “cause” with the resulting “effect.”

### Children Push to Feel Safe

Children naturally need to feel stability and consistency in their life. At the same time, they naturally push boundaries that are set for them, whether it is a rule to clear the dinner table or a limit on computer or phone time. Children often push back on firm and consistent limits to see whether and how their parent or guardian will respond. Children need parents and other adults to reaffirm their safety, security and sense of well-being.

A parental team with shared expectations and agreed-upon discipline can decrease the number of times a child tries to test boundaries. If a child realizes he or she can get different answers from each parent, the child is more likely to try to manipulate them to get what they wants.

Most children, especially those entering teenage years, know parents’ weaknesses and how to manipulate them. However, with a united front, your child knows that what you say will be the same as what your partner says or does.

### Do Not Undermine the Authority of the Other

Parenting as a team means neither undermines a partner’s authority as a parent – even as kids grow up and expectations change. Adults may need to routinely review their expectations and modify decisions so they can agree on rules. When parents discuss how well the rules – and consequences – are working for each child, they can decide together what kinds of changes may be more effective. The goal of these discussions is to reach an agreement so that both partners can back each other up in front of the children.

Be consistent and supportive of your spouse, and try not to disagree in front of the children. Talk privately, and sort out your feelings and ideas without your child’s involvement. After you and your partner discuss concerns and jointly agree that punishment needs to be revised, talk with your child. Sometimes, explaining the change can be appropriate: “I’m sorry I reacted too quickly,” or “I didn’t understand the seriousness of your behavior.”

### A Partnership is the Center of Family

Partners who do most of the child-rearing are generally considered the center of the family. In a two-parent family, both partners need to nurture their relationship to keep it alive. When both partners contribute to the relationship, the bond with the kids can be stronger.

Parenting together as a team will help you and your partner enjoy shared child-rearing responsibilities, which also helps build stronger, more secure and resilient children.

Here are some ways to develop a strong partnership and work together on rules and expectations for children:

- Communicate personal needs and expectations clearly
- Spend time together
- Stay emotionally and physically connected
- Manage conflict together.

Understanding the developmental stages of children and sharing expectations are essential for parenting as a unit.

The most important relationship in a family is often the one between parents or partners. When you work together, you set a positive example for your child by showing that you are a strong and agreeable team.

When partners work together, it is more likely that a child will develop positive behaviors, respect for others, problem-solving skills for the future and school success.

If children live in a household that values consistency and stability, children will become stronger and surer of themselves. They will have higher self-esteem and will behave appropriately.

## Resources

- Child Welfare Information Gateway: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
- American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry: [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-5465

Online: [guidanceresources.com](http://guidanceresources.com)

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