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*Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.*

## Five Ways to Show Love to a Child<sup>1</sup>

*Kate Fogarty<sup>2</sup>*

While children aren't delivered with a "how-to" manual, there are several great resources for parents, such as Larry Steinberg's 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting. Steinberg recommends a number of ways to show your children you love them. For example, shower them with affection—there's no such thing as being "too loving." Even teenagers benefit from this; no research has yet found praising and hugging to be harmful to teenagers!

How you walk, not talk, makes the difference. Research consistently shows that from young children to teens, youth imitate by example, not what is told them without follow-through. In the presence of children, your actions matter.

Set loving limits on your child. Firm but fair rules and consequences for breaking the rules need to be set in place. Most important, following through on consequences without compromising gives children a sense of boundaries and safety.

Be consistent, but not rigid with your child's schedule. Keep in mind areas that are non-negotiable. Have a set schedule for weekdays and weekends, yet be flexible, including time for recreational activities and leisure.

1. This document is FAR0079, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published March 2009. In the interest of time or clarity, the broadcast version of this script may have been modified. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Stay involved in your child's life. The definition of involvement changes as they age, but the amount of involvement in your child's life should not change. For example, adolescents don't need micromanagement, but do need monitoring.

Parenting can be one of the toughest, yet most rewarding and most important jobs you'll ever have, with results that last far beyond your lifetime.

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