

# 6 Parenting New Years' Resolutions

By Positive Parenting Solutions

## 1. Rethink the Way You Spend Time with Your Child/Children

Consider your day-in-day-out time with your child/children. How often are you multitasking with dinner or laundry or the bazillion other things on your list?

While we're physically WITH our children, we're not always fully present in mind, body and soul.

Because of that, we pay a price. If children don't get some "fully present and engaged" time with us during the day, they will have their attention baskets filled one way or another—whining, clinging, interrupting, fighting with siblings. Do any of those sound familiar?

All of these behaviors get your attention—albeit negative attention. It may seem silly to think a child would seek out negative attention when they don't get positive attention. But the truth is, children simply want their baskets filled.

However, you can turn those behaviors around by making a small tweak to the time you already spend with your child. The child-centered, intentional, and directly labeled time.

**Spend 10 INTENTIONAL minutes, each day one-on-one, with each of your children. Your child is in control of the 10 minutes—they call the shots.** A tea party? LEGO building? Dressing up daddy? A tickle fight? Listening to their favorite music with your teen? Whatever your child chooses, you oblige. (As long as it's an activity that can reasonably be accomplished in 10-15 minutes.) By giving your child, the power during this time, you help fill their power buckets in incredible ways.

**By intentional, with no distractions**—put down your phone, don't answer that email, and turn off the show you're watching. Your child is the center of your universe for these 10 minutes and it's critical you are fully present for your time with them.

Lastly, when it's finished be sure to say, "I sure enjoyed our special time today! I can't wait to do it again tomorrow!" Your child will benefit from knowing you're committed to your time, plus you'll get credit in his mind for time well spent.

## 2. Ensure Your Child Gets Enough Sleep

Sleep matters...a lot. Children would never admit it, but they need regular bedtimes and [plenty of sleep](#) to be at their best. These key components to a healthy, calm lifestyle, however, are sometimes the first things we abandon as we celebrate the holiday season—and they're the most daunting piece to restore in January.

*So how do we back up bedtime from the late hours we've grown used to keeping?*

The most effective way to get your children more sleep is to keep bedtimes early and consistent throughout the week, without much more than a 15-minute difference on the weekends. If you give in to a late bedtime once, children will think the hour on the clock is always up for negotiation.

### **3. Retool Routines**

Once you've reset bedtimes, refresh your evening routine so the not-so-fun stuff (brushing teeth, picking out an outfit for the next day) comes before the good stuff (reading with Mom or Dad until lights out at 8:30).

We call this a [\*When-Then Routine\*](#), and it can revolutionize all the tricky times of the day. For example, *WHEN your child is done studying his French verbs, THEN he can have 30 minutes of technology time. Or WHEN your daughter gets dressed, packs her backpack, and makes her bed, THEN she can eat breakfast.*

Be sure the very last item in the routine—enjoying media time, perhaps, or playing with friends—can only happen after the yucky stuff is done.

Start small by revamping one routine at a time. Once you have bedtimes streamlined, for instance, move on to mornings. Stick to the routine and soon your child will take control of their own schedules with less pushback from them and no nagging from you.

### **4. Demonstrate the Behavior You Want to See**

Most parents don't know it—or don't like to admit it—but we do a lot of things that contribute to our children's poor behavior.

Have you ever heard a parent say, "Do as I say, not as I do?"

Was your next thought, "Hey, that's not fair!?"

You're not alone.

Children see the world in black and white, and if our actions are not consistent with our words, they will push back and you'll have a whopping power struggle on your hands!

*Do you harp on your children for leaving toys all over the floor, while your kitchen desk is covered in a mound of unopened mail and papers?*

*Do you yell at your children and then reprimand them for yelling at each other?*

*Are you munching on chips on the couch, when you tell your children to take their snacks out of the living room?*

Like it or not, **children pay much more attention to what we DO rather than what we say.**

When we command one thing and do another, we send the message that our rules are optional. By deleting these double standards, we'll get better behavior from our children.

### **5. Task Every Child with a Job (or Two)**

Remember last year when your children never wanted to help out around the house? That doesn't mean your children need to be exempt from taking on responsibilities at home this year.

In fact, children of all ages thrive when they feel useful and needed (even toddlers), even if they simply empty trash cans and fold towels. What's more, when you divvy up the work, you'll feel less harried and better able to enjoy your family.

Studies show that the earlier you enlist your child's help, the less pushback you'll receive.

First, start by assigning every child a job.

Then—and this part is critical—**train each child thoroughly in any new skills.** (Keep in mind they might prefer to scrub the shower in their swimsuit, or Swiffer floors instead of dusting baseboards.)

Once they're able to handle the job on their own, make it official and required by adding it to a *When-Then Routine*, or setting up in advance a reasonable consequence if the task's left unfinished.

By remaining consistent in your expectations, your child will see you're not going to let them wiggle out of their new responsibilities and will complete their jobs without pitching a fit as well.

## **6. Prioritize Weekly Family Meetings**

A new year often means a new hockey schedule, new gymnastics classes, or a changed-up carpool—all these arrangements could take a team of professionals to manage. Even those of us facing the same old routines would probably appreciate a little assistance to ensure everyone is where they need to be at the right time.

That's where a family meeting comes in.

Set aside a few minutes each week at a regular time, such as Sunday evenings, to meet as a family and get on the same page. Not only is this a time to tackle the logistics of scheduling, but this is a time to problem-solve family issues as well. Whether the dog keeps getting into the trash or your children are having trouble keeping their shared space clean, you can discuss all of these issues and more in a calm, thoughtful way at family meetings.

To get buy-in from everyone, **assign rotating jobs to each member of the family** (Meeting Leader, Note Taker, Snack Server, etc.), provide refreshments, and make it fun. Not only will you connect as a family, but your children will start stepping up and taking on more responsibility—and no one will be left behind at swimming practice again!

Final Thoughts

There has never been a better time to make a change in your parenting habits. **Your family is too important NOT to be the center of your New Year's resolutions.**

But don't worry, even if the New Year has left you feeling frazzled, there's no need to hit the panic button. Start 2025 with these tips and tools, and get ready for the most peaceful, most enjoyable year yet.

### **Resource:**

<https://www.positiveparentingsolutions.com/parenting/parenting-resolutions>