

Chapter 1 : Child Discipline

*How important is it for parents to present a united front regarding discipline? The answer depends on your child's age. Learn more from Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D., author of *The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting*.*

B Ryder Professor of Sociology University of Wisconsin-Madison My starting point is that the family is a major factor in the well-being of adults, children, and society. This chapter brings a sociological perspective to the increasing instability in the lives of children in the United States. I will emphasize the social context in which parenting interactions and child development take place. That social context structures the decisions we make as individual parents. Then I will summarize my conclusions about changes in family structures. First these changes are anchored in the social systems and economies of Western industrial societies reaching back into the last century. Second, these changes are influenced by feedback loops between the behaviors of parents.

Decreasing Stability in the Lives of Children While it is a major factor in the well-being of both adults and children, the stability of family life is clearly decreasing. Single parents and multiple families during childhood are inescapable facts of American life. One half of all children will spend some time in a single parent family. There is an array of correlated outcomes from the resulting parent-child interactions: It is a complicated task for scientists to sort out the causal factors in this area. Certainly income plays an important mediating role, especially in educational attainment. From to the proportion of children in single parent families more than doubled among whites and blacks. Of particular interest from a policy perspective is that the level for whites is now at the level it was for blacks at about the time that Patrick Moynihan was writing about the instability of families among black children. We are on a trajectory in which movement in and out of single parent status is likely to continue. Concern for the future productivity of the economy is dire indeed when a quarter of all children are spending at least part of their childhood in poverty. This has serious implications for investments in children now and the nature of the labor force in the next generation. Conservatives and liberals ought to be able to reach common ground over this. I emphasize parenthetically that much of the research in this area focuses on the false dichotomy of being "in poverty" or "out of poverty. A sharp drop in income for a family following divorce may be above the poverty line and still have drastic consequences in stress on the family and the lives of the children involved. How has this happened to us? Do we really value stable relationships and parenting? The underlying dynamics are the atomizing effects of the culture of individualism on the one hand and of the market economy on the other. In that context relative value and revealed preferences actually determine the behavior of individual parents.

Individualism and the Market Economy The family changes occurring in the Western world, I believe, are the result of the interplay between individualism and market economies. They are not the consequences of policies, such as welfare or no-fault divorce or even the increased employment of women. The seeds of individualism were brought to America from Europe, where individualism plays an important role in family change as well. Individualism creates a climate in which responsibility to others and the attractiveness of childrearing are diminished. These changes are increasingly being shared with Eastern Asian societies. I hear my Japanese colleagues bemoan the increase in individualism among the young people in the Confucian context of duty to others. I believe that these changes are due to the increasing legitimacy of self-interest as a criterion for decisions as opposed to the interests of a larger collectivity. This need not be interpreted in the narrowest sense of selfishness but rather in the context of competing values, such as personal freedom, development, and empowerment values that we hold as important as our family roles. The needs of our market economy define individual as producers. As a result occupational roles take priority over family roles. We see the consequences of this priority. The father who works extra hours at the office, rather than the one who knocks off at four to take his boy to softball practice, is the one who will get the pay raise the next time around.

Relative Value and Revealed Preferences Here the perspectives of relative value and revealed preferences are helpful. Revealed preferences is a term from the economists for which there are fancy equations which basically mean "actions speak louder than words. Simple enough, and it is that perspective that I bring to much of the analysis that I am doing here. How can it then be that we as Americans truly value family relationships and yet act to the contrary? We can value

something very much. We can even value it more than we used to and still value it less relative to some other competing good, if our value on that competing good increased more rapidly. This is where the emphasis on the consumption need comes in. Does that mean that their life styles would be worse than they were in the s if they were to marry? It means that they think that they need more now than then they did then in order to marry. The values of independence and the realization of individual goals and self-definition are relevant as well. It is in respect to these things that parenting roles are becoming less important, even while their importance is maintained. A consequence of these competing values noted by many European as well as American observers is the decreased willingness to make long-term commitments. An intergenerational example is that children from nonintact families are less likely to form and maintain intact families of their own. The values of personal freedom, development, and empowerment reduce the relative attractiveness of the obligatory nature of family roles.

Divorce The trend in divorce toward which half of all first marriages will end in divorce is part of a long-standing accelerating curve that reaches well back into the last century to about 1900. There are fluctuations around this trend line, but we have been at a plateau for about the last twenty years. While the current levels of divorce are a continuation of the long-term trend, they also signal a turning point in the economic terms of a contract of marriage until death. That contract has become a very weak guarantee both of a stable economic environment for women and of a stable childhood environment for children.

Separation of Sexual Activity and Marriage Unmarried sex probably was accelerated by the availability of oral contraceptives in the s. The point here is that unmarried sex is simply a part of our culture. The significance of marriage for sex is disappearing, although male adolescents are more likely now than in previous years to say that marriage and support of the child is their preferred solution to nonmarital pregnancy. The marketplace is addressing a population that is unmarried and sexually active. This increased exposure time, earlier sexual activity, and later ages of marriage are resulting in increasing numbers of women who are having unintended pregnancies while they are unmarried. Yet two-thirds of the births that occur to unmarried women are the result of unintended pregnancy. I emphasize this because unintended pregnancy is the primary route by which these single parent families are created. Reducing the levels of unintended pregnancy among unmarried women would essentially restructure the family context of children.

Marriage no longer signifies a solid commitment to a lifetime relationship. It no longer signifies the point at which sexual activity is expected to begin. It no longer clearly delimits the necessary context for childbirth. It no longer signifies that a couple is likely to take up joint housekeeping. Cohabitation has evolved from a strongly disapproved behavior to the majority behavior in our society. One used to refer to cohabitation as "shacking up" or "living in sin. If we live in a society in which we take for granted that young people are sexually active, then the stigma associated with unmarried childbearing or cohabitation is gone.

Cohabitation One of the most important factors in the present plateau of divorce is cohabitation, which is pruning off a fair number of divorces that would have occurred. My colleague, sociologist James Sweet, calls these "premarital divorces. Writers from the late 19 th century bemoaned the increase in individualism and the decline in commitment to community obligations. Thus, single parents are not new. A qualitative change did occur sometime in the s, however. Single parent families over the latter part of the last century and the first part of this century were largely the consequence of orphanhood. Somewhere in the s the majority of single parent families followed divorce. Parental choice became the primary mechanism by which single parent families were formed and public attitudes accommodated that choice. A decreased sense that parents were obliged to stay together for the sake of the children occurred. In half of the women in their thirties had lived in a cohabiting relationship. The proportion of year olds who ever lived in a cohabiting relationship increased by over one-third from as younger cohorts aged into this category. What accounts for this rapid change? It is because of a demographic process called cohort succession or demographic metabolism. As younger generations with high levels of cohabitation grow older, they carry their experience with them in to the next age category.

Single Parenthood by Choice The significance of marriage as a lifetime contract has declined. Single parenthood by choice has become common. And this, I think, is one of the important feedback loops. With the high levels of divorce in the late s, the increasing numbers of single parent families, and the changes in public attitudes about a couple staying together, single parenthood in itself no longer is stigmatizing. So given that change, a young woman who finds

herself pregnant and does not really want to marry the father is in a different environment. One-half of all single parent families now begin by an unmarried birth. One-third of all children in the United States are now born to an unmarried mother. One-half are second or higher order births. These are not just first births and certainly not just teen births. Only a third of unmarried childbearing occurs to teens; the majority occur later in life. This trend toward unmarried childbearing in the United States has not occurred primarily among minorities and occurs at all ages. Among white women in the United States at virtually every age, there has been an increase in the rate of unmarried childbearing. The significance of marriage for childbearing has clearly declined. The roots are in delayed marriage and in the separation of sex from marriage. Delayed Marriage Delayed marriage plays three roles in this process.

Chapter 2 : Differences in Parenting? How Your Child May Be Using it Against You

Parents should not pressure their teens to select a college based on the desires of the parents. Although taking care of your children may be your primary focus, it is important to take care of your needs as well.

Getty Images In a previous blog I wrote about the Sandwich Generation – a generation of people typically in their 30s or 40s who are responsible for bringing up their own children and also for the care of their aging parents. I mentioned that I am a member of that group due to the care and support I provide for my mother, in addition to raising my young son. Naturally, any issues pertaining to the Sandwich Generation are of interest to me. Recently, I came across some information that was news to me and it seemed sufficiently important to pass it along here. It concerns the issue of long-term care and the possibility that, under certain circumstances, children can be held financially responsible for the expenses incurred in the care of their elderly parents. Typically, these would be costs associated with nursing home care. Before anyone panics at that notion, please understand that it is not my intention to cause any fear or alarm. However, these rules do not apply when parents are eligible for Medicare – in those cases, Medicare covers the expenses. But filial responsibility laws could require children to pay if their parents incurred medical expenses before qualifying for Medicare. Though filial responsibility laws exist and are legally binding, they are rarely enforced. Most states stopped invoking filial support laws after Medicaid was created in These days, Medicaid generally steps in to cover expenses when nursing home residents can no longer pay. But a few states – including New Jersey – have reserved the option for nursing homes and other health care providers to seek payment from family members of nursing home residents with unpaid bills. Read the Fine Print Carefully Most well-intentioned children go to great lengths to find a long-term care facility for their aging parents that meets their needs and budget. Often, adult children will help their parents sign the residency agreements required for admission by long-term care facilities and, in some cases, the language in those agreements can be confusing or even deceptive. Of course, in these circumstances, it is a very good idea to consult with an elder care attorney for advice and guidance before signing any legally binding document. Pre-Planning is Invaluable Too often frank and honest family discussions involving parental health care are postponed until a family is forced to address them, either by virtue of a sudden medical emergency or by the onset of a chronic illness, and these are not the best circumstances in which to solve delicate and sensitive family issues. Once a family is in crisis mode, enormous emotional pressures are brought to bear, often making logical and rational decision-making difficult to achieve. It is far better for everyone involved – parents and children – to be involved early in the planning for all possible eventualities regarding the health care for aging parents. Some adult siblings enter into a caregiver agreement that establishes who is responsible for paying and how that sibling will be reimbursed. Or, if a parent lives at home with an adult child, he or she might receive a regular monthly stipend to help defray the cost of meals and any home health services that might be necessary. Also, parents are encouraged to be actively engaged in the planning for their own health care needs in their later years. This could involve issues such as effective retirement planning, the acquisition of long term health care insurance, or timely enrollment in Medicare or, if necessary, Medicaid programs. Financial Life Management We all want the best for our parents, but their long-term care expenses need not imperil our own financial well-being. Understand the filial responsibility laws in your state, review all residency contracts carefully, consult with an elder care attorney if necessary, and facilitate open discussions with your siblings early on regarding the shared responsibilities for caring for aging parents. Finally, as always, I strongly advise a close and ongoing relationship with your financial adviser. These kinds of financial life management issues are exactly what professional advisers are trained to address, and with the proper guidance, they will help to ensure the best possible outcomes for all concerned. She has been in the insurance industry more than 20 years and is a continual student of the industry.

Chapter 3 : Single parent? Tips for raising a child alone - Mayo Clinic

This is why a united front in co-parenting is recommended. Be boring. Research shows that children need time to do ordinary things with their less-seen parent, not just fun things.

Child Discipline Child Discipline - What is it? Discipline or training might simply be defined as a process to help children learn appropriate behaviors and make good choices. In addition, loving, effective discipline aids a child in exercising self-control, accountability, and mutual respect. Through proper discipline, children learn how to function in a family and society that is full of boundaries, rules, and laws by which we all must abide. With it, children gain a sense of security, protection, and often feel accomplishment. Without proper discipline, children are at risk for a variety of behavioral and emotional problems. Child Discipline - How Does it Work? How do we effectively implement child discipline? The Bible says parents have a God-given responsibility to train their child in the way he should go. That challenge often requires that we first learn to discipline ourselves in the matters of child rearing. Whether parenting skills come naturally or we learn them through trial and error, they are accomplished by consistency, encouragement, and example. The importance of these tools cannot be expressed enough. Here are some effective child discipline techniques using instruction: State boundaries and commands clearly and concisely. As parents, we cannot flip-flop when children try to bargain or negotiate - and they will. Children will test us to see if we will give in to their persuasive pleas no matter their age. We must deliver our instructions calmly, yet steadfastly, not as a quivering request. It is more effective to say, "Do not go into the street. Our authority must be clearly, consistently established. Use only the necessary words, and teach your children to develop eye contact and listening skills. Show, by example, that you listen to them as you expect them to listen. Remember to make rewards and disciplinary consequences not only age appropriate, but also task appropriate. Teach your child that all actions bring consequences. Encourage them when they make good choices. They need to know the benefits of obeying and making good choices, as well as the negative consequences for disobedience. Give predictable consequences, such as, "If you behave in this way, this will happen. Go to church as a family. Plan healthy family activities that promote good morals and "together" time. You will soon see your child mirror your values and morals. Child discipline and training does not occur in a vacuum. Their behaviors are formed within the context of what they witness in their primary teachers. Child Discipline - When Should it Begin? Child discipline should start in the beginning. You should enjoy holding, cuddling, and talking with your baby. Studies have reported that infants respond to the sounds of the human voice. Your baby will learn very quickly that crying brings response. When a child is hungry and cries, it gets fed. Begin training your infant to know the times he will be held and cuddled and the times he needs to be put in his crib. Speaking coupled with action is where child training should begin. Most new parents think about discipline only after negative behaviors begin. Your child does not automatically know what is expected; you must spend time teaching him. While we encourage our children to learn to make choices, they need our guidance. It is to their benefit and ours to lovingly lead them into compliance with praise for the positives. From the start, put forth effort in your responsibility as a parent. Your child will thank you for it. When should a parent begin disciplining their children? Learn why it is important in their development and basic principles to make it effective. Learn More About Parenting! God , the Father, sent His only Son to satisfy that judgment for those who believe in Him. Jesus , the creator and eternal Son of God, who lived a sinless life, loves us so much that He died for our sins, taking the punishment that we deserve, was buried , and rose from the dead according to the Bible. If you truly believe and trust this in your heart, receiving Jesus alone as your Savior , declaring, " Jesus is Lord ," you will be saved from judgment and spend eternity with God in heaven. What is your response?

Chapter 4 : The importance of parents presenting a "united front"™

The United States is either in or near last place in the industrialized world on paid family leave, child care subsidies, maternal health, and child poverty. This is well known.

Hands-down, this is one of the most frequently asked questions we receive at Empowering Parents. Read on to see why fighting with your spouse over parenting actually undermines your own authority in the long run. To me, marriage is like a book. There are many pages in the marriage, with different pages representing different aspects of your life. You have parenting, household duties, extended family, and of course, your relationship with your spouse and children. But things that are subtle differences can become more burdensome over time. And this is especially true when you have a child with behavioral problems, because besides putting extra stress on a marriage, you need to be united in teaching that child firm, clear rules. I believe the three main parenting roles for both parents are the Teaching, Coaching and Limit-setting roles. James, you talk a lot about limit-setting in your articles and your programs. Why do you see it as being so critically important for both parents? There are a lot of rules around how you treat other people, how you handle your finances, how you act at work. I think kids need to learn to respond to those limits from both parents from a very early age. Part of socialization for kids is learning that there are rules, with consequences and rewards attached. That larger group can be a student in a classroom, a family member, an employee at a corporation or somebody riding a plane with other passengers. Kids need to learn how to handle those situations when they become adults. I personally believe in a process where kids are given responsibilities, taught how to accomplish those responsibilities and then held accountable for meeting their responsibilities. An example might be how they should treat their siblings. You tell them what the rules are: And then you hold them accountable and follow through. You have them make amends if necessary. What about when parents disagree about how to give a consequence or discipline their child? Realize that when one parent undermines the other parent in this way, it hurts both parents. Sometimes, kids feel like they have to choose sides. So these things have to be handled privately. I think the key is to start by finding one thing you can both agree on and go from there. Once one thing is working, you can build some momentum and form the basis of an agreement on parenting your child. She brings it on herself. My spouse makes me do all the dirty work. We worked together to agree on everything and we both articulated our position when dealing with our son and his behavior. What about parents who are working on getting on the same page, but then find they are gradually slipping back into those same old roles? Parents need to consciously work at making an effort to stay on the same page with their kids. And by the way, disagreements you have over other things in your marriage will also affect the way you parent together. James, you mention that kids sometimes use our lack of agreement to manipulate and take advantage. What do you mean by that? The higher your cognitive abilities, the more natural it is to try to manipulate your environment. Adults do the same thingâ€”have you ever tried to manipulate your boss when you wanted something? And do you remember trying to manipulate your own parents when you were a teenager? He will use that information to split the two of you and manipulate you against the other. What happens when you get entrenched in opposing roles as parents? To go back to our original analogy, when one parent is entrenched in opposition to the other parent on any one page of the marriage, it affects all the pages in the book. And why is compromising so difficult? Show Comments 5 You must log in to leave a comment. Create one for free! Responses to questions posted on EmpoweringParents. We cannot diagnose disorders or offer recommendations on which treatment plan is best for your family. Please seek the support of local resources as needed. If you need immediate assistance, or if you and your family are in crisis, please contact a qualified mental health provider in your area, or contact your statewide crisis hotline. We value your opinions and encourage you to add your comments to this discussion. We ask that you refrain from discussing topics of a political or religious nature. Having had severe behavioral problems himself as a child, he was inspired to focus on behavioral management professionally. Together with his wife, Janet Lehman, he developed an approach to managing children and teens that challenges them to solve their own problems without hiding behind disrespectful, obnoxious or abusive behavior. Empowering Parents now brings this insightful and

impactful program directly to homes around the globe.

Chapter 5 : Co-Parenting Tips for Divorced Parents: Making Joint Custody Work After a Divorce or Separation

Your most important job is to help your child to grow up feeling self-confident, independent, and capable. Countering Arguments Against Shared Parenting in Family Law By Edward Kruk Ph.D. on.

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Becoming a Foster Parent
Foster care is a protective service to children and their families when families can no longer care for their children. There are many reasons and circumstances that make it difficult for biological families to meet the needs of their children, which include poverty, substance abuse, mental illness, homelessness, loss of a job or lack of support from extended family and community. In foster care, the children are provided with a safe, nurturing, loving family for a temporary period of time. What foster care is: Being a successful foster parent is hard work and it requires opening yourself and your home. The heart of it, of course, is working with children and their families. All types of people make good foster parents as we all have our own special talents, but keep in mind that foster parenting is not for everyone. If your family is thinking of foster care, contact an agency near you, and begin the discussion. Foster Parent Qualifications The key qualification is being able to meet the physical, emotional and developmental needs of a child. Foster care agencies are able to help you evaluate whether this is something you might be able to do. They do this through a process that helps you and the agency evaluate your capabilities. In addition, most agencies would expect that you meet the following: Most states and regions also welcome same-sex partners as foster parents. The licensing process is different in each state -- and may even vary in different counties -- yet, there are certain steps that almost everyone follows. Please recognize that every agency has a few variations in the process, and the steps do not always follow the same sequence. Find a Phone Number or an Email Address Foster care is provided by both private agencies and public agencies state, county and tribal. You can find foster care agencies in your area through an Internet search. Make the Call Once you have identified an agency or agencies, the best way to start the process is to make a phone call. They may also discuss your motivation and their need for foster families. If there are multiple foster care agencies in your area, be sure to contact several. It is important to find an agency with which you are comfortable. In many states you can chose to become a foster parent with the public agency state or county or chose a privately run foster care agency. Initial Meeting Some agencies offer information meetings. At an information meeting the agency presents an overview of the role and responsibilities of foster parents. Other agencies will schedule an appointment in your home for the initial meeting. Similar introductory information will be provided and the agency may begin to gather information about you. Whether you attend an information meeting at the agency or meet in your home, the first meeting will likely end with the licensing worker giving you an application and forms to complete. The worker should also give you a copy of the state foster care licensing rules and regulations. Exploring Your Interests and Capabilities The licensing process is designed to help both you and the agency. While the process may vary, it always has two equally important purposes: The agency will likely ask you to complete a social history and several questionnaires. In addition, the licensing worker will ask you many questions about your childhood, relationships and interests. The assessment is extensive -- but usually not difficult -- and gives you an opportunity to think about yourself, your interests and your motivations. Many agencies conduct the family assessment in group sessions and combine it with orientation and training. Other agencies may conduct the assessment and initial orientation on an individual basis. References The agency will ask you to provide three or more references. These should be people who know you and can help the agency assess your capabilities and interests. The licensing worker will either mail the references a form to complete, or will conduct a phone interview. State regulations usually define the completed references as confidential and they cannot be shared with prospective foster families. Background Checks The background checks are a formal review of your criminal and child protection history. It will require fingerprints and an authorization for the agency to check your background. The fingerprints and authorization are used to check local, state and FBI databases. A previous arrest or conviction does not automatically prohibit one from providing foster care. It depends on the charges and when they took place. The background check is important to ensure that people with a history of potentially harming children are not licensed. Home Safety Check The agency is required to

look at your house or apartment to assure it is safe for children. Foster care and safety researchers have identified several risk factors in homes. It is impossible to describe them all here, but the licensing worker will have a checklist that must be completed. Please remember that the home safety checklist is intended to help protect you and all members of your family. Nearly all problems identified by the checklist can be fixed. In certain circumstances, homes will also need to be inspected by a fire marshal or building inspector. Your family may also be asked to document such things as pet vaccinations and water drinkability if you have your own well.

Orientation and Pre-Service Training Most states require 10 to 30 hours of training before you can become licensed or before a child is matched with your family. Some agencies require even more hours and may include CPR and first aid training as part of the pre-service requirements. The orientation should include information about how best to work with your state or private agency, as well as information about caring for children with special needs.

Licensure At the end of the study process, the licensing worker will complete a written report with recommendations. The recommendations will generally include information about the children that might be best for your family, as well as areas of training you might need. The worker should provide you with a copy of the written report. The licensing worker will also submit the appropriate forms to the licensing agency in order to have the license issued. In most states they cannot place children in your home until the actual license has been issued. The National Foster Parent Association is a champion for the thousands of families that open their hearts and their homes to the over , children in out-of-home placement in the US.

Chapter 6 : Planning for Your Parents' Long-Term Care Expenses - United Capital

Second, if your parent is outside the United States, your parent will be notified to go to the local U.S. consulate to complete the processing for an immigrant visa. If your parent lives legally inside the U.S., he or she may apply to adjust his or her status to that of a lawful permanent resident using the Form I

For reasons I no longer recall, I decided that a baby was a feasible addition to my multi-city book tour. At one point in this journey, I headed to Dulles Airport. Having traveled extensively with my older son, I thought a family lane at security was standard. Not so at Dulles. But the fact is that long before xenophobia was the soundtrack to making America great again, the US government was treating such families as free agents selecting from among an array of options. The idea that they could be deterred through policies at the border is long standing. Andrew Free detailed an exchange he had with President Obama on this. According to Free, Obama justified holding immigrant children in prisons alongside their parents to warn others against attempting the trek. But for many people, both in the United States and outside of it, parenting is an attempt to navigate among insurmountable obstacles for the well-being of the humans in your care. Yet, as horrified as many Americans are by the abuse of immigrant children, this cruelty is what happens when racism intertwines with the neoliberal ideology embedded in the idea of parenting as a set of consumer options. Many of us accept that children are the sole responsibility of the adults related to them. My experiences as a naturalized citizen and mother to Latino kids is mercifully buffered from human rights abuses. However, even from my perch of privilege, my experience raising kids in the United States demonstrates how widespread the tacit acceptance that society has nothing to do with the fate of its children has become. The United States is either in or near last place in the industrialized world on paid family leave, child care subsidies, maternal health, and child poverty. This is well known. The destruction of family-gear'd public resources " schools, playgrounds, libraries, and so on " is another noxious emblem of the mentality that parents alone hold all responsibility for the next generation. Policies to support parents that other wealthy nations take as obvious are huge political battles yet to be won here. This is, of course, a country where people proudly maintain that those unable to make ends meet have simply not tried. Nor should it mean we look away while our leaders justify imprisoning children as the means to force parents to make better choices. The need for paid time to care for a new baby, or for good and affordable child care, affects all but the wealthiest among us. Babies behind bars, with or without their parents, should never seem appropriate. Decades ago, those arguably most committed to collective well-being unintentionally bolstered the idea of parenting as private undertaking. Secondly, this opening helped conservatives paint themselves as pro-family while they denied social supports for child-rearing. And, thirdly, today people who proudly espouse progressive political beliefs approach child-rearing in ways that both stem from and reinforce individualism. My Child, My Choice: The Roots of Rugged Individualism in Child-Rearing Progressives are accustomed to blaming decades of calculated conservative efforts for our lack of supports for child development. But a hard look at the last 50 years of political discourse and recent parenting practices belie a more complex origin story. Since the Roe v. Americans claim the legal right to abortion and contraception " at least at this moment. But without government support this critical win was far from sufficient. Consider the prolonged battle to include reproductive coverage in the Affordable Care Act and the evergreen threats to defund Planned Parenthood. We see that without government, reproductive health care is a legal right in name only for many. This is an argument that reproductive justice proponents like Loretta Ross and Dorothy Roberts have made for decades. This critique was a profound and still not fully heeded wake-up call. Yet, these are inherently contradictory ideas. Instead of fighting about the right of women to have sex without the threat of lifelong consequences, just like men, we had a debate about how far into our lives government ought to be permitted. But research now shows that the language of choice leaves audiences cold. Studies in cognitive linguistics and psychology demonstrate this phrase suggests action quickly considered and of little consequence. Yet, the broader ideas behind this slogan have proven durable. In addition, with contraception and subsequently abortion such flashpoints, second-wave feminists were largely silent about how we ought to ensure the healthy development

of the children we do have. In fact, it became a mainstay of a proudly more radical element of feminism to see child-rearing as anathema to liberated womanhood. Today, the number-one reason women give for abortion is their desire to better care for their current or future kids. Thus, exiting the conversation about how to raise healthy, functional adults hurt even the narrowest interpretation of the reproductive rights cause: With the left more or less silent on child-rearing, the right had plenty of room to claim this territory. This and his dozens of subsequent volumes gave rise to his parental advice industry, which would serve as the foundation for his influential organization, Focus on the Family. By luring parents in with biblical techniques for handling everything from toddler tantrums to teen angst, Dobson and his allies could comfortably claim to be helping families by dishing out wisdom on how to rear strong boys and obedient girls. Never mind that they championed dismantling social supports, and the municipal budgets that fund parks, after-school programs, and libraries. Dobson was part architect, part beneficiary, of an intentional change in the conservative tune. They witnessed the concerted shift leftward in American politics and saw in this a certain inadequacy to their Rugged Individual story. So they expanded the Rugged Individual story to shift the politically relevant unit from atomized man to his yes, his household. Sex before marriage, single mothers, and deadbeat dads became explanations for poverty. Conservatives built themselves a plum perch from which to argue for defunding public schools, dismantling safety nets, and blocking subsidized child care under a red, white, and blue banner of Family Values and parental choice. The Religious Right likes to trace its origins to *Roe v. Wade*. According to founding fathers like Jerry Falwell, it was this pending Supreme Court decision that convinced him to organize evangelicals as a political force. As Balmer illustrates, evangelicals organized in response to a decision to prohibit segregationist private schools from maintaining tax-exempt status. Preserving tax exemption for segregated private institutions helped politicize evangelicals who were drifting toward the Republican Party anyway. But the question of how to frame the cause remained. Anti-integration was too easy to assail. So, instead, conservatives turned this into an issue of religious freedom “and, of course, parental choice. These white evangelical parents were fighting for the right of their schools to refuse to contribute to the commonwealth. They wanted out of a shared kitty that funds public education under a social contract of collective responsibility for the next generation. Moreover, they were refusing these funds in order to tailor the schooling their offspring would receive in the private sector. This needs to be about them, their hometowns, their future and, of course, their children. Parental empowerment makes sense in a paradigm in which kids are products to be perfected, not future adults that society recognizes we all share a responsibility to educate, empower, and shape. How Progressives Parent Conservatively The efforts of Dobson, Falwell, and eventually Luntz resonated more effectively because American culture had already shifted from old notions of child-rearing into ones of parenting. Formerly, the focus had been “as the term suggests” on moving human young into adulthood. Implied in this is some social benefit to turning entirely dependent infants into eventual citizens, providers, and, in turn, parents themselves. And where so much is at stake for society, it follows that there must be some collective effort. Child-rearing sounds old-fashioned because our focus has shifted to parenting. Society plays a role whether we like it or not. But we have lost the language to speak about the collective nature of this basic requirement for the future of our species: The obsession exists in seemingly opposing political paradigms. Dobson come to wildly different pronouncements on how to rear kids. Today, over half of US fertility clinics offer embryo screening that includes information about sex. Pharmacies now sell tests to ascertain sex at seven weeks into pregnancy. This is meant to minimize sex-linked diseases. But it comes into a culture where some would-be parents want more than a healthy child. They have in mind a particular kind. Regardless of the reality that birth ratios indicate sex selection is extremely rare in the United States, opponents of abortion are using these concerns as reasons to control women. In this, they target women of color in particular. Currently, eight states have passed outright bans on sex-selective abortions and half of state legislatures have voted on such bills. Meanwhile, those of us parenting in Boston or Austin, Brooklyn or Oakland, are frequently so overwhelmed financing child care or scrambling to get that coveted spot in the school lottery, we lack the bandwidth to notice we have accepted that our children are projects for us to manage, solo. Internet search trends in liberal areas suggest that parents in blue counties are responding to parental anxiety about the chances for their offspring more than they are Googling

how to create the political will to care for the collective. They are looking to give their kids a competitive edge — classes and tutors, brain-boosting gadgets and optimal diets. But the immediate assumption that this is a bad thing is troubling. Vaccine refusal means you rely on the very herd immunity you threaten by prioritizing your individual concerns. More broadly, urban coastal parents faithfully identify structural causes and favor collective approaches. These beliefs enable both the systematic refusal of social supports for children and the simultaneous blame for all economic ills on family disintegration. Parents who risk everything to come here do so precisely because they are completely out of choices. Without collective recognition of this, we have lost all understanding of what it means to be humans, let alone raise them. If parents are forced to raise children on our own, how can they become the adults our country requires? How we treat the children and parents on our soil today — whether temporarily or for a lifetime — determines who and what we will become tomorrow.

Chapter 7 : Parenting: MedlinePlus

About James Lehman, MSW. James Lehman, who dedicated his life to behaviorally troubled youth, created The Total Transformation® Program, The Complete Guide to Consequences, Getting Through To Your Child, and Two Parents One Plan, from a place of professional and personal experience.

But co-parenting amicably with your ex can give your children the stability, security, and close relationships with both parents they need. With these tips, you can remain calm, stay consistent, and resolve conflicts to make joint custody work and enable your kids to thrive. Research suggests that the quality of the relationship between co-parents can also have a strong influence on the mental and emotional well-being of children, and the incidence of anxiety and depression. Of course, putting aside relationship issues, especially after an acrimonious split, to co-parent agreeably can be easier said than done. Joint custody arrangements can be exhausting, infuriating, and fraught with stress. It can be extremely difficult to get past the painful history you may have with your ex and overcome built-up resentments. Despite the many challenges, though, it is possible to develop an amicable working relationship with your ex for the sake of your children. Making co-parenting work

The key to successful co-parenting is to separate the personal relationship with your ex from the co-parenting relationship. It may be helpful to start thinking of your relationship with your ex as a completely new one—one that is entirely about the well-being of your children, and not about either of you. Your marriage may be over, but your family is not; doing what is best for your kids is your most important priority.

Benefits for your children Through your co-parenting partnership, your kids should recognize that they are more important than the conflict that ended your marriage—and understand that your love for them will prevail despite changing circumstances. Kids whose divorced parents have a cooperative relationship: When confident of the love of both parents, kids adjust more quickly and easily to divorce and new living situations, and have better self-esteem. Better understand problem solving. Children who see their parents continuing to work together are more likely to learn how to effectively and peacefully solve problems themselves. Have a healthy example to follow. By cooperating with the other parent, you are establishing a life pattern your children can carry into the future to build and maintain stronger relationships. Are mentally and emotionally healthier. Children exposed to conflict between co-parents are more likely to develop issues such as depression, anxiety, or ADHD. Set hurt and anger aside Successful co-parenting means that your own emotions—any anger, resentment, or hurt—must take a back seat to the needs of your children. Get your feelings out somewhere else. Never vent to your child. Friends, therapists, or even a loving pet can all make good listeners when you need to get negative feelings off your chest. Exercise can also be a healthy outlet for letting off steam. If you feel angry or resentful, try to remember why you need to act with purpose and grace: If your anger feels overwhelming, looking at a photograph of your child may help you calm down. Resolve to keep your issues with your ex away from your children. Never use kids as messengers. When you use your children to convey messages to your co-parent, it puts them in the center of your conflict. The goal is to keep your child out of your relationship issues, so call or email your ex directly. Keep your issues to yourself. Never say negative things about your ex to your children, or make them feel like they have to choose. Your child has a right to a relationship with their other parent that is free of your influence. Improve communication with your co-parent Peaceful, consistent, and purposeful communication with your ex is essential to the success of co-parenting—even though it may seem absolutely impossible. It all begins with your mindset. Think about communication with your ex as having the highest purpose: Before contact with your ex, ask yourself how your talk will affect your child, and resolve to conduct yourself with dignity. Make your child the focal point of every discussion you have with your ex-partner. The goal is to establish conflict-free communication, so see which type of contact works best for you. Co-parenting communication methods However you choose to communicate, the following methods can help you initiate and maintain effective communication: Set a business-like tone. Speak or write to your ex as you would a colleague—with cordiality, respect, and neutrality. Relax and talk slowly. Instead of making statements, which can be misinterpreted as demands, try framing as much as you can as requests. Requests can begin "Would you be

willing to listen? Communicating with maturity starts with listening. You can train yourself to not overreact to your ex, and over time you can become numb to the buttons they try to push. Though it may be extremely difficult in the early stages, frequent communication with your ex will convey the message to your children that you and your co-parent are a united front. Quickly relieve stress in the moment. But by practicing quick stress relief techniques, you can learn to stay in control when the pressure builds. This simple technique can jump-start positive communications between you. Apologizing can be very powerful in moving your relationship away from being adversaries. If a special outing with your ex is going to cut into your time with your child by an hour, graciously let it be. Plus, when you show flexibility, your ex is more likely to be flexible with you. Cooperating and communicating without blow-ups or bickering makes decision-making far easier on everybody. If you shoot for consistency, geniality, and teamwork with your co-parent, the details of child-rearing decisions tend to fall into place. Important lifestyle rules like homework issues, curfews, and off-limit activities should be followed in both households. The same can be done for rewarding good behavior. Making important decisions as co-parents Major decisions need to be made by both you and your ex. Whether you decide to designate one parent to communicate primarily with health care professionals or attend medical appointments together, keep one another in the loop. Speak with your ex ahead of time about class schedules, extra-curricular activities, and parent-teacher conferences, and be polite to each other at school or sports events. The cost of maintaining two separate households can strain your attempts to be effective co-parents. Set a realistic budget and keep accurate records for shared expenses. Be gracious if your ex provides opportunities for your children that you cannot provide. Resolving co-parenting disagreements As you co-parent, you and your ex are bound to disagree over certain issues. Keep the following in mind as you try to reach a consensus. Respect can go a long way. Simple manners should be the foundation for co-parenting. Being considerate and respectful includes letting your ex know about school events, being flexible about your schedule when possible, and taking their opinion seriously. If you disagree about something important, you will need to continue communicating. Never discuss your differences of opinions with or in front of your child. If you disagree about important issues like a medical surgery or choice of school for your child, by all means keep the discussion going. But if you want your child in bed by 7: Make transitions and visitation easier The actual move from one household to another, whether it happens every few days or just certain weekends, can be a very hard time for children. Help children anticipate change. Encourage packing familiar reminders like a special stuffed toy or photograph. Always drop off—never pick up the child. To help your child adjust: When children first enter your home, try to have some down time together—read a book or do some other quiet activity. Allow your child space. Children often need a little time to adjust to the transition. If they seem to need some space, do something else nearby. In time, things will get back to normal. Establish a special routine. Play a game or serve the same special meal each time your child returns. Kids thrive on routine—if they know exactly what to expect when they return to you it can help the transition. The problem may be one that is easy to resolve, like paying more attention to your child, making a change in discipline style, or having more toys or other entertainment. Or it may be that an emotional reason is at hand, such as conflict or misunderstanding. Talk to your child about their refusal. Go with the flow. Whether you have detected the reason for the refusal or not, try to give your child the space and time that they obviously need. It may have nothing to do with you at all. Talk to your ex. A heart-to-heart with your ex about the refusal may be challenging and emotional, but can help you figure out what the problem is. Try to be sensitive and understanding to your ex as you discuss this touchy subject. Recommended reading Co-Parenting After Divorce — A four-page booklet that includes a checklist of what to include in a co-parenting plan and descriptions of different types of custody arrangements.

Chapter 8 : For Parents - United Way of Dane County

To petition for your parents (mother or father) to live in the United States as green card holders, you must be a U.S. citizen and at least 21 years old. Green card holders (permanent residents) may not petition to bring parents to live permanently in the United States.

Sign up now Single parent? Tips for raising a child alone Raising a child on your own can be stressful. Single-parent families are more common than ever. Know how to manage some of the special challenges single parents experience and what you can do to raise a happy, healthy child. Common single-parent challenges Child rearing can be difficult under any circumstances. Without a partner, the stakes are higher. As a single parent, you might have sole responsibility for all aspects of day-to-day child care. Being a single parent can result in added pressure, stress and fatigue. Single-parent families also generally have lower incomes and less access to health care. Juggling work and child care can be financially difficult and socially isolating. You might worry about the lack of a male or female parental role model for your child, too. Positive strategies To reduce stress in your single-parent family: Remember to praise your child. Give him or her your unconditional love and support. Set aside time each day to play, read or simply sit with your child. Structure â€” such as regularly scheduled meals and bedtimes â€” helps your child know what to expect. Find quality child care. If you need regular child care, look for a qualified caregiver who can provide stimulation in a safe environment. Be careful about asking a new friend or partner to watch your child. Explain house rules and expectations to your child â€” such as speaking respectfully â€” and enforce them. Take care of yourself. Include physical activity in your daily routine, eat a healthy diet and get plenty of sleep. Arrange time to do activities you enjoy alone or with friends. Give yourself a "timeout" by arranging for child care at least a few hours a week. Work out a carpool schedule with other parents. Join a support group for single parents or seek social services. Call on loved ones, friends and neighbors for help. Faith communities can be helpful resources, too. Give your child an age-appropriate level of responsibility rather than expecting him or her to behave like a "little adult. Be aware that some research has shown that teens in single-parent households have a higher risk of depression and lower self-esteem. If you see these signs in your child or teen, talk to his or her doctor. Talking to your child about separation or divorce Many single-parent families are the result of divorce or separation. A counselor might be able to help you and your child talk about problems, fears or concerns. Look for a partner who will treat both you and your child with respect. To send positive messages about the opposite sex: Look for opportunities to be positive. Point out accomplishments or positive characteristics of members of the opposite sex in your family, the community or even the media. Avoid making broad, negative statements about the opposite sex. Contradict negative stereotypes about the opposite sex. Seek out positive relationships with responsible members of the opposite sex who might serve as role models for your child. Being a single parent can be a challenging but rewarding experience. By showing your child love and respect, talking honestly and staying positive, you can lessen your stress and help your child thrive.

Chapter 9 : The Changing Contexts of Parenting in the United States

All foster parents in the United States must be licensed or approved in order to provide care for children. The licensing process is different in each state -- and may even vary in different counties -- yet, there are certain steps that almost everyone follows.