

# Edenglen Primary School

Some advice to Mothers who need to encourage their child to become self reliant, self confident & independent.

1. Don't over parent – “we are all Jewish Mothers Now”, “Cheating Childhood” & “From Scrutiny to Fragility” are three chapters in a book entitled The High Cost of Invasive Parenting. It is a book well worth reading. When a mother makes decisions, hovers over the child and does almost everything to ensure that her child succeeds, she in fact is disadvantaging her child. Children need to learn to think for themselves. As difficult as it may be, “LET GO” and painfully watch your child make mistakes, it will happen. There are some things they need to learn on their own, as long as they're safe, they will be OK. A Helicopter parent doesn't hold any advantages. The cost of smothering is pricey.
2. An excerpt from a book entitled “Strategies for Counselling with Children & Their Parents” by Geraldine Leiti Orton puts it very succinctly:  
Overprotective parents, under the guise of helping their children promote helplessness & dependency. By always doing things for children, parents tell their children that they are not capable of doing anything for themselves. This message has a very negative effect on self-esteem. The overprotective parent hampers the child's decision making ability and encourages reliance on others for advice and approval. Often parent, particularly mothers, need to feel needed & therefore promote this cycle of dependency by doing things for their children. However extreme dependency often foments resentment. Parents are not always going to be able to protect their children from the consequences of their behaviour, and, therefore the children may grow into adulthood looking for other people to direct their lives.
3. There is no way to produce a perfect kid so don't try. Great parents are invested in their children's lives but when they become too immersed in their children's lives it does not allow the child to learn to behave in a way that is socially empowering. A cautious protective parent is not to be confused with an over controlling parent.
4. Every child needs to develop self enabling skills to cope with disappointments, learn from failures, be proud of his her OWN achievements. In fact, failure is how they achieve success.
5. When participating in extra murals or other co-curricular activities, watch every now and again and watch matches. Don't be ever present (hanging around the classroom before or after school to speak to the teacher or simply to fetch your child and carry his/her case). Drop the child off at the school gate and fetch the child from the school gate. Try not to make your child feel different to his her peers. Most children are empowered to enter and leave on their own.
6. Free time where social skills are honed is as important as doing homework and extra lessons. Homework is done by those who don't need reinforcement and not done by those who do need it! However if they have homework to do, don't overdo it and do not make excuses for your child if it is not done. Let them learn consequences and responsibility. This can extend to the home situation as well. Give them chores and responsibilities but don't nag – if they don't do it they simply suffer the consequences that were explained beforehand. No negotiating or pleading to be entertained. You are the boss and not the child.
7. If your child leaves projects or sports kit at home, do not take it to them. They need to learn to rely on their strengths and not yours.

8. Be aware that dependent children often become manipulative and demand to get their own way at all times. Don't fall prey to tears which are a great tool to achieve instant gratification, sympathy and ensure that you stay close. Make them wait and make them realise that there are others who also need attention and that it is fine to be independent.
9. Don't quiz your child on what he/she did each day – General questions are acceptable eg. "how was your test today" but not "let's go through your questions, what didn't you know?".... wait for them to tell you if they choose to do so. Don't quiz your child on what marks other kids got. It doesn't matter – comparisons are odious and will make them feel inferior if their friend got a better mark. They will also feel that they have failed you.
10. If your child complains about being bullied, make sure that your child is not a contributor to the bullying. Has he/she instigated the bullying? If your child is timid and open to being bullied, teach him/her coping skills. There are lots of good books on "Bullying Busting".
11. Create space – don't allow your child to sit on your lap, always be in your company etc they need to establish who they are. Let your child hang out alone with friends.
12. Do not go up to the child's classroom constantly. Wait for an invitation from the teacher. Trust the teacher to contact you if there is a problem. The teachers are trained to intervene if they feel it necessary.
13. Give your child privacy. Just as space is important, so is privacy. When they have friends over or talk on the phone allow them their privacy. As long as you know the friend they are communicating with, trust them and allow them to develop and explore their social dynamics.
14. Be patient. In addition to failing, your child needs time to learn life skills. They may make the same mistake a few times but it may just take time. Be patient and understanding but know when to support or reinforce as well. There is a very fine line between interfering and supporting, knowing when to intervene and when to keep your distance. Remind them that you will be here when they need you. They will come to you if they do.
15. It is sometimes a good idea if you are not working, to get a part time job as this then redirects the focus a little and the all consuming task of being a good mother is diluted a little. It is not easy to be a good parent and to fine tune the status of negligence and over protectiveness is a challenge. That is why grandparents are so good, they have learnt through being in the trenches!
16. You may need some guidance (on a short term basis) from a professional psychologist on how to "stretch the umbilical cord" – seek help in order to trust yourself to show restraint.

**STEP BACK AND LET YOUR CHILD NAVIGATE THE REAL WORLD  
IN ORDER TO  
EXPLORE AND EXCEL**