SKILLS AND TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTING

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By: Cathy L. Graham
County Extension Director

"There is no perfect parent. We need to give ourselves permission to be human and understand that if, overall, we have a good parenting plan and we’re using skills and tools, that our long-term relationship with our children will benefit, and we will be raising responsible, capable people."

Elizabeth Pantley

This week's column provides several skills and tools for effective parenting. Four keys, which can contribute to parenting success, are: 1) Take Charge...You Are the Parent; 2) Think...Have a Parenting Plan; 3) When You Say It, Mean It...Follow Through; and 4) Use Skills and Tools...What Is the Goal?

The following tools can be used to gain your child's cooperation:

- **Make a Statement:** "The trash is overflowing." "The dog wants to go out." "Your crayons are on the floor."
- **Use Grandma's Rule:** "You may __________ after you __________." "You may play outside after you do the dishes."
- **Give Clear Instructions:** "Please ________." (Be specific.) "Please put your shoes and coat on, and get in the car."
- **Give a Choice:** This or that? Then or now? You or me? "Do you want milk or juice? Will you do your homework now or after supper?"
- **Make It Brief:** "Ginger needs water." "Homework first!" "Toys!"
- **Make Something Talk:** Be creative. Use your funny puppet voice.
- **5–3–1–Go!:** Be consistent. When you say "Go," mean it!
- **Ask Helpful Questions:** "What will you do now?" "How can we solve this?"
- **Put It on Paper:** Use notes, lists, or drawings.
- **Use Humor:** Make a joke, sing a song. Pick your battles wisely.
- **Use Rules and Routines:** Make clear, simple rules you will enforce.

Source: Elizabeth Pantley. Kid Cooperation: How to Stop Yelling, Nagging, and Pleading, and Let Kids Cooperate

FUN THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR CHILDREN

- Take in a matinee movie.
- Go to the library and bring home a book on finger plays.
- Go for a walk. Take along a paper bag and pick up litter.

For more information, please contact Cathy L. Graham, County Extension Director with North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, at 671-3276, by E-mail at Cathy_Graham@ncsu.edu, or visit our website at http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu/.