



POSITIVE PARENTING

How your church can encourage families to positively parent in the First Thousand Days

LUNCHTIME CONVERSATION REFLECTION

Sikunye seeks to equip and support churches to care for families in the First Thousand Days (FTD). This reflection is part of a range of Lunchtime Conversations hosted by Sikunye, aimed at equipping churches to become FTD-Friendly.

Listen to audio recording [here](#)

Watch the video recording [here](#)

Psalm 8: 2

"Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger."

WHAT IS POSITIVE PARENTING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Positive parenting is best explained in this [image](#). But in summary positive parenting is:

- When parents have realistic expectations of their children – and knowing what realistic responsibilities for the child's age is
- Encouraging learning and self-control in the parent and child
- Noticing how a child is feeling and treating their feelings with dignity – even their overwhelming and angry feelings etc.
- When parents understand their children better and see their children "through soft eyes" – it is understanding the reasons why children misbehave, or refuse to do something
- Looking at how the parent engages or speaks to the child and whether the child is simply copying the parent
- Modelling to children how we want them to behave – by doing the opposite to the way we want our children to behave causes conflict between parent and child
- Using positive words, positive actions, positive thoughts
- Teaching a child the difference between right and wrong, and that their behaviour impacts others
- Understanding that developmentally 2-year olds are curious and that they will run around, touch things, explore – they are not being naughty
- A two-way relationship where the child understands the parent and the parent understands the child – understanding one another builds a relationship

It is easier to parent when your child is behaving well, and it is harder to parent when your child is unhappy or misbehaving.

Understanding your child for who he/she is helps have a positive relationship

WHAT IS DISCIPLINE VERSUS PUNISHMENT?

Discipline is to teach a child so that the child becomes self-disciplined, gains confidence, knows what is socially acceptable. If there is conflict between a child and parent, then the parent is encouraged to engage their child more, rather than use physical punishment.

Discipline is to teach your child how to behave – it is not an easy process

Punishment is to cause pain – and if a parent is causing pain, how are they teaching self-discipline. Punishment also stops the behaviour in the moment, but the behaviour will continue. What also happens is that the child does not think about what they did wrong in their behaviour but rather has “revenge fantasies” and is angry with the parent, planning on what they will do next time, instead of reflecting on the action that was disciplined.

There is no right or wrong way to parent – but if the way a parent is disciplining is not working, it may be punishment

Harsh parenting is controlling behaviour through fear (e.g. shouting, smacking, threatening, using harsh and negative words)

Harsh parenting is damaging to your child's development

A tantrum does not mean your child is being naughty – remember your child is good and find the reason for why he/she is reacting this way!

REMEMBER: Parents typically parent the way they were raised, through generations of parenting before them. But we have come a long way in understanding the impact of harsh parenting on our children's brains, cognitive development and relationship development and so how do we parent better and encourage parents to parent in a positive way to build healthy relationships with their children to see them thrive? We spoke to Carmen De Vos from [The Parent Centre](#) and Yonela Sipoko from [FAMSA](#).

Did you know: The impact of experiencing or witnessing violence as a child has wide-ranging and long-lasting effects. When a child experiences violence at home, they learn to tolerate violence. Follow us on Facebook for our [16 Days of Activism](#)

YOUR CHURCH AND POSITIVE PARENTING

We listened to Carmen De Vos and Yonela Sipoko who gave us some practical advice to support families in parenting in a positive way.

Speak Up: Address the difference between discipline and punishment and encourage parents to see that their child is not being “naughty” but is exploring the world around them as they grow up.

Pray: For parents in the First Thousand Days, for patience, gentleness, and self-control with their children, despite what is happening around them. Pray for good two-way communication and understanding between parents and children.

Surround families: Be the support and encouragement that parents need to parent well, offer support, encourage them to seek support if needed

Create warm welcoming spaces: Model the love, gentleness, kindness that we hope parents will model to their children. Be the safe place that parents can come to and find friendship and understanding to then be able to parent well.

Equip and prepare: Refer parents to services such as positive parenting courses, counselling services, and encourage them to use the Robot method to know when to discipline and when to wait so that it does not become punishment.

Collaborate and refer: Know your local organisations and services that offer parenting courses, as well as counselling that parents may need to heal from their past trauma – invite these organisations to speak to parents in your congregation and your community.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- [The Parent Centre](#)
0217620116
carmen@theparentcentre.org.za
- [FAMSA](#) national office at 011 975 7106/7
021 4477951
[Khayelitsha](#) - 021 3619098
- [Positive parenting resources](#)
- [Guide to age-appropriate responsibilities for toddlers and teens](#)
- [The South African Depression and Anxiety Group](#) (SADAG): 0800 567 567 or SMS 31 393 (free to call and SMS)
- [Living Hope – Family Strengthening](#)