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**PARENTING STRATEGIES  
(Issues Which Impact Behavior)  
(Applies To All Ages)**

1. Monitor and pace the amount of stimulation and stress your child is exposed to on a daily basis—both positive and negative.
2. Pay close attention to the manner in which you separate from your child and reunite with your child. Your physical presence and absence matters a lot.
3. If you need to be away from your child for a period of time (i.e. a business trip), prepare your child well, and contact your child frequently while you are gone. Provide repeated reassurances that you are thinking of them, miss them, and that you are looking forward to seeing them when you return.
4. Your presence (or attunement) to your child with an undistracted, open, and curious mind has a powerful impact on behavior. Be mindful of your demeanor, tone of voice, and eye contact.
5. Provide many opportunities to have pleasurable interactions with your child during which you convey how delighted you are in them, and how thrilled you are that they are in your life. This builds the trust bank.
6. Give them at least 10 minutes of undistracted attention every morning, 20 minutes after school, and 10 minutes before bed.
7. Convey empathy, validation, and mirroring and matching emotions as much as possible.
8. Through your presence, validation, and engagement your child will spontaneously open up to you. Encourage their sharing what is going on in their mind. Direct questions tend to shut them down. As much as possible, enter your child's world.
9. When your child is doing something that is upsetting you, first step is to breathe and calm yourself down. Second step is to calm your child down if she is upset. Third step is to provide correction in a manner in which you maintain relationship connection. Do not try to teach or correct until you are both calm, even if it means leaving it alone for a while.
10. When your child is upset or expressing unhappiness about something, invite her to say more. The experience of emotional expression combined with feeling understood, in and of itself, is soothing to a child, can calm their stress, and enable them to be compliant.
11. When encountering negative behavior, seek to understand before trying to change.
12. Think of process and relationship being more important in parenting, than outcome or results.

- 13.** Remember that the strongest motivating factor for a child is your approval or disapproval. For a young child, it can feel like a life and death matter.
- 14.** Practice mindful parenting and attunement. This is almost like being in your child's mind.
- 15.** Prepare your child for any changes, including changes in routine.
- 16.** Engage in self-care activities. This will help you stay calm and attuned to your child.
- 17.** Parent to the age presented, not chronological age. This will vary from time to time. Most children with a history of stress or trauma are not their chronological age. Respecting the presented age will help them move up the developmental ladder.
- 18.** Meeting presented dependency needs will help your child grow to be independent.
- 19.** Young children cannot tolerate long states of distress or shame.
- 20.** Practice self-reflection. Consider your attachment patterns.

Prepared by Chris Walker, LCSW 5/09