

WHEN IT COMES TO PARENTING, NOBODY HAS ALL THE ANSWERS.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Children are born such helpless little creatures. They are dependent upon their parents to sustain their safety and provide for their existence. During this stage of the child-parent relationship, the parent's role is to nurture, guide, teach, correct, and ensure the child's safety and wellbeing. It is through the parents love, nurturing, and care that strengthens the development of the child and prepares the child to make choices that compliment their emotional, spiritual, and physical growth into productive adulthood.

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

It is quite common for some parents to hold the opinion that their journey as parents' ends when their child is of legal adult age. But as many other parents will tell you, this movement into adult age simply marks the beginning of the second phase of the journey of parenting.

While children are gaining the confidence to function independently of their parents as young adults, they still have a proclivity to cling to parents for guidance in their decision-making and emotional support as they learn to maneuver in the world of adulthood and self-independence. Parents too go through a period of adjustment when children "leave the nest." This "empty nest syndrome" is an emotional adjustment that many parents may overlook and as a result discount how it impacts their behavior with the family and their relationship with the child who has left the comfort and security of the family nest.

Throughout the lifetime of the parent and child, there are ongoing interactions, relationship building and adjustments by both the parent and the child. As the child becomes older and more self sustainable as an adult, the relationship needs between the parent and child changes. The child learns to stand on its own footing and the parent no longer serves in the capacity of a full-time nurturer helping the child to adapt and survive in his/her environment. The parent now begins to nurture through encouragement and by being available to offer comfort and provide wisdom to the child as needed. The string of attachment between the child and parent lessens considerably. The child is functioning independently as demonstrated in his/her ability to make lifestyle decisions that compliment a healthy life.

This third stage of parenting shapes itself over a period of years beginning when the child is at or in their twenties or thirties. It is during this stage that the child begins to show less need for direct parent involvement in their lives. They don't call as much and may visit the parent less often. Both parent and child have adapted to this relationship. The child's career is on track and he/she may develop serious relationships that result in marriage and eventually children.

As parents move into their senior years... the fourth stage of the parent-child relationship forms. In many families, the child takes on the nurturing and leadership role by helping and caring for parents as they deal with the challenges of aging through their loving actions and relationships with their parents.

NO ONE SAID PARENTING WAS EASY

Parenting is certainly not an easy journey. It is one wrought with forks in the road and unknown challenges. It is a journey survived by the strong. It is a journey filled with rewards when one is well-equipped and prepared for the trip.



PARENTING IS ABOUT CHANGE

The key to parenting successfully is remembering that parenting is mercurial (changeable) and that changes should be expected and handled with surety of outcome, purpose, and confidence. In other words, parenting is fashioned with changes as our way of life changes in society. Parents must be adaptable, flexible, and ready to move forward under many unknown circumstances. Because of the constant dynamics of change in our society, it challenges parents to keep up and stay current and equipped to raise children in accordance with the standards and thinking of a changing society.

HOW PARENTING EDUCATION FACILITATES THE JOURNEY

The opportunities inherent within parent education are the constant within our society of change, which makes it possible for parents to change, acquire, and adapt new parenting skills to help their children succeed. Parenting education is a lifelong process and is not about what parents do wrong as parents but rather what parents can do right to ensure the wellbeing of themselves their children and their families. Parenting education builds and enhances parents' overall competence and self-efficacy, knowledge of child development, and capacities to parent more effectively. Parenting education is the companion to raising well-adjusted, capable, responsible, and caring children.

PARENTING ... A LIFELONG JOURNEY?

Yes. Whether you are becoming a parent for the first time or you are already a parent, you can begin today to enhance your parenting skills and become a better parent and in so doing become a better more confident and self-assured person.

The goal of the Indiana Parenting Institute is to engage parents and the community in advocating for the wellbeing of children and families through effective and responsible parenting education. Our parenting classes and programs are open to parents of children birth to 18 years.

For a schedule of classes, log on to our website at www.indianaparentingstitute.com or calls us 219-886-1111.