



Parents Connect@Admiralty

Issue 3

Dear Parents,

How Do We Manage Our Expectations of Our Children?

Your child has his/her own unique style of behaviour, temperament, and interaction mode. It would be good to focus on your child's abilities and highlight these.

Our challenge as parents is to shift our expectations from what we think it 'should' be to raise a child to accept our children as they are, with their uniqueness. We, as adults, can learn to manage our expectations while encouraging our children's development from their current reality.

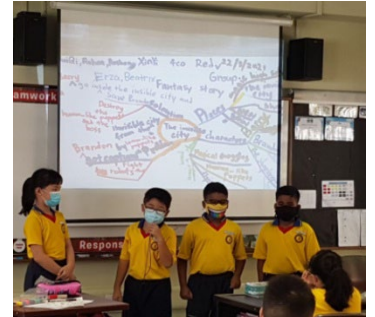
How do we become a cheerleader as well as a discipline master for our children?

This is the beginning of the year, so let us start the New Year by managing our own expectations and that of our children's.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

ADPS School Counselling Team



Scenario:

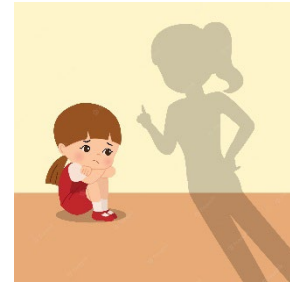
My child came home with his/her report book. He/She failed his/her Mathematics and just passed his/her Mother Tongue. The other 2 subjects were just average marks. I am so disappointed as I have always been coaching him/her and sending him/her to the best tutors, yet she did not get AL1.



You may tick (✓) more than one option

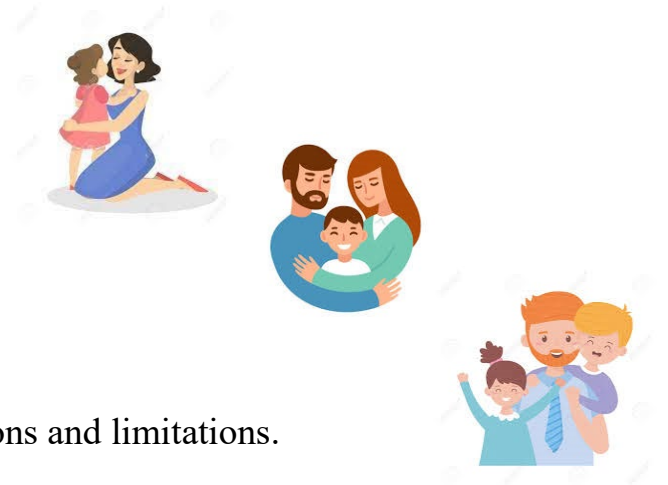
Section A

- Scold and punish my child.
- Stop my child from playing his/her online game.
- Increase tuition classes



Section B

- Sit down and talk to my child
- Listen to my child's frustrations
- Understand my child's difficulties, frustrations and limitations.



The trick, therefore, is to lower our expectations enough without lowering them too far that it causes us to be miserable.

We have all heard of the phrase “manage your expectations”. This is exactly it.



While standards are important and we do need to set them, we should set reasonable expectations, especially for children. It is in the little wins and accomplishments that children feel motivated to do better the next time.

Too many or too high expectations can overwhelm children, and if they do not meet these targets, they could feel dejected and give up altogether.



Author and neuroscientist Robb Rutledge once said: “Happiness depends not on how well things are going but whether things are going better or worse than expected.”

Or as another psychologist Jeremy Sherman argued, the tension between contentment and improvement is about “managing the ‘aspirational gap’, the gap between what is and what could be, what you have and what you expect.”

What can we do?

1. Set expectations based on your child's traits

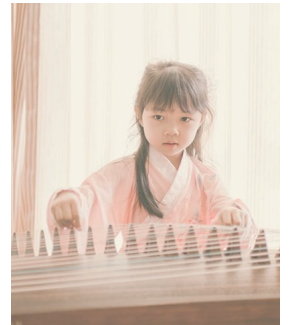
Every child is different, so it is only right that your expectations are different for each child. Find out what your child is good at, and set goals based on their strengths. This way, they are more likely to find it easier to meet your expectations and may even find it encouraging hence driving them to do better in future.



2. Refrain from setting expectations based on your own life's experiences

Many parents tend to set unrealistic expectations for their children because they could not achieve certain goals when they were their child's age. Now that they are parents, they expect their children to fulfil these unattained goals without considering if their child can or wants to attain them or not.

Instead of setting expectations and goals based on what you did not achieve while you were younger, set new goals and expectations based on your child's likes and interests.



3. Emphasize "it's okay to be imperfect" and not "you have to be perfect".

A child must know it is perfectly normal not to be perfect. Instead, they should be more focused on working hard and giving their best. If they get used to giving their best in everything they do, the results will come eventually.



4. Analyse if goals set for your child is realistic based on age and abilities

Every child grows differently, and they mature at different rates. It is only reasonable to set expectations based on their abilities and personalities at that point in their development and not expect them to do tasks that they are not physically and mentally able to do — for example, forcing your child to skydive when they do not even know what skydiving entails.



5. Focus on the process of learning

Instead of berating your child for getting a bad result, focus instead on how and where they can improve. That way, tests do not become as scary anymore. Instead, they serve as a checkpoint on how your child has progressed.

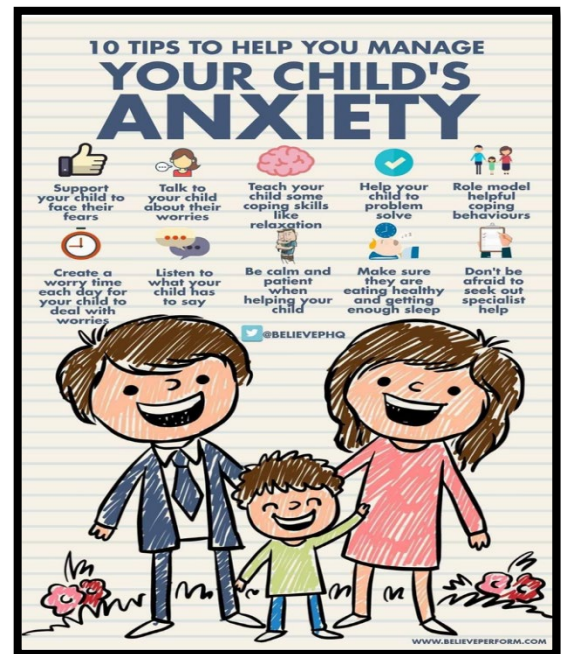
Parents need to help their children focus on the process of learning. If children understand how to learn, they will pick up skills easily and improve their knowledge.

***How many of you ticked more of the options in Section B from the Scenario above. These options will definitely lead you towards managing your expectations and seeing progress in your child.**

If you would like to read further, you can click on the links below: -

Why You Should Lower Your Expectations of your Child

You need to know the difference between realistic and unrealistic expectations. Expectations when clear and realistically set based on strengths become a tool in encouraging kids to be competent and hardworking. Such expectations help to develop a sense of self-worth and boost confidence.



Children can thrive if parents have clear expectations for their behaviour and enforce these standards consistently. We asked some friends from Focus on the Family broadcast for advice on communicating and enforcing expectations with children. Here is their advice: Please refer to the link below.

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/clear-expectations-for-kids/>