

## Ways to Unlock a Child's Potential

Encouragement from parents and significant adults can play a vital role in helping a child realize his or her infinite possibilities. Affirm children whenever possible, from taking their first step to tackling a first job outside the home. The following are some ways adults can help unlock a child's potential:

- ❖ **Openly enjoy and celebrate your children's accomplishments** – every child's life is filled with accomplishments and milestones that ought to be recognized within a family. Praise, affirm, cheer, endorse, or bless them whenever you can, as they rise to an occasion, meet a new challenge, or master a new skill. Take nothing for granted as a child develops and learns. Celebrate and praise children from their first step, to their first ride on a bicycle, to learning to read, swim, or skate, making a great play in sports, or getting their first job, car or date. Lift your children upward and onward by encouraging them rather than criticizing and judging.
- ❖ **Expect great things** – Too many people limit themselves because they have low expectations for themselves or others. Let children know they are capable of doing great things that opportunities abound, that they should aim high and do their best. Consistently and clearly remind children that "life is what you make of it."
- ❖ **Be charitable when children make mistakes**– Children should not get the message that there is something wrong with them if they make a mistake. Too many shaming messages make them feel they are bad, unworthy, or that something is wrong with them. They feel defeated and lose their natural motivation and confidence. When children do make a mistake help them get up from their fall and support them as they work to move forward again.
- ❖ **Teach children to make decisions and solve problems** – Choosing and deciding can be instilled in children at the earliest ages. Some simple ways of doing this include presenting a child with choices and decisions to make regarding things in his life. This could include what time to eat dinner, what to have for a meal, what time to get up in the morning, or what do they want to wear to school that day. Begin this process early and children will gradually develop their abilities to discern, make choices, and live with their decisions.
- ❖ **Promote a strong work ethic combined with positive thinking** – Consistently remind children that while opportunities abound in life, they come to those who have a high work ethic coupled with almost unbridled optimism.
- ❖ **Encourage patience** – Most people have a tendency toward wanting immediate gratification. But because true satisfaction and lasting rewards come through diligent and persistent pursuit of a goal, the ability to handle delays en route to a goal should be instilled in children. They need to understand that nothing really worth having comes easy and without sacrifices on their part.

Children come into this world filled with infinite possibilities, but some fail to tap their potential because they lack encouragement from the significant adults in their lives. Every parent as well as other adults who interact with children can play a vital role in helping unleash that potential.