

Enneagram Tips for Parents

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Working with Type 1 Children

Motivation - to avoid mistakes and do the right thing

- Acknowledge how hard they work to “get it right” and help them to accept that very little is “perfect”
- Admit your mistakes first, and have a sense of humor when appropriate
- Celebrate your own mistakes and model ease with self-forgiveness and compassion - *“Oh geez, I just missed my exit - silly me!”*
- Don’t criticize, correct, or nag - these kids are self-correcting, and too hard on themselves already
- Let them have “negative” emotions - jealousy, sexuality, selfishness, greed, anger. Listen without judgment
- Do homework for them once in awhile or have “Hooky Day” - sometimes it’s okay to be a little “bad”
- Walk through mistakes and help your child see that it worked out
- Schedule in pleasure, fun, relaxation, and do it with them
- Because they can be overly responsible, lighten up on the occasion that they are irresponsible
- Help them see other points of view
- Encourage cooperative games/experiences where there isn’t “one right way”
- Be fair, and if you can’t be, explain why
- No clichés like “if it’s worth doing at all, it’s worth doing right”
- Allow for creative expression and give them their own space
- Avoid the “Advice” Roadblock – advice can be mistaken as criticism
- Help them make decisions by knowing what they truly want, not by just what they think they should do

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Working with Type 2 Children

Motivation - to please other and to be needed

- Express appreciation for their help and let them know they're loved for who they are, not what they do for you and others
- Teach them to be direct by being direct, but gentle, yourself
- Be gentle when giving feedback. They are very sensitive to disapproval or criticism
- Give lots of reassurance and listen to their hurt feelings
- Share fun times
- Take an interest in their problems, though they will try to change focus to yours
- Make it okay not to be cheerful, value them when they are "blue", and not just when they are "up"
- Help them stay in touch with their own needs by active listening - refrain from advising
- Encourage non-social activities for balance - walking in nature, picking shells up on beach
- Don't be heavy handed, but provide consistency and structure
- Help them learn to tolerate disapproval from others on occasions
- Help them stay in touch with what they like and believe- movies, books, styles, politics

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Working with Type 3 Children

Motivation - to achieve recognition for accomplishments

- Support doings/accomplishments and let them know they are loved for who they are and not what they do
- Implement down time (“being” time) early on in life
- Approve non-”performance” behaviors. *“I just loved being with you today and doing nothing.”*
- Listen to feelings...all of them, and value the “negative” emotions too
- Point out incongruencies compassionately - *“I heard you tell me how you don’t like Mary, so I’m confused as to why you would want her to spend the night.”*
- Encourage patience and tenacity, sticking with something even when they are not the best with it - can do this by modeling yourself
- Help them to value and cultivate close relationships, not just relationships that support them meeting their goals
- Provide support for lots of activities
- Be together as a family doing non-competitive, relaxing activities
- Provide opportunities for them to mentor others in what they are already good at

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Working with Type 4 Children

Motivation - to find love and meaning through unique expression

- Encourage their creative and unique expression of their inner life and let them know you think they are special in ordinary circumstances
- Listen and mirror their feelings, don't try to spin things positive and help them develop the ability to see beyond what's missing
- Find something special/unique for them to engage with/go with their interest - something that siblings don't do
- Consider an alternative/unique education - they must be seen, Can't be a number. Creative, expressive, the arts...possibly Waldorf?
- Realize that when they do something mean to a sibling or friend, it stems from a sense of envy; reassure specialness while reining in behavior
- Don't let your child take on role of "identified patient" in the family...Explain situations in a way that the "Fourish" child does not feel it to be his/her fault
- Special time together can work wonders
- Engage emotionally and let them know when it gets too intense for you
- See if you can point out how they fit in even when they feel they don't
- Provide outlets for their humanitarian tendencies - working with animals, the elderly, the underprivileged

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Working with Type 5 Children

Motivation - to insure privacy to explore their ideas and interests

- Give them private time and support their investigations/protect them from intrusions (siblings for example)
- Listen to their thoughts and opinions and show appreciation for what they observe
- Consider alternative education or home schooling, but make sure it includes some peer interaction
- Know that they want to be taught what they want to learn
- Don't expect them to be on stage or try to impress others
- Gently encourage, and have some reasonable boundaries, but don't force them to be social - *"I know you prefer to be in your room investigating dinosaurs and it is important that you participate in the block party for an hour, so let me know when that will work for you."* Then, start by introducing them to one person and letting them warm up
- Celebrate their few close friends and see that as enough for them
- Beware of an Asperger's diagnosis - could just be the type showing up
- Investigate with them and practice reading the emotions of others - *"Look at that person - what do you think he might be feeling?"*
- Be brief and objective with reminding them to study or do chores
- Don't expect them to think quickly on their feet. Give them time to make decisions
- Develop an interest in their world and encourage activities to support those interests - music lessons, robotics club, etc.
- Explain reasons for traditions and manners

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Working with Type 6 Children

Motivation - to find certainty, predictability; to be prepared

- Be consistent, dependable, and steady and do what you say you will do. Structure can help these kids feel their world to be predictable and minimize their anxiety
- Don't change your mind without informing them, transitions can be difficult
- Make sure they have a safe school and safe home environment
- Answer their "what if" questions - and help them develop problem solving skills
- Active listen their worse-case scenarios, and then help them see other, more positive scenarios
- Realize that they don't like spotlight (or, at least it raises anxiety)
- Remind them of their successes (times they overcame fear) - they can have success amnesia
- Body centered practices to help them get out of mind and into body - aikido, yoga, etc. Martial arts will also help them feel safe
- Take a stand if your six child provokes or shocks by making rude comments (counter-phobic)
- Stay calm if your child gets enraged, and talk about it after it passes
- Explain and teach skills for living in the world
- Contracts can work - helps them know what to expect with details
- Gently "push" into new situations, and expect some resistance. Remain stable yourself

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Working with Type 7 Children

Motivation - to have fun and enjoy life without limits

- Appreciate this child's adventurous spirit and upbeat style while helping him/her develop needed skills to cope with difficulties
- Make things fun: school, chores: "a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down" - it's got to keep their interest
- Active listen sensations, which can lead to exploring feelings
- Body-centered practices (out of mind into body) - aikido, yoga, etc. - slowing down, grounding
- School environment that doesn't limit - maybe "free; child centered" where they can pick and choose, where learning is an adventure, fun and doesn't label
- Provide gentle structure with considerable flexibility and support
- Reward completion with freedom, "*You are free until dinner time after you feed the dog.*"
- Problem solve difficulties and be open to their solutions
- Beware of an ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) diagnosis as it may just be the type showing up
- Show consistent, tactful concern for their well-being
- Enjoy the ride - develop your own playful spirit and sense of fun and humor
- They will learn to be responsible by choosing what they want to be responsible for - may not tolerate you dictating this
- Teach them social skills - they can tease just to "make things fun"
- Call it out when you see them rationalize - listen, but also be firm

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Working with Type 8 Children

Motivation - to have power, be in control

- Give this child control where you can and be firm about your expectations
- Don't give mixed messages or manipulate - be clear and consistent about what you expect
- Set fair limits/boundaries, or they will take you on
- Give clear articulated consequences with follow through, but first ask yourself, *"Is this a battle I want to fight?"*
- Remember, they can outlast you in battle, so choose potential power struggles wisely
- Don't be wimpy about bringing something up - *"Look Jack, I'm taking a stand here. We are going to talk about this now."*
- Watch what they do, not what they say. Don't react to their assertion *"I'm not coming home at curfew, I'll come home when I want to!"* or it becomes a battle of wills
- Teach them how to read the moods of others/playmates and how to compromise
- Lots of physical and energy outlets
- Choose a few manners to be firm about and let go of the others or you will get power struggles, not compliance
- Don't overreact to their anger - it will prolong it. Help them move their energy to something else - let them help by doing what they're good at
- Teach alternatives to fighting - walking away, a strong I-statement, compromises
- Start teaching early ways of coping with anger - run laps, 100 jumping jacks, punching bag

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Working with Type 9 Children

Motivation - to be at peace and avoid conflict

- Honor their need for harmony and assure them that they will not be separate if they express a different viewpoint
- Establish habits/routines around homework, chores
- Don't decide that they are good at something and then push them in that direction
- Expose them to the real thing, don't talk in the abstract - they have to visit an Aikido class or a school to get a felt sense of it
- Know that their environment is important - they merge with who they hang out with
- School: a good peer group is essential - can gravitate to lowest common denominator
- Encourage self-decision and let them know their opinion counts and encourage them to speak their minds
- Listen to their feelings and thoughts without too much active feedback and give them plenty of time to share the whole story - don't rush them
- Notice passive aggression - it will clue you in to what is going on
- Pay attention when they use their voice and say what they want or need, and if reasonable, try to do it
- Because they don't like to hurry, start early with everything
- Snuggle up and hang out with them