

# PARENTING WITHOUT FEAR

*Become the confident, assured, and happy parent that you want to be.*

Many parents experience enormous pressure to do everything right for their children, and feel overwhelmed with their responsibilities. They are anxious and fearful that they are failing their children if they do not everything they possibly can for them.

Dr. Paul Donahue helps parents to calm their worries and do less for their children. He encourages parents to rethink their priorities, and to teach their kids to be independent, to persevere, to cooperate and respect adults, to be mindful, to imagine and explore their world, and to develop compassion for others.

This book will help parents balance their own needs with those of their children, and to make informed choices regarding what is truly best for their family and home life. It gives parents the necessary tools and courage to manage their children's academics, social lives, skill building activities, and athletics. For the typical family juggling hectic schedules and multiple demands, it provides a road map to a more peaceful and satisfying existence.

## Introduction:

How do our worries and fears get in the way of what really matters for our children? The biggest obstacle for many of us is our preoccupation with long-term and measurable goals. The Holy Grail of parenting, admission to a top college, has clouded our judgment, and too often we put the cart before the developmental horse. When our kids are young we think too much about building their skills rather than focusing on the underlying traits that will be far more likely to ensure their success as they grow older. Encouraging a young soccer player or math student is fine, as long as we are teaching our kids to work hard and have self-discipline, not simply mimic their teachers and perform rote drills and memorization. Learning a foreign language or how to play an instrument can be a gift to a five year old,

but only if we are also giving them the time to be alone to use their imagination.

If we spoon feed our children healthy doses of enrichment, but don't give them time to struggle, to be frustrated and to fail, they are not likely to put their fledgling talents to full use down the road. Our goal, after all, is to help them become more self-reliant, to think, to imagine and to do for themselves. They need the time and space to experiment, to be bored, to plan and rehearse their ideas and put them into action. In many ways, the most important prescription I can offer parents is to do less, not more. Leave them be, let the kids work things out. Our job is to provide the parameters, and in many cases, the boundaries and limits of their behavior, not to fine-tune their every movement.

Our first job as parents is to care for and love our children, and to provide them the warmth and attention they need. Only through a solid and loving relationship will they feel secure enough to venture out on their own. After that, our job is to be their guides, mentors and teachers. We are not likely to be as successful if we are their managers, organizers, social secretaries or their over-protectors. Often I suggest that parents sit back and ask themselves a simple question that they can apply in many situations: "Does this make sense?" Do we really need to plan out their social calendar in great detail? Are we really going to be remiss if they skip the kindergarten T-ball clinic? Do they need that new educational computer game to keep up with their friends? Are we to be at their beck and call whenever they struggle to make something or try something new? The more we learn to think about our role and to pause before reacting to their requests, the greater the likelihood that we will decide to leave our children to their own devices.

Source: Paul J. Donahue, Ph.D,  
[www.drpauldohahue.com/books/excerpt.php](http://www.drpauldohahue.com/books/excerpt.php)