

What Is Parenting with Love and Logic?

by Jim Fay

"I don't understand it. The techniques my parents used so effectively just don't seem to work with kids today." Does this statement sound familiar to you? A lot of parents today are wondering what to do with their kids and are frustrated because the old techniques just don't seem to get the job done.

Parents want to enjoy their kids, have fun with them, and enjoy a less stressful family life. But even if their kids are trouble-free right now, they fear what the coming teenage years will bring.

At no time in history have parents been more unsure of their parental role. Even the best are not all that sure about whether they are using the best techniques. They say that their kids don't appear to be much like the ones they knew in years past.

A lot of conflicting philosophies have been presented over the last 30 years. Many of these sound good, but don't seem to do the job of helping children become respectful, responsible, and a joy to be around.

Many ideas, offered with the best of intentions, center around making sure that kids are comfortable and feeling good about themselves in order to have a good self-concept. However, we have discovered that self-confidence is achieved through struggle and achievement, not through someone telling you that you are number one. Self-confidence is not developed when kids are robbed of the opportunity to discover that they can indeed solve their own problems with caring adult guidance.

There is, however, an approach to raising kids that provides loving support from parents while at the same time expecting kids to be respectful and responsible.

This program is known as *Parenting with Love and Logic*, a philosophy founded by Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D., and based on the experience of a combined total of over 75 years working with and raising kids.

Many parents want their kids to be well prepared for life, and they know this means kids will make mistakes and must be held accountable for those mistakes. But these parents often fail to hold the kids accountable for poor decisions because they are afraid the kids will see their parents as being mean. The result is they often excuse bad behavior, finding it easier to hold others, including themselves, accountable for their children's irresponsibility.

Jim Fay teaches us that we should "lock in our empathy, love, and understanding" prior to telling kids what the consequences of their actions will be. The parenting course *Becoming a Love and Logic Parent* teaches parents how to hold their kids accountable in this special way. This Love and Logic method causes the child to see their parent as the "good guy" and the child's poor decision as the "bad guy." When done on a regular basis, kids develop an internal voice that says, "I wonder how much pain I'm going to cause for myself with my next decision?" Kids who develop this internal voice become more capable of standing up to peer pressure.

What more could a parent want? Isn't that a great gift to give your child? Parent-child relationships are enhanced, family life becomes less strained, and we have time to enjoy our kids instead of either feeling used by them or being transformed from parent to policeman.

The Love and Logic technique in action sounds like this:

Dad: "Oh, no. You left your bike unlocked and it was stolen. What a bummer. I bet you feel awful. Well, I understand how easy it is to make a mistake like that." (Notice that the parent is not leading with anger, intimidation, or threats.)

Dad then adds, "And you'll have another bike as soon as you can earn enough money to pay for it. I paid for the first one. You can pay for the additional ones."

Love and Logic parents know that no child is going to accept this without an argument, but Love and Logic parents can handle arguments. Jim Fay advises "just go brain dead." This means that parents don't try to argue or match wits with the child. They simply repeat, as many times as necessary, "I love you too much to argue." No matter what argument the child uses, the parent responds "I love you too much to argue." Parents who learn how to use these techniques completely change, for the better, their relationships with kids and take control of the home in loving ways.