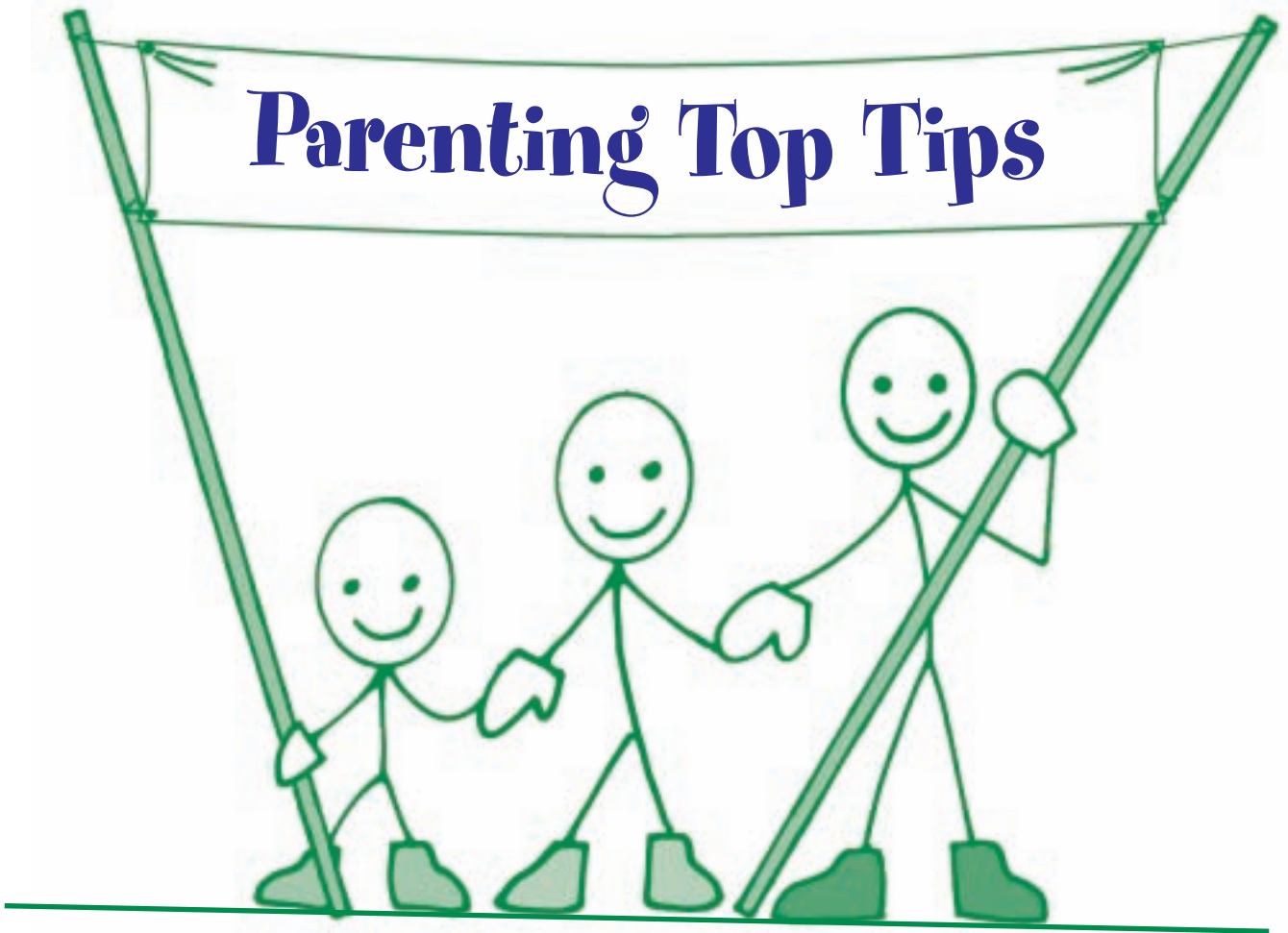




# Parenting Top Tips



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The Parenting Top Tips sheets can be downloaded from  
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### **The Parenting Puzzle**

Copies of the book (ISBN 0-9544709-0-7) are available at £14.99,  
and can be ordered direct from:

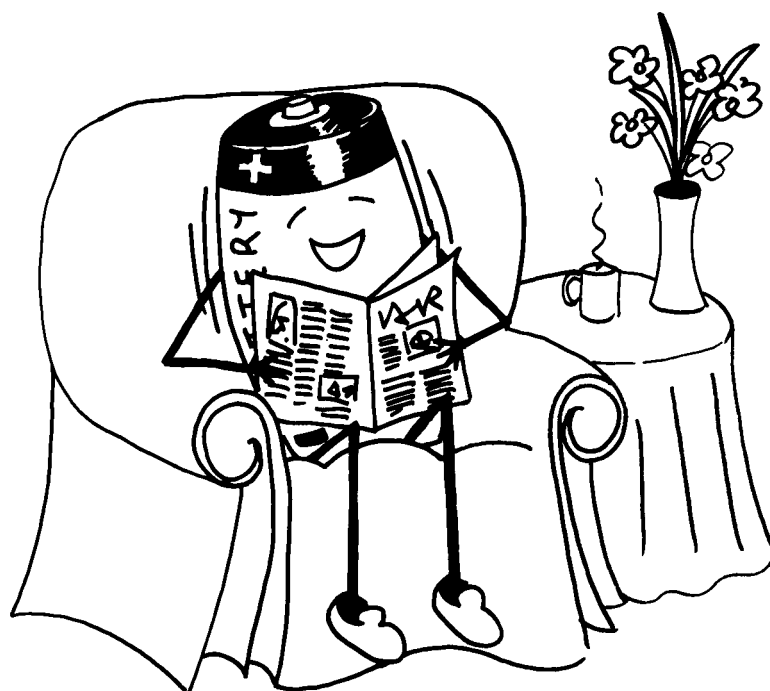
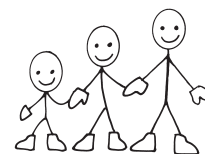
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# Look after yourself!

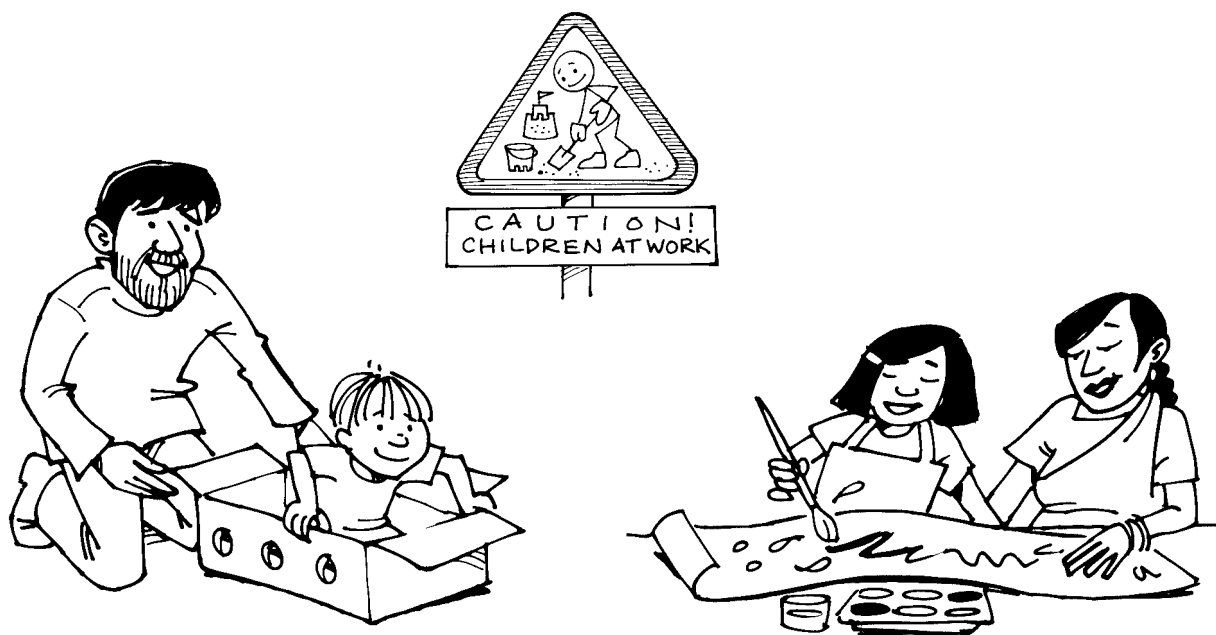
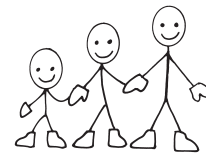


## Top tips

- ☺ When we are very busy it can be hard to find a moment for ourselves, and it's all too easy to put our own needs at the end of the list.
- ☺ If we neglect ourselves we become exhausted and stressed, and then it's much harder to enjoy family life.
- ☺ We owe it to ourselves to recharge our batteries, and our families will benefit too.

A RECHARGED BATTERY MEANS  
A FAMILY FULL OF ENERGY

# The power of play



## Top tips

- ☺ Children do most of their learning through play.
- ☺ Play can be messy but it's very important.
- ☺ We need to give time to let children play by themselves and also to join in with them sometimes.
- ☺ Playtime is their chance to be in charge – and it's fun for us and for them!

CHILDREN AT PLAY  
ARE CHILDREN AT WORK!

# Understanding our own feelings



## Top tips

- 😊 Being aware of our own feelings and accepting all of them (even the difficult ones) is a positive and healthy thing to do.
- 😊 Feelings are never bad in themselves – it's how we deal with them that counts.
- 😊 Children learn from what they see us do. If we can express our feelings appropriately, they will learn how to do this too.

FEELINGS ARE SIGNPOSTS

# Understanding our children's feelings and behaviour



☹ Unhelpful



😊 Helpful

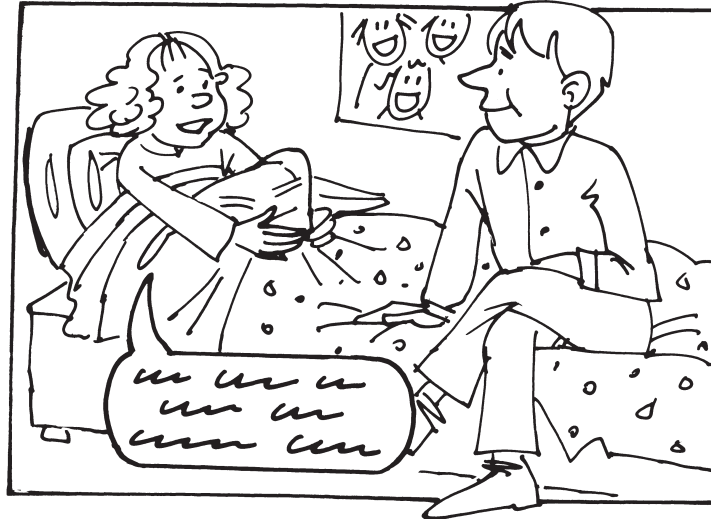


## Top tips

- 😊 Noticing our children's feelings is important – tuning in to their excitement and distress (and everything in between!).
- 😊 Responding helpfully often prevents explosive behaviour.
- 😊 It takes years to learn to manage our feelings. Many behaviours (such as tantrums) are a natural stage of development – so don't expect too much too soon.

FEELINGS FUEL BEHAVIOUR

# Listening to our children



## Top tips

- ☺ One of the greatest gifts we can give each other is to listen.
- ☺ In our busy lives it isn't always easy to stop what we are doing so we can listen closely to our children and value what they say – but it's worth it.
- ☺ Taking time to listen to our children builds trust and honesty.
- ☺ If we listen to our children they will learn to listen to us and to each other.

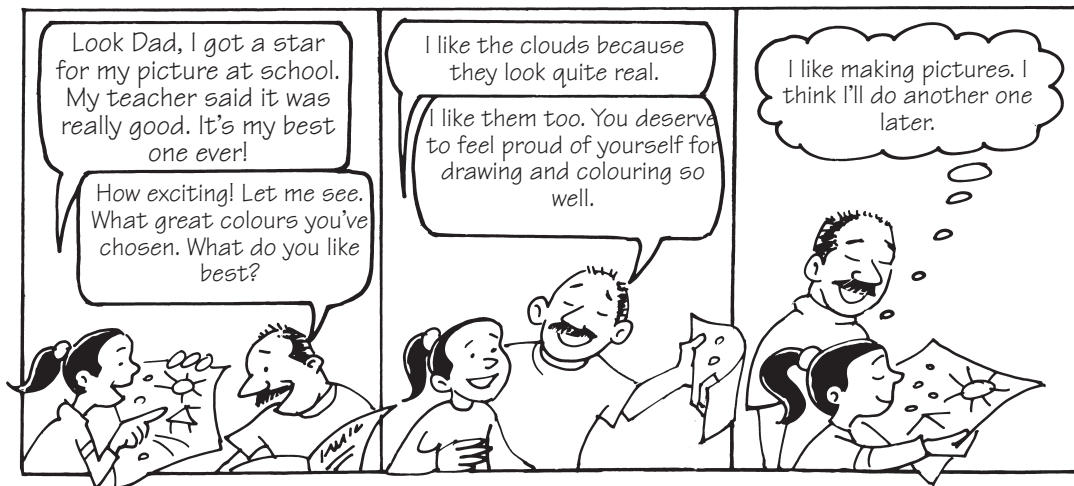
WHAT CHILDREN NEED  
IS A GOOD LISTENING TO!



# Praise is magic!



## 😊 Helpful praise



## Top tips

😊 Praise helps children feel good about themselves, so they are more likely to behave well.

😊 Praise helps us to notice all the good things about our children, rather than mostly focusing on their faults.

😊 Praise helps children to remember what we'd like them to do.

😊 Praise helps us to feel good, too – it's no fun having to tell children off all the time.

PRAISE WORKS WONDERS!



# Using rewards

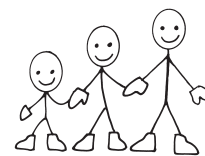


## Top tips

- ☺ Children like to please us, but some of the ways we want them to behave aren't easy for them to learn.
- ☺ It's easier to learn a new behaviour if something nice happens when we remember it.
- ☺ Reward effort as well as achievement.
- ☺ Reward little and often, and remember that our time, pleasure and attention are the best rewards of all.

WHAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO  
IS WHAT WE GET MORE OF

# Diverting and distracting



☹ Unhelpful



☺ Helpful

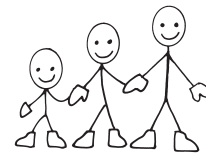


## Top tips

- ☺ **Young children easily switch their attention to something else that interests them.**
- ☺ **By offering a different object or activity, we can often avoid difficult situations without mentioning any unwanted behaviour.**
- ☺ **If you are going out it can be helpful to take some small toys or everyday objects for children to play with.**

**DIVERSION - HAZARD AHEAD!**

# Creating boundaries

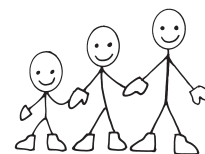


## Top tips

- ☺ **We all want our children to grow up confident, independent and responsible. Developing clear, fair, consistent boundaries helps them to do this.**
- ☺ **Children need to test the boundaries in order to feel safe. When they do, we need to be firm without being harsh.**
- ☺ **Boundaries are a family affair – everyone needs to agree them and be prepared to stick to them.**

**CLEAR, FAIR RULES  
HELP US ALL FEEL SAFE**

# Time to calm down

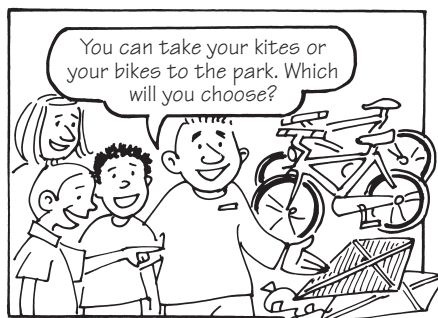
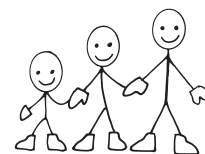


## Top tips

- ☺ When emotions are running high, a cooling-off time gives everyone the chance to calm down.
- ☺ Allowing time to calm down helps us to hold on to clear boundaries without nagging or adding our own angry outbursts.
- ☺ Sometimes our children will need to release their frustration or anger safely before they can calm down.

WE ALL NEED TIME TO CALM DOWN

# Giving children choices

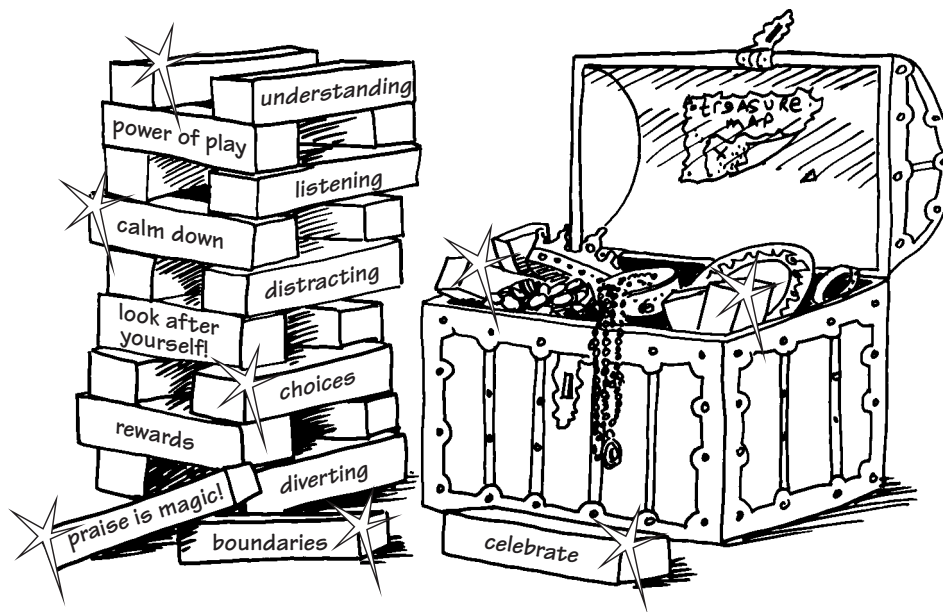
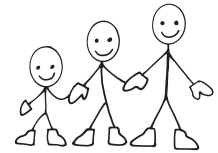


## Top tips

- 😊 **We all want to feel that we are in charge of our own lives – though it's not always easy!**
- 😊 **It is helpful for children gradually to learn to make choices for themselves. We can offer them a choice many times during the day.**
- 😊 **The choices we offer children need to be ones we're happy to provide – and can describe to them clearly.**

**GIVING CHILDREN CHOICES  
MAKES THEM RESPONSIBLE**

# Celebrating family life



## Top tips

- ☺ **Family life is like a treasure hunt – full of hazards, adventures and discoveries to make along the way.**
- ☺ **If we keep using the skills we have discovered we will face the hazards more confidently.**
- ☺ **When family life seems like a struggle it can be hard to find the energy to keep going. Making sure our own batteries are charged up will give us the boost we need.**

**THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT,  
AND NO PRESENT LIKE TIME!**