



Goals for the first 12 years of my child's life

Adequately Establish Authority by Creating a Functional Family Structure

(It doesn't have to be perfect, just good enough 😊)

- First, we need to define the **STRUCTURE** of our family and clarify **ROLES**
- Every family has roles/jobs to be filled
- Families need hierarchy AND hierarchy needs to be well defined

EVERY FAMILY NEEDS TO BE BROKEN DOWN INTO 2 SUBSYSTEMS:

The parental subsystem (THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH)

- Roles included within the Executive Branch include:
 - Mother
 - Father
 - Grandfather
 - Grandmother
 - At times may include: Pastor, Teacher, Aunt, Uncle etc.

The child subsystem (THE KID BRANCH)

- Roles included within the Kid Branch often include:
 - Oldest
 - Youngest
 - Middle

Other Roles to consider:

- Grandma, Grandpa, Aunt, Uncle, Scapegoat, Hero, Mediator, Peacemaker etc
(Don't underestimate the power of someone's role)

Remember, your job is to be the parent, so be that! You child will make plenty of friends. That may sound simple, but being the parent is hard and often requires us to challenge some of our own issues from the past that can hinder the process.

Families often get into serious trouble when there is a significant shake up in the family structure occurring as a result of:

- Parental separation and divorce
- Remarriage and the blending of families
- Parental abandonment (Dad skips town leaving mom to raise the kids)
- Parental addiction
- Significant medical problems

When these things occur it is vital the Executive Branch regroup and begin to redefine the FAMILY ROLES in a manner that is most beneficial for the kids.

So, as a parent it is good and healthy to ask yourself periodically, who's really in charge here? Is there a weakness in the executive branch that needs to be addressed?

Once the FAMILY ROLES have been adequately defined and clarified, then the EXECUTIVE BRANCH can more effectively do its job...so what is its job?

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH NEEDS TO...

TASK #1, ESTABLISH THE FAMILY RULES AND EXPECTATIONS.

- The rules need to *simple, clear,* and *easily understood*
- The rules need to be *age appropriate*
- The rules need to be *firm but flexible* (more firm than flexible during early childhood)
- The rules need to be *enforced!*

TASK #2, ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF DISCIPLINE

- When the rules are not followed or expectation go unmet, what happens?
- There needs to be a system in place to deal with this
- The most effective Discipline includes the following elements:
 - The system is **SIMPLE** and **CLEAR CUT** (use 1 or 2 things over and over)
 - The system is applied **IMMEDIATELY** or as soon as possible (no more of this, “just wait until your dad gets home.”)
 - The system needs to be **UNIVERSALLY AND SYSTEMATICALLY APPLIED.**
 - The system needs to be **PERFECTED.** Discipline should be “easy” and place the burden on your child rather than on you or your spouse

Discipline is an excellent opportunity for you to see your child's heart and share the gospel with them.

I often tell my clients that the quickest way to your child's heart is through their behavior!!

TASK #3, ESTABLISH A SYSTEM FOR REWARD

- Kids need to know when they are doing well
- When they display those characteristics we are looking for we need to reward them (think fruits of the Spirit)
- Rewards can be encouraging words, high fives, telling your child your proud
- Rewards can include material things as well. When they work hard, reward them
- Rewarding good behavior is also a great way to get at your child's heart! It's your chance to confirm the Image of God in them.
- Be careful not to reward poor behavior! It's easy to do (for example: a mom or dad using a loving tone when disciplining or kids at school are sent to the principal's office where they get all kinds of attention!)

TASK #4, ESTABLISH A SYSTEM FOR MANAGING EMOTION, AGGRESSION, AND AFFECTION

- Is emotion welcome in your home? Is it ok to get angry? Sad? Scared?
- If emotion is allowed, which one's are welcomed and which ones are told to leave?
- What is a child allowed to say or do when they are angry?
- How long can a child cry before you tell them to pull it together?
- ***Emotion needs to be welcomed into our families however it can't be allowed to run rampant- Balance is the key***
- **Some tips for dealing with your child's emotions:**
 - Stop what you are doing and try to ***meet them where they are!!***
 - Try and ***put yourself in their shoes***
 - Try and ***connect with the emotion*** (What are they really feeling? Help them name it, "sounds like you are really sad")
 - ***Drain it off!***
 - Help them ***put it away*** (sometimes forgiveness may be in order)

TASK #5, ESTABLISH ROUTINES AND SCHEDULES

- Children, especially young children, need routines and schedules
- Routines lead to ***predictability***, predictability leads to ***safety***, safety leads to ***trust***, and trust leads to ***relationship!***