

Pointers For Parents

Tips On Raising A Strong Kid

(NAPSA)—What does it take to help a child excel in school, on the playing field, and in the community? Who better to answer that question than the parents of the Strongest Kids in America?

Last year, as part of the first Strongest Kid in America event (which rewarded a child with a \$10,000 U.S. Savings bond for college), parents across the country were asked to write essays on how a child in their life exhibited three aspects of “strength”: academic strength, athletic strength, and strength of character in their community. The parents of the 25 finalists for the “Strongest Kid in America” honors were then asked to share their parenting tips.

Common Values

While the winning essays focused on each child’s talent, it’s the parents that deserve credit for raising the kids. What are the common values the parents instilled in their children? Have a look:

- **Determination**—Children must have the persistence, enthusiasm and discipline to achieve goals.
- **Compassion**—Kids must have empathy for others.
- **Confidence**—Children must have a strong sense of self and a belief in their abilities.

Top Tips

When asked what methods in particular help to achieve these goals, parents again responded alike. The most common answers were:

- Encourage reading.
- Challenge your child academically through games and contests.
- Always praise your children when they accomplish a goal.
- Encourage your child to participate in sports.
- Participate in family recreational activities.
- Lead by example; be a role model for your child.
- Promote spirituality.
- Help your child to become more respectful and considerate of others.

What About Discipline?

No one’s perfect, and children often learn their most valuable lessons by making mistakes. So how do these talented parents deal with their children when issues surface? Here are the ways



the parents of the Strongest Kids in America handle problems and try to help prevent them in the future:

- Always communicate with your child—never be afraid or reluctant to address an issue.
- Set limits and expectations and enforce them.
- Express your disapproval.
- Help children distinguish between right and wrong.
- Explain that actions have consequences.

These universal lessons should assist any parents as they help nurture and raise a child.

Do you know of a child who already excels in the areas of academics, athletics and in the community? Then nominate him or her today and show a child just how proud you are of how he or she shines!

This Year’s Event

This year’s Strongest Kid in America event begins in late June and runs through early September. If you are 18 years or older, you can nominate a child (aged 9-11) by heading to participating Wal-Mart stores to pick up an entry form, starting July 13, 2001. You may also enter a child online, through the www.strongestkid.com Web site, beginning June 22, 2001. You do not have to be a parent to nominate a child, and entries must be received by August 7, 2001.

One local winner from each participating Wal-Mart store will receive a \$25 Wal-Mart Gift Card. Ten finalists will be chosen for an all-expense-paid trip to New York City to meet U.S. Olympic gold medalist Summer Sanders and to compete in the Try-athlon—a quiz, an interview and a sports competition. After these events, one winner will be crowned the Strongest Kid in America and will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship in the form of a U.S. Savings Bond.