

Discovering Your Family's Strengths: A Five-Part Webinar Series

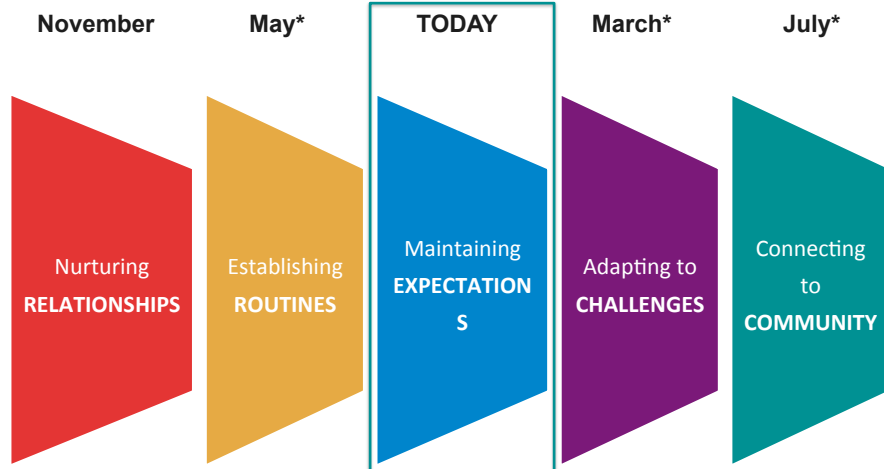


PART 4

# So What Did You Really Expect?

*and Supporting  
Challenging Our Kids  
to Be Their Best*

## Family Assets Webinar Series



\* Archive: [www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-strengths](http://www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-strengths)





## POLL

What expectation do you bring to this webinar today?

- a. It will change my life
- b. I'll learn something useful to me
- c. It will be a waste of time

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## Session Overview



- So Easy, Yet So Hard
- Why Expectations Matter
  - For Children and Youth
  - For Families
- Unpacking Expectations
- Getting Expectations Right
- Some Starting Points



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## So Easy, Yet So Hard

The Challenge of Getting Expectations Right



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## On the One Hand . . .

High expectations influence behavior and fuel achievement.



**High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.**  
— Charles Kettering




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## On the Other Hand . . .

We can resist or resent expectations that other people have for us.



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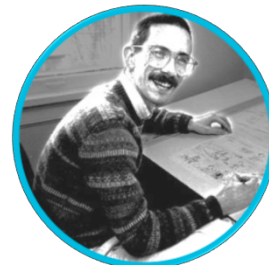
## So maybe it's better to expect less after all



"If you expect nothing from anybody, you're never disappointed."

— *The Bell Jar* (1963)

Sylvia Plath

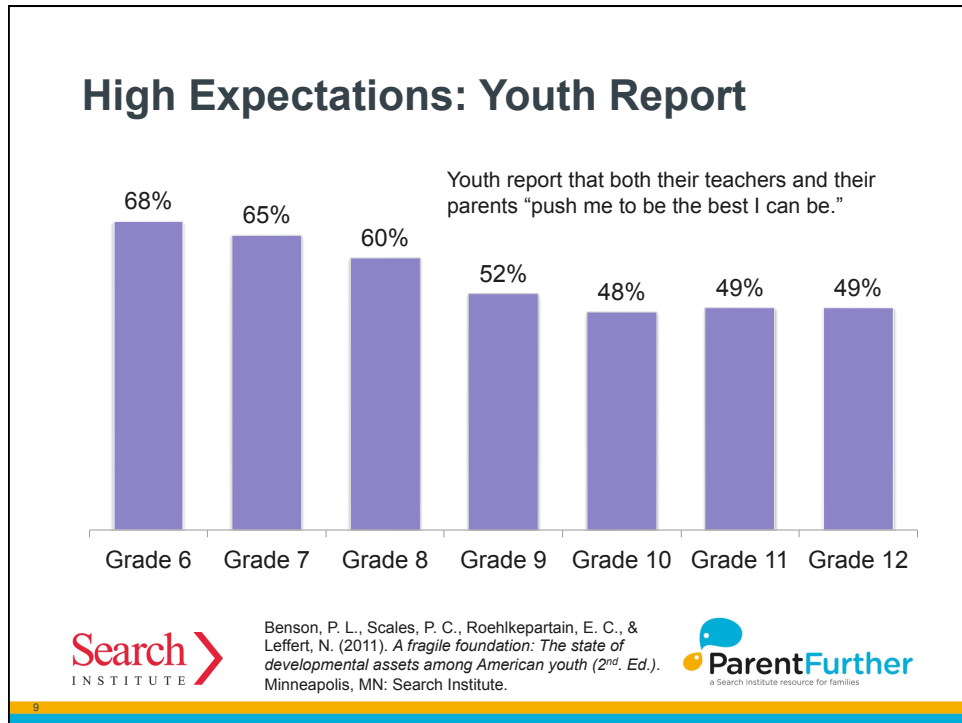


"I find my life is a lot easier the lower I keep my expectations."

— Bill Watterson (*Calvin & Hobbes*)



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## Why Parental Expectations Matter

### Parental expectations can influence (e.g.) . . .

- Academic achievement
- Career aspirations
- Prosocial, civic behavior
- Athletic achievement
- Nutrition & health habits
- Alcohol and tobacco use
- Delayed sexual activity
- Religious commitment
- Money management

### And can contribute to . . .

- Stress
- Perfectionism

- Influence child's own goals and expectations
- Increase parent-child communication
- Help focus attention
- Create a norm

See: Child Trends (2012). *Parental expectations for their children's educational attainment*. Child Trends Databank. Download from [www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/115\\_Parental\\_Expectations.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/115_Parental_Expectations.pdf)



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## Depending on Each Other

"In times of upheaval, families commonly lose structure, daily routines fall by the wayside, and established patterns become disorganized. . . . Members need to know **what is expected of them and what they can expect of each other**. Reliability is crucial: family members need assurance that they can **depend on one another to follow through** with the commitments they've made."

—Froma Walsh



Walsh, F. (2006). *Strengthening family resilience* (2nd edition). New York: Guilford.



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## POLL

In which of the following areas is it hardest for your family (or families you work with) to set clear, appropriate expectations?

- a. Education (current and future)
- b. Health, fitness, and nutrition
- c. Technology/screen use
- d. Alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use
- e. Other (write your thoughts in the chat box)

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## THE AMERICAN Family Assets STUDY

- 1,511 families
  - One parenting adult
  - One 10 – 15 year old
- Oversampled
  - African Americans
  - Latino/Latina
  - Asian Americans
- Weighed to U. S. Census



Syvertsen, A. K., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Scales, P. C. (2012). *The American family assets study*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. Download from: [www.search-institute.org/research/family-strengths](http://www.search-institute.org/research/family-strengths)



## Key Findings from the Study

- 21 family strengths (Family Assets) identified
- Average family scores 47 out of 100 on an overall Family Assets Index
- Overall levels of family assets vary little, if at all, across different types of families
- Family assets are associated with a range of measures of youth and family well-being

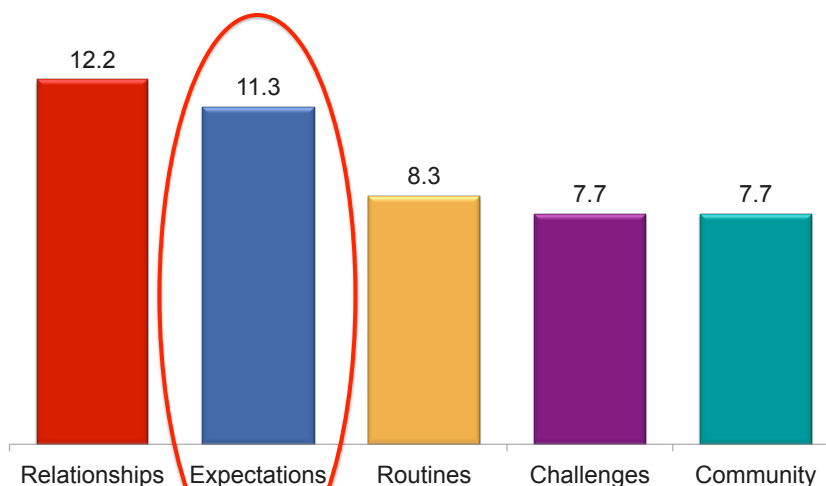
### OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS

- [www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-assets](http://www.parentfurther.com/webinars/family-assets)
- [disneydiscovertogether.com](http://disneydiscovertogether.com)



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## Levels of Family Asset Categories

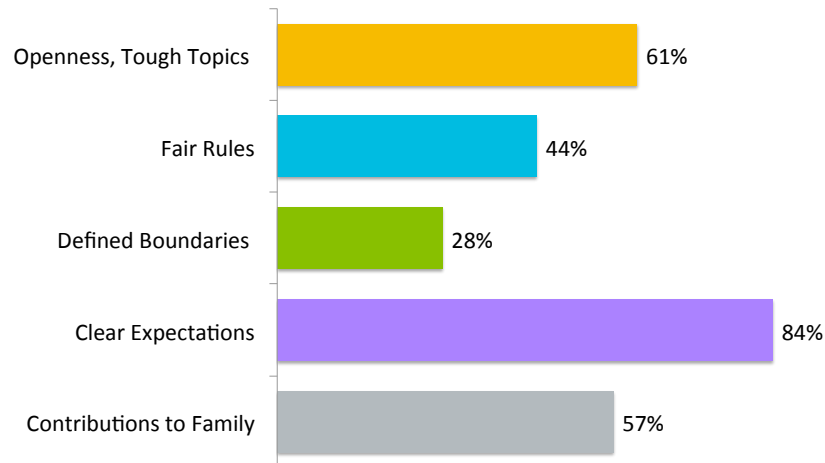


Notes. Each category ranges from 0 to 20.



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## Maintaining Expectations



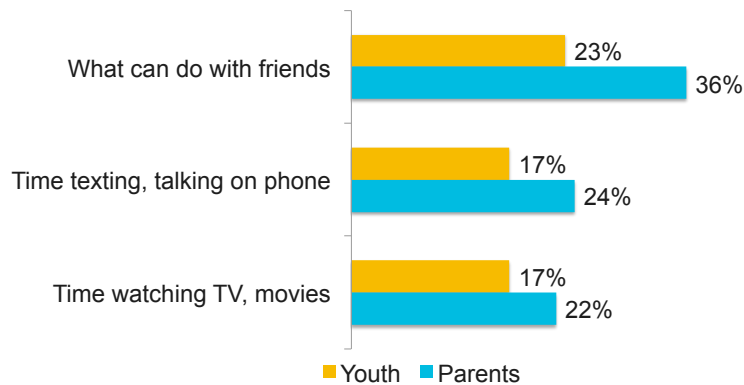
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## Differences: Defined Boundaries

Parent(s) set limits for youth on . . . (strongly agree)



■ Youth ■ Parents

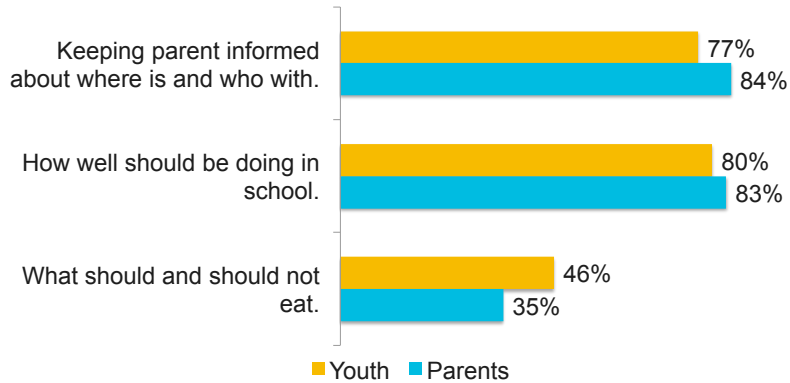
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## Differences: Clear Expectations

How clear has your parent/have you made the following expectations to you/your child . . . (completely clear)



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## Unpacking Expectations

How they work to influence development and achievement

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## Expectations: The Balancing Acts

Too low  
(whatever)

External only  
Socially motivated

Too few



Too high  
(aspirations)

Internal only  
Self-motivated

Too many



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## Wishful Thinking

1. Always be in a good mood.
2. Be perfect in school.
3. Never mess up.
4. Be grateful for what I've given you.
5. Ignore how we treat each other.
6. Don't try to get away with anything.
7. Always forgive.
8. Do what I say, not what I do.

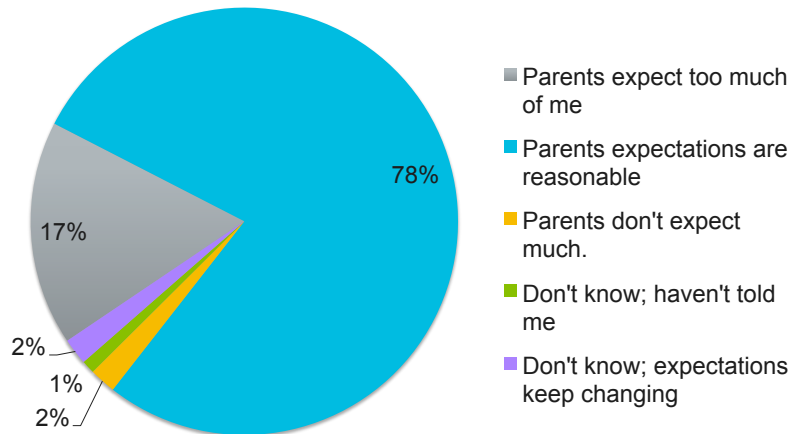


[www.huffingtonpost.com/kimanzi-constable/8-unrealistic-expectations-parents-have-for-their-kids\\_b\\_5778104.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kimanzi-constable/8-unrealistic-expectations-parents-have-for-their-kids_b_5778104.html)



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## Kids' Views of Parental Expectations



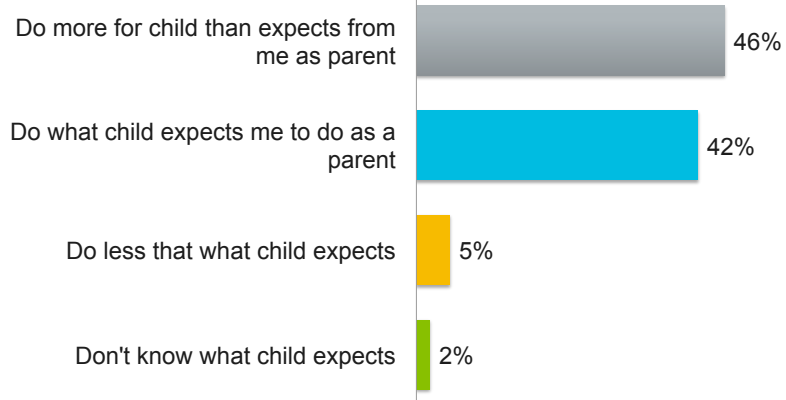
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SOURCE: *American Family Assets Study*  
(Search Institute, 2012). N = 1,500 youth

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## Parents' Views of Kids' Expectations



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SOURCE: *American Family Assets Study*  
(Search Institute, 2012). N = 1,500 youth

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## Perfectionism: Where's the Sweet Spot?

**Maladaptive Perfectionists**  
(fixed mindset) Strive for high standards—but feel worthless when goals aren't met.

**Adaptive Perfectionists**  
(growth mindset) Strive for high standards—but maintain a positive outlook when they fail.

**Non-Perfectionists** Don't strive for high standards



DiPrima, A. J., Ashby, J. S., Gnlika, P. B., & Noble, C. L. (2011). Family relationships and perfectionism in middle-school students. *Psychology in the Schools, 48*(8), 815-827. doi:10.1002/pits.20594



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## Perfectionism: Where's the Sweet Spot?

**Maladaptive Perfectionists**  
(fixed mindset) Strive for high standards—but feel worthless when goals aren't met.

- Lower self-esteem, emotional adjustment
- High concern about external expectations, criticism
- Self-blaming, self-critical
- Lower problem-solving skills

**Adaptive Perfectionists**  
(growth mindset) Strive for high standards—but maintain a positive outlook when they fail.

- Higher self-regulation and sense of personal power
- Higher decision-making ability
- Higher levels of social competencies

**Non-Perfectionists** Don't strive for high standards

- Lower personal standards
- Lower achievement



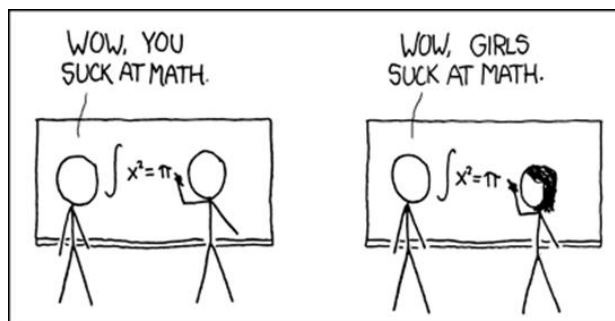
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## An Added Challenge: Stereotype Threat

Stereotypes or negative expectations based on being part of a stereotyped group (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, age, income, sexual orientation, religious minority)



<http://xkcd.com/385/> (Creative Commons License)

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## Expectations & Stereotype Threat

How stereotype threat (negative expectations) undermines performance

Induce stress, anxiety

Focus on controlling emotions

Create self-doubt, reduce effort

Create lower personal expectations

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From: [www.reducingstereotypethreat.org](http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org)

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## Reducing Impact of Stereotype Threat

- Reframe the task so that it doesn't focus on the threat
- Emphasize identities not associated with stereotype
- Self-affirmation of skills, abilities
- Emphasize high standards—and ability to meet
- Emphasize that ability is not fixed but can grow
- Externalize/explain the threat (it's not about you)
- Provide role models



From: [www.reducingstereotypethreat.org](http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org)



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## Getting Expectations Right

Eight guidelines setting expectations in families

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## SET EXPECTATIONS THAT ARE

**1. Shared in a Mutual Relationship**

- Built on recognized mutual care, concern, trust
- Negotiated and shaped together
- Grounded in accurate beliefs about . . .
  - Interests and sparks
  - Goals and priorities
  - Skills and capabilities
- Responsive to . . .
  - Growth and change
  - The realities in the world, context



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## SET EXPECTATIONS THAT

**2. Don't Confuse Expectations & Aspirations**

**Aspiration:** A hope or ambition of achieving something



**Expectation:** A belief that someone will or should achieve something.

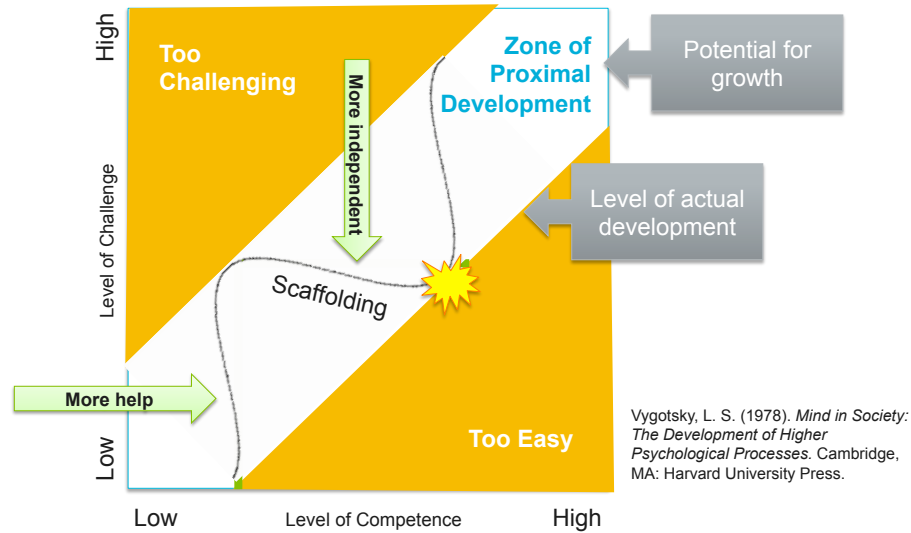


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SET EXPECTATIONS THAT ARE

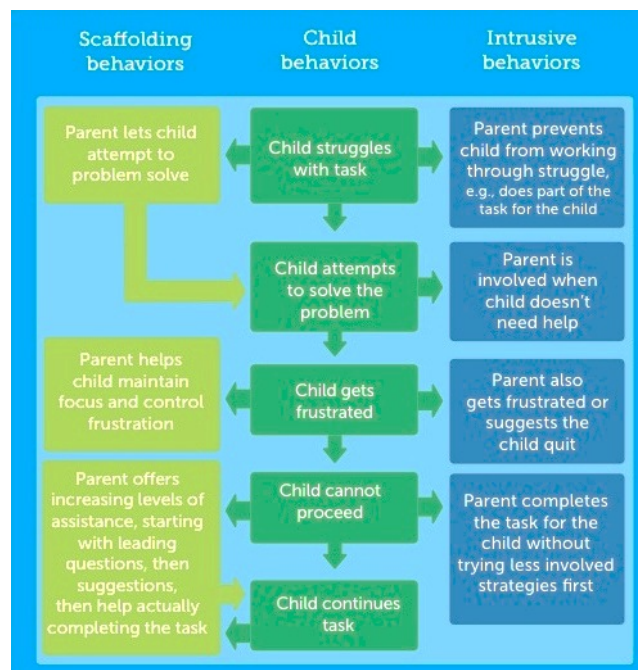
### 3. In the Zone (of Proximal Development)



### 4. Scaffold for Success IN MEETING EXPECTATIONS

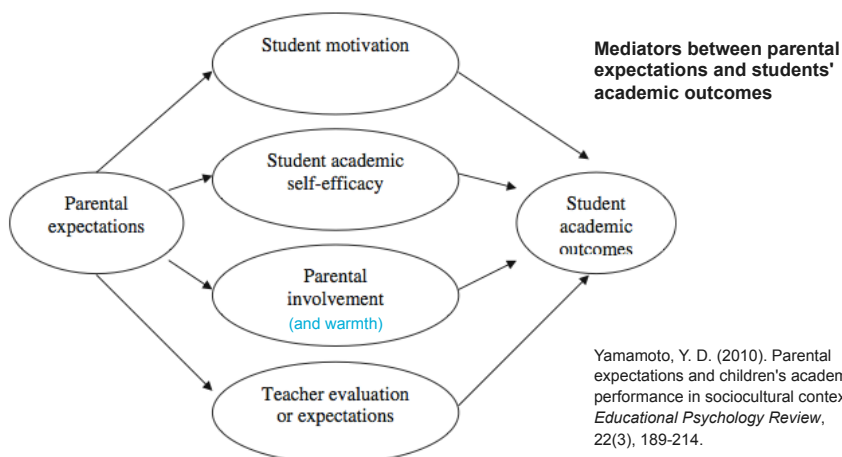
Excerpted from Hadani, H. (2014). *Shared discoveries: Positive parent-child relationships and child development*. San Francisco, CA : Center for Childhood Creativity. Download from <http://disneydiscoverytogether.com/> Used with permission.

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## 5. Tap Family & Personal Strengths

TO SUPPORT MEETING EXPECTATIONS



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## Family Dynamics (Strengths) that Matter

	Adaptive Perfectionism	Maladaptive Perfectionism
Family cohesion, warmth	High	Low
Emotional openness	High	Low
Autonomy, growth	High	Low
Conflict	Low	High
Processes, routines	Flexible, adaptive	Rigid
Acceptance, affirmation	Unconditional	Conditional
Achievement recognition	Improvement, growth	All or nothing
Expectations, standards	Clear, consistent, reasonable	Excessively high, unclear, inconsistent, or missing

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DiPrima, A. J., Ashby, J. S., Gnlika, P. B., & Noble, C. L. (2011). Family relationships and perfectionism in middle-school students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 48(8), 815-827. doi:10.1002/pits.20594

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SET EXPECTATIONS THAT . . .

## 6. Are Adaptive and Growth Oriented

FIXED MINDSET SELF-TALK	GROWTH MINDSET SELF-TALK
"Are you sure you can do it? Maybe you don't have the talent."	"I'm not sure I can do it now, but I think I can learn to with time and effort."
"What if you fail. You'll be a failure."	"Most successful people had failures along the way."
"It's not my fault. It was something or someone else's fault."	"If I don't take responsibility, I can't fix it. Let me listen and learn whatever I can."



Questions from Carol Dweck:  
<http://mindsetonline.com>



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## 7. Emphasize Growth through Failure

WHEN EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT MET

### CONSISTENT WITH FIXED MINDSET

- Denying that it happened
- Venting or expressing negative feelings
- Giving up on dealing with the situation
- Distracting oneself by doing other things

### CONSISTENT WITH GROWTH MINDSET

- Trying to see the situation in a different, positive light
- Focusing on what was achieved
- Actively working on addressing the situation
- Coming up with a plan or strategy for what to do next

Based on the "Brief COPE Scale" in: Stoeber, J., & Janssen, D. P. (2011). Perfectionism and coping with daily failures: Positive reframing helps achieve satisfaction at the end of the day. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 24(5), 477–97. doi:10.1080/10615806.2011.562977



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## 8. Reinforce Progress and Growth IN MEETING EXPECTATIONS

**Celebrate**  
early “wins”  
and signs of  
progress

**Adjust**  
expectations  
to reflect  
growth,  
change

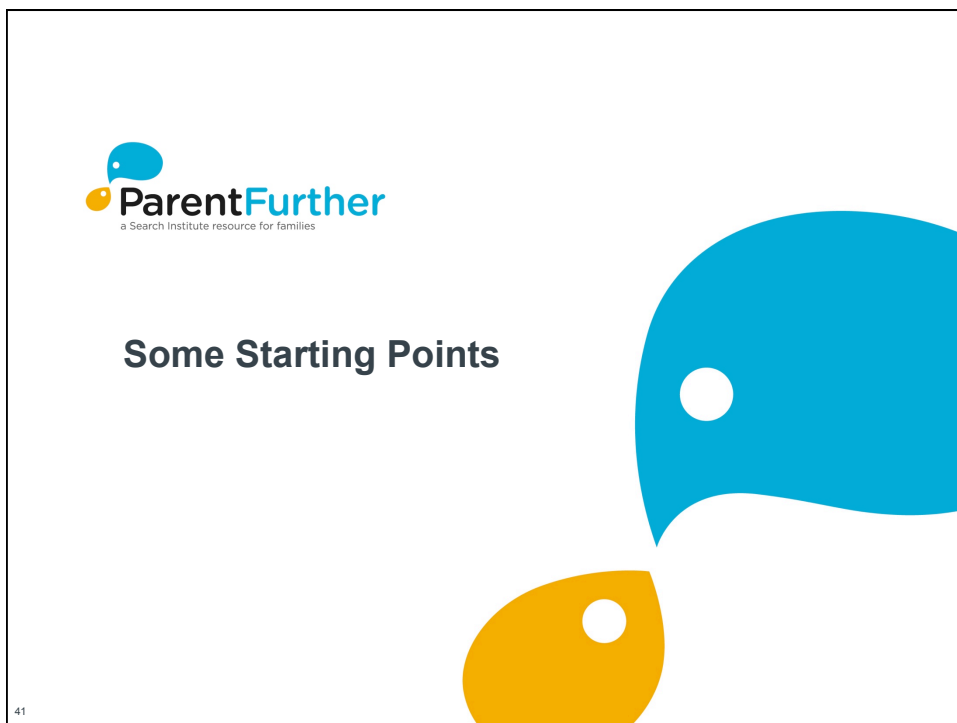
**Don't just**  
“raise the bar”  
without  
marking  
milestones

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## How Have You Set Expectations?

**In the chat box**, describe one concrete way you have effectively set high expectations in your family (or helped families you work with do it)?

- Ground in in a mutual relationship
- Don't confuse expectations and aspirations
- In the “Zone”—Competence & challenge
- Scaffold for success
- Tap family and personal strengths
- Keep them growth oriented and adaptive
- Emphasize growth through failure
- Reinforce progress and growth



## For Parents and their Families

- Be explicit; talk about mutual expectations
- Watch for triggers to talk about expectations
  - Transitions
  - Local or national events
- Develop explicit, shared plans
- Adjust and try different things

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## For People who Work with Families

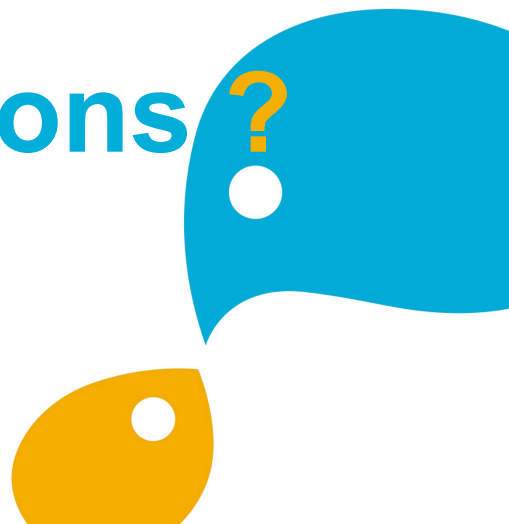
- Think through your expectations of families. In what ways do they reflect (or not reflect) these principles?
- Give families forums to share with each other:
  - What works for them?
  - Where are they struggling?
- Coach on principles for setting expectations
- Notice and reinforce progress



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# Questions?



## Parenting Resources



Available at:  
[www.searchinstitute.org](http://www.searchinstitute.org)



## Search Institute Workshops

### Discovering Your Family's Strengths

A workshop for parenting adults

### Engaging the New American Family

Relationship-based strategies for nurturing families' strengths

*More Info on these and other workshops:*

CALL: *Mary Shrader*: (800) 888-7828 ex. 526

VISIT: [www.search-institute.org/presentations-workshops](http://www.search-institute.org/presentations-workshops)



