

Teach Your Kids About Money

Life gets frantic. There are so many things to do, plan, and start, and so many activities to chauffeur the kids to, pay fees for, and organize. How can you find the time and energy to teach your children about money and also show them your love, discipline them wisely, oversee their manners, and assist them in mastering their favorite sport, obedience, and wise shopping?

The task is daunting, but with a little preparation, the answer is straightforward: Teach and train your children while you're doing, overseeing, and running errands!

Effective training is a matter of mindset and attitude. It's as simple as (1) understanding the topic, (2) living out your understanding, (3) communicating the topic, and (4) helping with application. All this happens right in the middle of life, but that's great, because life is exactly what you're teaching.

The training steps overlap. When your life is an open book to your children, their learning will happen with yours. For example: You learn about budgeting. Your children know that and ask questions. You explain what you're learning and why. They watch you put it into practice and try to emulate you. Then, as they ask for money and as you go shopping or pay bills, you speak naturally about how it affects your budget. Budgeting becomes a topic at the store, the supper table, church, the gas station, and more.

In the middle of your responsibilities and commitments, planning times to impart knowledge and train in application seems like one more pressure. Not so. Life is happening all around you whether you plan it or not. And every life event is a ready-made opportunity to teach and train your children. Be ready to grab those opportunities.

Some of the best times to train come when your children ask questions or are dealing with problems and their interest is high. Don't try to teach wise spending in the middle of a ball game. When children ask questions, they're primed to learn. A few minutes of solid teaching at that moment will stay with them longer than six lectures.

Modeling is another way to teach and train children, who love and look up to their parents. They watch what you do in tough and good times. The key is to make sure they're seeing you do what you want them to do. You're the one they pattern themselves after. Use their attentiveness to your life for their benefit. And remember: You don't have to be perfect. Letting your children watch you learn also is a great training tool.

Larry Burkett (1939-2003), a well-known author, teacher, and radio personality, was co-founder of Crown Financial Ministries, whose daily radio broadcasts are heard on more than 1,000 stations in the U.S. Larry's best-selling books include The Coming Economic Earthquake, What Ever Happened to the American Dream? and Victory Over Debt.



Protect Your Credit

According to the Better Business Bureau (BBB), keeping a good credit record is very important; a poor history can follow you for seven (or more) years and make buying a home, car, or even getting a credit card difficult. **The BBB offers these tips on how to keep a good credit report:**

• Use credit carefully. Pay close attention to your ability to repay your debts before using a credit card.

• If you're having problems paying your bills, contact your creditors at once and explain the situation. See if they'll help you work out a manageable payment plan.

• Keep all of your original documents, especially receipts, sales slips, and billing statements. You'll need them if you dispute a credit bill or report. • Be skeptical of companies that promise they can immediately solve your credit problems or "clean up your credit report." • Be persistent. If your credit file contains errors, you're entitled to have it investigated by the credit bureau. Inaccurate information must be corrected or deleted. Cleaning up errors on your credit report can take time and effort, so be patient. • If you've been denied credit, the company must advise you of the name of the credit-reporting agency from which they obtained their information. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, you're entitled to a free report. Ask for it in writing.

Source: Better Business Bureau, www.bbb.org



Prepare Your Home for Winter

Consider these safety tips from Centers for Disease Control, the National Fire Protection Association, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to prevent injuries and deaths related to heating your home this winter:

• Install a smoke alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. • Install a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. • Make sure heating equipment is installed properly. Have a trained specialist inspect and tune up your heating system each year. • Keep portable space heaters at least three feet from anything that can burn, including bedding, furniture, and clothing. • Keep children and pets away from space heaters. Never leave children in a room alone when a space heater is in use. • Have your fireplace chimney and flue inspected each year and cleaned if needed.

