

## **Dear Counselling Corner:**

Do you have any advice on general parenting tips? My spouse and I are quickly discovering that parenting is bringing a wide range of challenges daily and that this is not an easy journey! We would be grateful for any suggestions which you may have to help guide us. Thank you!

## **Learning Day by Day**

### **Dear Learning:**

Welcome to the club! Parenting can be incredibly challenging at times and we all have moments when we wonder how on earth we can handle a new unexpected parenting situation which has come our way. But parenting is also one of the most incredible and rewarding experiences we will ever have. I am going to recommend a terrific book written by Michael Unger titled I Still Love You (see: <https://www.amazon.ca/Still-Love-You-Troubled-Parents/dp/1459729838>) In his book, Unger recommends nine parenting focal areas designed to support your child to be resilient and grow. This is what he says:

1. Structure • Our children want a reasonable amount of structure. It convinces them that their parents love them.
2. Consequences • Our children want the security of knowing there are reasonable consequences to their actions.
3. Parent-child connections • Our children really do want connections with their parents, but those connections will look very different at each age and stage of development.
4. Lots and lots of strong relationships • Children live in interdependent worlds that bring them the possibility of lots of supportive relationships. Our job as adults is to help them nurture these connections.
5. A powerful identity • As adults, we are mirrors to our children. We reflect back to them who they are and how much they are valued.
6. Sense of control • Children need opportunities to control their own lives and learn the consequences of their actions. Children who experience manageable amounts of risk and responsibility have the risk-taker's advantage. They are better prepared for future challenges having learned how to solve problems early.
7. Sense of belonging • Children need to know they belong in their families, as well as at their schools and in their communities. They need to believe their lives have a purpose and that their families, peers, and communities need them.

8. Fair and just treatment • Children need to experience their homes and schools as places where they are treated fairly. Children need to be protected from racism, sexism, and other forms of intolerance.

9. Physical and psychological safety • Our children need access to the resources that make them healthy. This includes housing, safe streets, well-resourced schools, and parents with the time to pay attention to them.

Please see the link below for detailed examples and strategies of practical things caregivers can do for each of these nine areas:

<https://secure1.nbed.nb.ca/sites/ASD-W/NasisMiddle/Documents/9%20Things%20all%20Children%20Need-Strategies%20for%20Parents.pdf>

*The Counselling Corner is intended to offer some helpful ideas, encouragement, and insight on a variety of topics to support your child's social and emotional learning. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns at [hchang@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:hchang@sd43.bc.ca).*

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