Seven MYTHS of Effective Parenting:

1. Punishment will change bad behavior.
2. More reminders lead to better behavior.
3. Explaining to your child why a behavior is wrong will lead him to stop that behavior.
4. Lots of praise just spoils your child.
5. Doing it once or twice means your child can do it regularly.
6. My other child did not need extra training, so this child shouldn’t need it either.
7. My child is just being manipulative.

The real story is that:

You can get rid of almost any misbehavior by rewarding the positive opposite behavior.

Setting the stage:

A parent’s harsh command sets the stage for a child to respond with “NO” – or noncompliance (especially if embedded in a bunch of nagging statements and put-downs).

“Please” and a respectful tone of voice set the stage for more cooperation.

Ignoring

Ignore misbehavior whenever possible - especially attention seeking misbehaviors like: whining, complaining, moping or “water power.”

Two potential problems with ignoring –

- Child may raise the ante - the misbehavior gets worse before it gets better.
- Child may also become aggressive to force attention from the parent. You can give a time out or take away a privilege for kicking or hitting. Stay calm. Use neutral, disinterested tone of voice

Build the foundation for positive behavior – Each day give 20 minutes of uninterrupted, quality attention to each child:

- Be “present”
- Put aside your own “agenda”
- Be interested in your child
- Put aside your behavior goals
- Take delight in your child
- Relax, enjoy, listen, watch, describe
Give attention to good behavior
You will get more of whatever behavior you pay attention to

- Give your attention to behaviors you want to increase
- Your attention is the most effective form of reward for behavior
- Avoid giving attention to misbehavior when possible

Praise

- One effective kind of attention is to praise a child for doing a desired behavior
- The more **ENTHUSIASTIC** the praise, the quicker and more long lasting the change
- Praise should be **given only after the desired behavior occurs** – immediately and every time

Effective Praise

- Deliver praise when **close to child**
- Use **sincere, enthusiastic** tone of voice
- Use **specific positive words**
  - “Thanks for putting the game away before taking another.”

- With praise, use **nonverbal reinforcers**
  - **Physical** – hug, high five, pat on back, clap your hands
  - **Visual** – thumbs up, smile, wink, facial expression

- **Vary the words and gestures** you use

Praise can also focus on

- **Effort** – “You are working hard on getting your shoes tied!”
- **Progress** – “You can read so many new words!”
- **Child’s own feelings** – “You seem proud of your book report!”
- **Contribution** – “When you help set the table, we can have dinner sooner!”
- **Faith in child** – “I think you’ll be able to get up on time tomorrow.”