

## **The most important job in the world**

Being a parent is not a job that we apply for or need qualifications to do and yet, do it is likely to be one of the most vital roles we will ever have to play. Most of us get no formal training and we often muddle through doing the best we can. Sometimes, we try to do it in the way that our own parents did – and often, we try hard to do it very differently.

In this day and age, not only do parents often struggle without the help of extended family, but it is quite common for one parent to be coping on their own as a single parent. This may seem to be an overwhelming task.

Val McCrae, (MACA), has had many years experience teaching parenting skills, and explains: “ Following some simple principles can be a great help when managing children – of all ages. Firstly, reward desirable behaviour and secondly, give consequences for the behaviour you wish to discourage. Although it may be difficult to recognise at the time, a three-year-old in the middle of a tantrum is crying out to know exactly where the limits are and to feel secure that there is an adult in charge. There are strategies to learn that can be applied and modified right through to those trying teenage years.”

“Additionally,” says Val, “ it is crucial that parents of all ages, take care of themselves and get whatever help they need to take some of the stress out of their lives. A tired, irritable adult is not likely to be the best parent they can be. Parents need a life too!”

*Val McCrae, (MACA), is a Counsellor and Life Coach who has recently moved to the Blue Mountains.  
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