

## Toddlers in a gym

The sign outside the gym door says that children are not allowed inside. But I pretend I cannot read English when I hit my proximity card key fob on the gym door to allow me in. Why? Because I have no other choice but to ignore this particular sign.

When my husband is at work, there is no one at home I can leave my toddler with. But does that mean I cannot workout every day or at least a few times a week? Won't that be unfair to a full-time mum who wishes to stay fit and healthy? Well, I certainly think it will be.

I have never noticed if there are hidden close circuit TV cameras inside the gym, but even if there are, the property managers either does not monitor them regularly, or pretend to ignore the presence of a two-year-old visitor inside their gym. Kindhearted people, I must admit.

My toddler, however, is not nearly as kindhearted as the property managers. She does not care to show compassion to my poor nerves. So, no matter how much I ask her to sit quietly with a book or a plaything on the gym floor, she will try to climb a stationary bike or sit on a leg abductor machine.

From the treadmill, I have to turn my neck every 10 seconds to check if she is doing something that is potentially dangerous. Looking back every few seconds not only kills the rhythm of my running, but carries the risk of me losing my balance on a running treadmill. But I am brave - mums of little children have to be brave all the time. We can take risks in the blink of an eye, small and big alike.

I have finally started hitting the gym after two years and I am so proud of it, but a few weeks ago when I was running on a treadmill and patting myself on my back with an imaginary hand for the wonderful job that I was doing, my daughter pushed the gym's Swiss ball against the treadmill.

For a second I thought I would fly out of the machine. But I somehow managed to grab one of the safety handles with one hand and press the STOP button with another. If I were a second late, I believe I would have stumbled on the running area and lost a tooth or two.

Half of the air-filled exercise ball went under the machine and I burnt 15 calories just to pull it out from under it. But that incident assured me of one thing that there are probably no CCTV cameras inside the gym!

Being a mum is like being a student - you learn and experience brand new things every day, things you perhaps never thought you would experience. And you are right, it's the baby who is the teacher. She is strict and compassionless and she teaches you everything the hard way!

By Wara Karim

# Your child is a reflection of you

It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings - Ann Landers

One of the most difficult challenges parents now face is to draw the line between what to teach to their children and what to keep for a later time. Working till late hours, parents still strive to instill enough behavioural qualities in their children as teaching every imaginable skill and quality is not possible.

Some trees require the seeds to be planted in the right way and nurtured, only then will they grow up to bear fruits. Along with making them disciplined, it is important to mould the personality of the children, and also to prepare them for the future, so that they learn to pick themselves up when they fall. They have to be taught not only what to say, but also what NOT to say.

But what should we actually teach? Your child is your reflection. Every parent knows what is best for their child and there is no "To-Do" list of the "Good Book", but here are some absolute essentials which are often left for the children to find out about themselves, and some never learn the value of it.

## CURIOSITY TO LEARN

You have two options - one, to show so much interest to learn something on your own that when your child thinks about

learning something, his eyes sparkle like he is watching something glorious, or two, watch him get bored and struggle to memorise because he just would not pay interest in anything except the cellphone games. Show your child how exciting the making of something is, show him documentaries, take him to factories, and also visit bookstores and museums when you are travelling abroad.

## GENDER ROLE

Often, girls are taught that they are equal to boys. Girls are educated, trained to play sports that were only played by men even 30 years back, and are now expected to shape their careers like men do, besides perfectly playing the role of a woman. But are the boys ever told that they are equal to the girls? We have to teach our sons that they can do the house chores too. Teach them cooking and cleaning and sharing responsibilities, because boys are as good as girls and being independent does not require a gender role.

## NEVER LOSE YOUR IDENTITY

It is a common tendency for children, in fact for every age, to pick something from the people who are associated with them. You hear the first slang word and you cannot wait to use it on someone else.

We should regularly show the difference between "fun" and "bad". There is no point in being attracted to something that can result in something dreadful. There will always be people who would be a wrong influence, if you are not the stronger example.

From childhood, train them to battle frustrations and to not give up and to not give in,

because you have to try hard to get on the positive side of life. There will be bad experiences and which side you show them is what they will carry in their heart; to learn from it or to be injured by it.

## SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-RESPECT

We love to see our children succeed, be it in an exam or any competition, and they need to be praised as much as we find the need to be appreciated. But excess praise and pamper can lead to over-confidence and narcissism, and it is very essential to train them to draw the lines of modesty.

An alternate scenario would be self-doubt, when your child has no confidence at all to make an attempt. We have to teach our kids to withhold positivity and stay focused. No one needs to be perfect and we should just never stop trying.

It is ok to face failures, because what hurts more than failed attempts are disappointed parents. Teach them to love themselves, and everyone around them, for who they are and not what others can do for them.

## GREATNESS OF GRATITUDE

Thank you, please and sorry have healing powers. It is very essential to appreciate what others do for you, apologise when you are wrong and accept the apology of others. Show the kids what they are blessed with and to be grateful for it. It is only when you are happy with the little things in life that you can learn to live with peace.

By Sonya Soheli

