

Plan your stay.

After you have read the Points of Interest, look over the things you have learned. Pick something to work on this week with one of your children. Maybe you want to make a trip to the library or museum. Maybe you want to make plans to give your child more choices.

Map out the details of your plan. What exactly do you plan to do? When will be the best time? Do you need to do anything to prepare the child to take part in your new plan? Do you need to do anything to prepare yourself? For example, do you need to imagine some of the problems that might arise and be prepared to calmly solve problems and gently teach?

Decide some small things you can do this week and write out your plan:

What you plan to do:

What you plan to do:	
The best time to do this:	
Ideas to prepare my child or family:	
How I can prepare myself:	
People who can help me:	

Learn more about Discovery Point.

Discovery Point is an important part of the parenting journey. We hope you will become an expert at discovery. You may want more ideas to learn the most at Discovery Point. If so, you might:

-Read ideas about family reading, setting limits, and giving children choices along with other Parenting Journey information at www.arfamilies.org.

-Look for a class in your area on story-telling, reading, learning, or problem-solving.

-Read a book about understanding children such as Haim Ginott's *Between Parent and Child*, or a book on helping children succeed at school like John Ban's *Parents Assuring Student Success*.

-Get ideas from another person who has inspired lifelong learning in his or her children.

-Get more ideas by going to the national extension family website, www.cyfernet.org, and searching on learning, school, problem-solving, or lifelong learning.



Have you made progress?

Do you want to be more effective at parenting your children?

Do you have new ideas about how to parent your children effectively?

Have you made a specific plan for something you intend to do?

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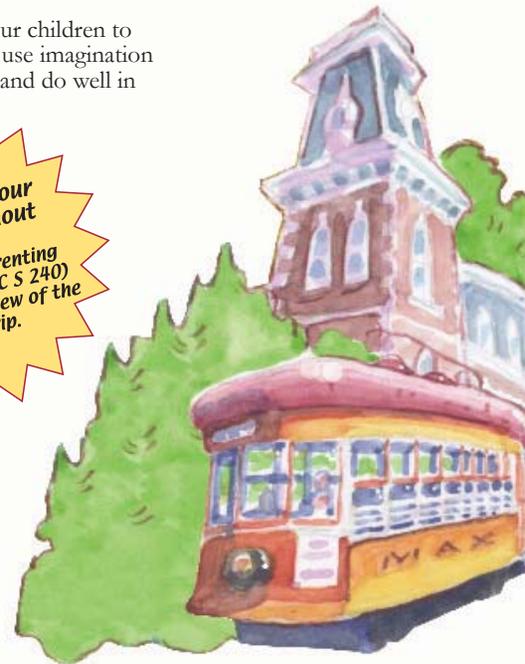
FCS 405

DON'T MISS DISCOVERY POINT

INSIDE:

Encourage your children to love learning, use imagination and curiosity, and do well in school

Don't start your journey without a map! Pick up the parenting journey map (FC S 240) to get an overview of the whole trip.





You can help your children learn happily and effectively and become lifelong learners!

Don't miss Discovery Point

Some people skip past Discovery Point. They don't take time to make learning and sharing an important part of their family culture. They don't help children become enthusiastic learners. The effort invested at Discovery Point can make a lifelong difference for you and your children.

In the boxes below, you can use stickers or create your own mark to celebrate those things you are already doing well. You might also mark those things that you are excited to develop further in your relationships with your children. Use these marks to help remind you to keep doing good things and to add more things to your journey.



Points of Interest

1. Give Choices.

We all like to have choices. Children are no different. They enjoy having choices and learn from making decisions. They discover good ways to be responsible when we let them make choices.

As adults, we sometimes try to force children to do things our way. This doesn't work very well. For example, we may want our children to do something more active than watching television. We all know what will happen if we command them to turn off the TV and go outside. They will protest. Instead, we can give them a choice: "It is time to turn off the TV. Would you like to go outside and play or stay inside and read a book?" We are happy when they make a choice that does not involve television.

Another example of giving choices is getting children to clean their rooms. We can yell at them

or threaten them, but this will probably just make them mad. We would have better results if we gave them choices.

For instance, we might ask a child if she wants to play music on the radio while cleaning her room or have it quiet. We might even ask the child if she would rather get the room cleaned up right now or wait until after dinner. However, if the child decides to clean the room after dinner, we need to be sure that she doesn't watch TV or play with friends until the room is clean.

 **Checkpoint**
I give my child reasonable choices.

Wise parents set limits on choices. We allow young children to decide which shirt they want to wear to school but we set limits on bedtimes. We allow teens to go out with their friends but we ask them to be home by a certain time.

 **Checkpoint**
I let my child choose from safe alternatives.

Many things should be decided by the child. In matters of style, it is better not to start a battle. You may think your child's hair is too long or too short or that baggy pants look ridiculous. Our parents probably had some of the same concerns about our style! Allow the child freedom to express herself or himself in areas that are not unsafe or immoral. Do not panic when some of those choices are different from ones we make.

 **Checkpoint**
I let each of my children make choices appropriate for his or her age.

Sometimes, we allow children to make bigger choices after they have shown that they are wise in making small choices. For example, a teen who wants to be trusted to go with friends to a concert needs to have demonstrated responsibility about making good choices. A parent may need to say occasionally, "I think I will be ready to trust you with going to the concert when you have shown that I can trust you to come home on time." Because trust is earned over time, a 14-year-old will probably not be allowed the same freedom as a 17-year-old.

2. Learn from mistakes.

All of us make lots of mistakes. Sometimes, our children's mistakes bother us because they seem silly. It can help to remember that we were once children and also made mistakes. We should allow children to be children.

 **Checkpoint**
I know it is normal for children to make mistakes.

If we get angry when children make mistakes, they may learn to be afraid of trying anything. That is why we should react to mistakes with calm problem-solving and gentle teaching.



For example, when a child spills her milk, we simply say, "The milk spilled. Here is a cloth to wipe it up." That is problem solving. Later, when the child is feeling peaceful, we can help her think about where to place her cup to avoid spills. That is gentle teaching.

Imagine your teenager has an accident with the car. Calm problem-solving involves being sure everyone is feeling safe and peaceful. When everyone is feeling peaceful, the parent and child might call the insurance agent to arrange repairs. Gentle teaching might include asking the teen, "That was a terrible experience for you. What did you learn from it?"

As children get older, the most important teaching may happen when they start making sense of their experiences. We encourage them to learn from their experiences. This is better than lecturing or scolding.

 **Checkpoint**
I am prepared to respond to my children's mistakes with calm problem-solving and gentle teaching.

We can help children grow into capable adults when we are willing to help them learn from the mistakes rather than punish them for making mistakes.

3. Encourage a love of learning.

A love of learning is one of the greatest gifts any parent can give a child. There are simple things parents can do to help children develop a love of learning and a love of reading.

There are even things we can do to help babies love to learn. When a child experiments with sounds and words, we can repeat them back. Also, we can play peek-a-boo and laugh with the child. When a child is tired, we should let them rest. When a child wants to play, we need to play with them in a way that is enjoyable for them. Our sensitive response to them teaches them to interact with us.



 **Checkpoint**
I take time to interact with my children.

We can also fill our lives with learning. We can read, ask questions about new ideas and check books out of the library for us and our children. Also, we talk about the things we are learning.

 **Checkpoint**
I show my children I love them.

We can make reading fun for our children. We can let our children select books from the library. We can read to them regularly.

We should make an adventure out of reading. When we read to them, we can bring excitement and fun to the story. When a child wants to linger on a page, we can take time to talk about it. We can name the characters on the page of an illustrated story and invite the children to point to them. If we turn reading into a chore, children will resist it. If we make reading fun, they will seek it.

We can make learning an adventure. Maybe once a week we can make an outing with our children to

an interesting place such as a museum, historic site, a business or any place that is new and interesting. For example, visiting a site where a new house is being built and asking the contractors or craftspeople to tell about their work can open children's minds to new ways to use their talents. Be sure to have safety in mind.

 **Checkpoint**
I make reading and learning interesting for my children.

We also show our appreciation for learning when we make a place in our homes for books, bookshelves and other learning materials. The child who grows up seeing and experiencing the adventure of learning is likely to become a lifelong learner.

Things to do at Discovery Point

Be an enthusiastic learner yourself! Take an interest in your children's discoveries. Make a regular practice of sharing the things you learn with each other.

Visit interesting people and places. Make learning and exploring safe for your children. Help your children become good decision-makers.