



# **A SIMPLE GUIDE TO MENTOR YOUR CHILD**

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# Introduction

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Child Mentoring is an increasingly popular way of providing guidance and support to young people in need. Age range for children undergoing this kind of mentoring is usually between 7 and 17 years.

A parent has the ability to pass down essential skills and knowledge to children. Therefore, it is vital to continuously improve parenting skills and maximize the effectiveness in delivering key skills through mentorship.

Parents are powerful role models for children because soft skills such as resilience and optimistic mentality can influence children to an extent in how they would behave in the long term. Of course, no one is perfect. Therefore, parents must be aware of their weaknesses and seek support to ensure children will be less likely to pick up undesirable habits or mindsets that counteract their mentorship, e.g. procrastination, poor time management, e.t.c

# Stages of Mentoring

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There are 3 stages of mentoring that you should know; Pre-mentoring stage, Mentoring stage and Post-mentoring stage. For the purpose of this training guide, I will talk about the first two.

## **Pre-Mentoring Stage:**

This is the stage of relationship building. An important principle of mentorship dictates that relationship must precede mentorship. No amount of mentorship training outweighs the value of an authentic connection between mentor and mentee.

This principle suggests that mentorship is as important as maintaining the relationship between parents and children. When the relationship is healthy, parenting and mentoring become more efficient as children are more likely to listen and respect the connection.

I have written extensively before on how to create a good parent-child relationship. For this training, I will reveal to you the 3 important elements of relationship. They are: Know, Love and Trust (KLT).

**a. Know:**

Knowing your child is beyond knowing his birthday dates and favourite dishes! You need to study your child to understand his personality, emotions, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, potentials and life purpose. It is only by knowing your child that you can create the so desired loving relationship with him or her.

In the case of a mentorship relationship, this 'knowing' must be mutual. Your child must know you just as you seek to know him or her. You need to ask yourself how much does your child know of your history, struggles, accomplishments, failures and experiences. It is when they know your true personality that they can also connect with you and see you as a worthy role model.

**b. Love:**

Although, love happens naturally between parents and their children, this love wanes over the time if it is not recreated, nurtured and sustained.

I have come across children who told me they hate their fathers and some children have told me they hate their mothers. This hatred stemmed from genuine and sometimes non-genuine reason. However, parents must be cautious to build hatred of their persons in their children.

But then, how do you know your child loves you?

As a parenting coach, I can confidently tell you that a sign that your child loves you is that the child will always want to please you and won't like to hurt you through his or her behaviours. Anytime, he does something that makes you unhappy, he becomes penitent, remorseful and sober!

**c. Trust:**

This seems to be the hardest part of parenting that most parents struggle with. Children are quick to lose the trust they have in their parents.

As a rule of thumb, you should be careful not to reveal your child's secret or insult her with her weaknesses. Be a trustworthy confidant and a supportive problem solver and not the kind of parent who spreads their child's dark side with just anybody!

Once you are sure these three elements (KLT) are available in your relationship with your child, then you can move on to the mentoring stage.

### **Mentoring stage**

The mentoring stage is further divided into four stages; initiation, negotiation, growth and closure. However, an exposition of these stages and all that they entail is beyond the scope of this guide. Worthy of note is that mentoring between a parent and a child is life-long!

# Steps to Mentor Your Child

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This aspect is the core of this parenting guide. After creating a good relationship with your child, these are the steps you can follow to mentor your child:

1. Start by choosing a specific day in the week to have a mentoring session with your child. It is not as if you won't be talking to or guiding your child on other days, however, you have to formalize the mentoring process so that you and your child can attach seriousness and importance to it. Thus, a way of ensuring this by designating a day and time for the mentoring session. You can start with 30-40 minutes per session, then increase the duration as time goes by.



2. Gather a list of important topics from which you will select a topic to discuss with your child every week. These topics should cover almost every aspect of life e.g. positive and negative values, religious teachings, interpersonal relationship, leadership, politics, money, education, societal issues e.t.c.

What is important in this respect is to help your child relate the topic to life experiences or link the topic to what he or she can relate with.

Also, in your discussion, you have to take note of the following ethics:

- a. Be the first to greet, maintain eye contact, smile often, address your child by his or her name and listen more than you talk.*
- b. Use open-ended questions such as 'how' or 'why' instead of 'did you' or 'do you want to'. Open-ended questions help your child to be able to share more of their thoughts and feelings.*
- c. Let your child do a summary/recap while you listen attentively.*
- d. Talk to your child more as a friend than as a parent.*

3. Share daily/weekly experiences together. These include, for your child, what happened at school, in the neighborhood and every other place they frequent; and for you, it could be about something that happened in the market, in your place of work/business, between you and someone, or reports in the news.

Please note that while your child should share everything with you, you must only share age-appropriate information with him/her.

4. Always empower your child to play some decision-making roles. For example, you can present your child with an hypothetical or real challenging situation and ask him or her to think of a solution or possible ways of solving the situation.

5. Have fun. Your mentorship with your child doesn't have to be 100% serious. Play games, tease one another and have casual gist sometimes. Child mentoring can turn boring if you are too serious about it.

# Importance of Child Mentoring

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1. It is a good avenue to connect with your child.
2. It is a good avenue to help your child with any intellectual or emotional deficiency he or she may be battling.
3. It is an effective means of easing your parenting affairs. The more your child is guided and has been helped to develop a sense of responsibility, the lesser your parenting challenges.
4. It is a sure way of raising a unique and TOTAL child who is going to make positive impacts in the world.

# Conclusion

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Parents should observe and evaluate at intervals whether their mentorship effort is yielding the desired results. It is therefore important that children get tons of strong support, encouragement, and rewards from parents as they develop in the mentorship program.

Also, it is advisable that parents should get trusted mentors for their child in order to complement their mentoring efforts.

Thank you for your time and attention!

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