



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Top tips

for parents of 4-7 year olds



Magu plant.
Rhowch amser iddo.

Parenting.
Give it time.



This advice promotes positive parenting - a parenting style that focuses on what your child is doing right and their strengths.

All children need boundaries and discipline. Positive parenting is based on creating this with warmth and respect between parent and child.

What can I do to help my child's development?



At this stage your child will be entering into their first few years of education. Your child is growing up and developing a strong sense of independence. You can support their development in different ways as they grow.

- Playing is still very important at this age. Let your child choose how they want to play and join in. You can make play time work for you when things get busy. Get them to help you with simple tasks like tidying up or laying the table, maybe do this by singing or dancing to music.

Continued

- Encourage your child to talk to you by using open questions like “Can you tell me the best thing about your day?” Showing an interest in what your child has to say lets them know they are important to you.
- Talk to your child about their emotions. It will help both of you if your child can better express themselves by understanding and putting words to these feelings.
- Read together and ask them to make up new endings to their favourite stories to help with their creative thinking.
- Encourage them to take part in an activity they enjoy such as football or swimming. This will help them to keep healthy, to sleep better and to enjoy being active from a young age.
- And remember, they are still developing and learning how to fit in. Tantrums, anger and frustration will still happen, and this is completely normal.



For tips for what you can do to support your child go to [Stages of Development](#)

Encouraging positive behaviour

- Praise your child for positive behaviour. This helps your child feel good about themselves and they are more likely to repeat it.
- Stick to clear family rules and boundaries. Children need to learn that there are certain rules that cannot be broken in order to keep them safe.
- Spend time together. Unwanted behaviour can be a child's way of seeking connection. Play a game, read a book or eat together as a family.
- Show love through words and affection. Your child will learn to talk and act based on how you talk to them and how you treat them.
- Think about whether there are times when you see more unwanted behaviour. What triggers it? What changes



could you make to break the cycle?

- Children need to feel safe and secure in their family and their home in order for them to thrive. Do not smack or physically punish your child. This is illegal in Wales.

Routines



Routines help children develop responsibility and independence and make life easier and less stressful for parents too.

It takes time to establish a new routine that works for your family, these tips may help:



Make mornings more fun

You could create checklists together and make ticking each 'job' off part of the game. Try having fun with music by trying to get everything done before a favourite song ends.

Bedtime at the right time

Let them know bedtime is coming up. If your child takes a long time to fall asleep you might be putting them to bed too early. If they get too wound up to sleep, you might be putting them to bed too late.

Focus on activities that help your child feel calm before bed and check they have been to the toilet and got everything they need to avoid them calling out. Have they had a drink? Got their favourite teddy?



Be consistent

Do the same thing every night at the same time. If your child keeps getting out of bed, gently and calmly return them until they stay in bed.

Screen time

Technology is a part of all our lives and there's plenty of good things to say about screen time. It can be educational, informative, and a great way of staying in touch with friends and family who live far away. It should be something everyone enjoys, not something everyone needs.



Importantly, if children are spending too much time looking at a screen, it means they are not communicating with you and the rest of the family.

How much is too much screen time?

- Would your child choose screen time over any other fun activity?
- Is it difficult to get their attention when they're on their screen, do they ignore you?
- Do they act out of character if you take the screen away?

If any of these signs ring a bell, it's time to reduce and balance screen time.



How do I reduce screentime?

- Be positive. It's not about taking something away, it's about substituting it with something even better.
- Explain why you're taking the screen away, and why it's a good thing. If you tell your child "I'm taking your iPad away because you're on it too much," they may push back - if you tell them you're going to do something better instead, you'll get a much better response.
- Agree on the screen time and consequences. Talk about how much screen time is allowed – including the consequence if this is not followed. For example, if after the time your child refuses to stop, then the consequence could be no more screen time for the rest of the day or week.
- Create technology-free zones. Maybe bedrooms or the dining room can be reserved for meals, play and sleep only.
- Avoid screens an hour before bed. This also helps them to sleep.



Where can I get support?

It's important to look after yourself too. It's ok to ask for help. More advice on that [here.](#)

The Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L)
call free on 0800 132 737
(confidential 24-hour service)
or email call@helpline.wales.

C.A.L.L offers emotional support on mental health and related matters.

If you found this helpful, we have more top tips and information available [here](#)