



## Developing a Parenting Mission Statement

Any successful organization has a guiding mission statement that describes its purpose and objectives. It's an aspiring vision for the future, together with the underlying core values or desired outcomes that drive its strategy and practices. Most companies put a great deal of effort into developing a mission statement because it defines the organization and frames its goals. It's something every employee is expected to uphold.

Should we consider taking a page from the business playbook and develop a mission statement to guide our parenting? Our families? We think so! A family mission statement is a way to define the family's "brand" and serves as an identity statement and set of guiding behaviors and attitudes.

When developing the statement, families mutually agree on roles and accountabilities, and children are free to offer constructive feedback to their parents. They have weekly "roundtable" meetings to review the prior week (how did we do and what can we do better next time?) and determine plans, goals, and workload allocations for the next. They work together to make and enforce daily checklists (with flexibility to accommodate the unexpected) and resolve conflicts in predetermined ways with less stress and fireworks. It's proactive rather than reactive. It's empowering. There's less nagging too, and kids seem to like it!

Many organizations develop separate mission and vision statements. However, because parenting has such a developmental aspect to it, there's merit to combining them. Let's consider the possibilities by first defining the components:

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- The **mission**—our overarching purpose and objective. It captures what we do, for whom, and for what benefit.
- The **vision**—our inspirational and aspiring goals for the future (where we want to go and why) that are realistic and achievable.
- The **core values** and expected **outcomes**—our unwavering, guiding principles that govern our behavior, decisions, and attitudes. They can also include expected outcomes from successfully implementing our mission and vision.

Mission statements can be developed at the family level, parent unit, or individually. When applied to the family or parent units, it is critical that each member has a voice in the final product. Your kids will enjoy and appreciate being involved in the process and will feel a sense of ownership to abide by the terms. Remember, it's one team, one dream!

## Try This: A Parenting Mission Statement

What follows is a hypothetical parenting mission statement. Consider developing your own, as you raise your future adult. This bit of strategic parenting will take some effort, but can pay huge dividends in the long run.

### Sample Parenting Mission Statement

#### MISSION

To inspire, equip, and empower our future adults who are admired for their character, respected for their gifts and talents, and remembered for the love and service they gave to others.



## **VISION**

We will raise future leaders of excellence who will live purposefully and honorably, who will understand and passionately offer their unique assets, who will leave a legacy of significance and joyful service, who will value relationships and faith, who will exude gratitude and courage, and who will live with the confidence of knowing they are loved unconditionally and believed in emphatically.

## **CORE VALUES**

1. We will assume primary responsibility and accountability for developing, nurturing, and supporting our children to become well-prepared, honorable, and productive leaders.
2. We accept the responsibility of serving as the chief role models for our children and practice what we teach.
3. We will parent as a team, complementing, advising, and affirming each other in a spirit of love and cooperation.
4. We will demonstrate unequivocally through our actions, words, and attitudes that our children are loved unconditionally.
5. We will actively seek to build strong relationships and communicate based on love, trust, respect, active listening, and mutual understanding.
6. We will support self-discovery in our children to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of their unique design, assets, and opportunities.
7. We will help our children build a personal leadership foundation for life that fosters wise decision-making.
8. We will honor our children's uniqueness and empower them to live their dreams.
9. We will actively engage loving adults in the lives of our children.

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10. We will value their person more than their performance and regularly communicate our belief in them.

This is just an example, based on our parenting goals as our kids were growing up. Play with these statements a bit and see what you can come up with for your own family.

Remember, it's never too early to begin "parenting for adulthood." At the same time, it's never too late! However, the sooner we begin, the sooner we will help build the leadership foundation our children need for life. By keeping our eyes on the goal, we'll improve our parenting and ultimately, their destination.