



## Can Childhood be “Perfect?”

By Carlynn McCormick

*How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!*

Robert Louis Stevenson: [A Child's Garden of Verses](#)

I love this stanza from Stevenson's poem; it brings memories of pumping so high I felt I was flying. It brings reminiscence of Father running behind me as I learn to ride a two-wheeler; of Mother helping us set up a lemonade stand in the summertime; of my sister Helen and me, acting out stories with our paper dolls.

But childhood is not always idyllic: sometimes it is flawed by unpleasant or painful moments. As parents we look back at our early memories — be they good or bad — and envision what we want for our own children: that perfect childhood.

Is there a secret to fulfilling such a desire?

Most definitely: it is found in the four letter word L-O-V-E.

More than anything else, children need the love and affection of the adults around them. Saying “*I love you*” is a great start. Using terms of endearment replicates the law of affinity: *when you give love, you get love*. And there are innumerable actions you can carry out that spell love:

- When your child wants to talk to you, for example, you can give your full attention and really listen — *I want to hear about it. Please tell me.*
- You can acknowledge what your child says — *thank you for telling me about that.*
- You can let your child know he is needed by allowing him to contribute — *let's get rags and we can clean up the spill together.*
- You can encourage your child to solve problems for herself — *what do you think you should do about it?*
- If you make a mistake, you can apologize — *I'm sorry that I forgot to take you to the library. Please forgive me.*
- You can follow the dictate “**what you admire is what you get**” by admiring positive traits and ignoring negative ones — *you have the most beautiful smile; I love it when you smile!*
- You can teach your child common-sense values — *let's work out some examples together of how the Golden Rule works.*
- You can set a good example — *it might hurt Kitty if we are rough so let's pet him gently like this.*
- You can show your child the same respect and importance you want your child to show you — *we need to leave soon; is ten minutes enough time for you to finish coloring that picture?*
- You can support your child's personal interests — *let's look on the Internet and see if we can identify what kind of spider it is.*
- You can shield your child from non-survival activities and influences — *that movie is not appropriate but this one is rated for children.*

By demonstrating your love on an everyday basis, you keep your child's native sweetness, kindness and desire to contribute in tact: the precise qualities that ensure a child's happiness.

Yes, Mom and Dad, you *can* create a **perfect childhood** for your kids.

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