

## Parenting Your Child Effectively: Help Children Feel Lovable and Capable

By Marilyn Fox, Extension Educator

Sometimes we need something right now to help us calm an emotional discussion with our children. When things are difficult, we are most likely to “lose our cool” and say or do things that we wish later we hadn’t. We need something that settles the conflict without either the child or the parent feeling put down. There are a number of guidance principles that help us discipline in stressful times.

### Guidance Principle

**Help your children feel lovable and capable.** In this discussion, we refer to a person’s feeling of being lovable and capable as an IALAC (I am lovable and capable). An IALAC is a little bit like your spirit or sense of humor—no one can see it, but it’s an important part of who you are. People need a big, strong IALAC to be able to love others, accept and receive love and feel good about themselves. Your IALAC gets bigger or smaller because of what happens to you. IALAC is another word for self-esteem.

Following are ways parents can build a child’s self-esteem.

Situation	Hurtful Response	Constructive Response
Mark spills the juice he is carrying to the table.	“Can’t you ever do anything right?”	“That’s a hard job. We’ll wipe it up and you can try again.”
Katie cries because she can’t open the lid on the peanut butter jar.	“You’re too little to do that — let me do it for you!”	“Let’s see if we can do it together.”
Three-year-old Miguel runs away from you in the grocery store.	“What the matter with you, Miguel? You’re acting like a baby! I thought you were a big boy!”	
Keasha cries at bedtime because she is afraid of the dark.	“You ought to be ashamed. You’re acting like a baby. There’s nothing	

### Acknowledgment

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