

## NEWSLETTER

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LOVE AND LIMITS are really all you need to raise kids.

Parental love should be UNCONDITIONAL. This means you love your child for the unique being he or she is. You don't just love the child for his or her attributes like a pretty face, or accomplishments like being the first on the block to be toilet-trained, or acquisitions like a soccer trophy. You just simply love the kid!

Understanding the concept of unconditional love is a good start but it is not enough. Your love must be DEMONSTRATED many times each day. You know the drill: hugs, kisses, pats, holding hands, telling the child !I love you! over and over again. Your love should be CHILD-CENTERED so you go to the swings rather than the tennis court on Saturday morning.

Your love must also be STRONG. Strong enough so you foster the child's development of autonomy even though it's scary. This means you let your toddler climb up the slide in the park. Of course you stand there and keep your child safe. But you love the child so much you swallow your fear and help the kid grow up day by day when it would be a lot easier on your nervous system to keep the child in your arms.

And your love must be strong enough so you set LIMITS even though it's often easier to give in.

Knowing that their parent is strong and always in-charge gives children a sense of security. !My Mom (or Dad) loves me. And is in-charge around here and will keep me safe. The kid whose parent always gives in worries, !Who's running this show? It better not be me--I'm too little!

Loving your kid is the easy part. Most parents need some work on their limits skills. Check out the DISCIPLINE section of my website's ParentTips if you need help.