

QUICK TIPS
FOR
BUSY
FAMILIES

SNEAKY STRATEGIES FOR RAISING GREAT KIDS

JAY PAYLEITNER



BETHANYHOUSE

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2017 by Jay Payleitner

Published by Bethany House Publishers
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438
www.bethanyhouse.com

Bethany House Publishers is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

ISBN 978-0-7642-1869-9

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

Scripture quotations marked *ESV* are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ESV Text Edition: 2011

Scripture quotations marked *NLT* are from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked *NKJV* are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Darren Welch Design LLC

Author is represented by The Steve Laube Agency.

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



This book is dedicated
to your kid's mom and dad

CONTENTS

Introduction	11	13. The Library Card Initiation	29
<u>STRATEGIES</u>		14. If It's Important to Your Kids, It's Important to You	30
1. Realize Every Kid Is Different	13	15. Dad Tucks In	31
2. Candy Land Penance	15	16. Plan to Flex	33
3. Six Games for Road Trips	17	17. Throw Paper or Rock Accordingly	34
4. Don't Hide Your Yearbook	19	18. Keep the GPS Option Open	35
5. Blasting Classical Music	20	19. Use the Needlepoint Metaphor	37
6. Honor Apologies	21	20. Happy Everything	39
7. Stash Markers and Poster Boards	23	21. Scrub Pots Together	40
8. PEZ Dispenser Magic	24	22. Stop Scrubbing Pots Long Enough to Make a Serendipitous Memory	41
9. Twenty-one Things to Write on a Sticky Note	25	23. Insert Name Here	43
10. Take Two-Person Photos	26	24. Make Room in the Fridge	45
11. Buy Them One Thing	27		
12. Celebrate Moments of Maturity	28		

25. Repetitively Repeat Important Lessons Redundantly 47
26. Let Them Set Their Own Video Game Boundaries 49
27. Snap a Lost-Kid Photo 52
28. Everybody Out 53
29. The Simple Compliment 54
30. Never Just Walk by a Tree Stump 55
31. Kids on Business Trips 57
32. Buy a House With Sidewalks 59
33. Back-to-School Night 60
34. Prepping for the Next Unit 62
35. Sock Rings 64
36. Doubling Productivity 65
37. The Slurpee Solution 67
38. Basic, Basic, Basic Astronomy 68
39. Lunar Eclipse Lesson 70
40. Stress Not About Stuff That Just Doesn't Matter 71
41. Teach the Birds and Bees Before Your Local Schools Do 72
42. Be the Bad Guy 74
43. "I Think You're Done for the Day" 76
44. Clean Stuff Besides Dishes in the Dishwasher 77
45. Amusement Park Hacks 78
46. Homeowner Secrets 79
47. Visit Colleges 81
48. Personalized Pancakes 83
49. Your Response to Their Frustrations 84
50. Pegs 86
51. Field Trip Frugality 88
52. Asking for Kid Insight 90
53. How to Convince Your Son He Needs a Haircut 92
54. Envision Your Kids As Parents 93
55. Camping Out in the Bathroom 94
56. Expectations and Disappointment 96
57. Nine Times Anything 98
58. Sibling Math Races 100
59. The Art of Pausing 102
60. Oil Their Mitt 103
61. Be Smart With Smartphone Photos 104
62. Responding When They Fail 106
63. When They Want Their Own Room 108
64. Lockbox for Scattered Stuff 109
65. Can We Talk? 110
66. Hold Off on Dessert 112

67. Rites of Passage
Bring New Rights and
Responsibilities 113
68. Play Best Ball 115
69. Fourteen Things 117
70. Remember Grandma's
Spin 118
71. Tide Sticks, Etc. 119
72. The 360 120
73. Open-Door Policy 122
74. The Job Jar 123
75. The Answer Is 204 125
76. Keep Reading Out Loud 127
77. Be Their Favorite Critic 129
78. Start Cheap 131
79. More Than a Driveway 133
80. How to Have Perfect
Timing 134
81. About Your Secret Stash 136
82. Low and Slow 137
83. Teaching Centripetal
Force 138
84. Armed With Science
Trivia 139
85. Volunteer for the Talent
Show 141
86. Identifying Potential Without
Adding Pressure 144
87. Getting Teachers on Your
Side 145
88. The Bad-Apple
Teachers 147
89. Like All Your Kids Best 148
90. Dividing Your Time 150
91. Explain 911 152
92. World Map Shower
Curtain 154
93. Barge Into Their World 156
94. Take Real Road Trips 157
95. Please Don't Say "We'll
See" 158
96. Making Bad Stuff Better 159
97. Trusting Science 160
98. Make Your Kids Your
Hobby 162
99. Introduce Your Hobby to
Your Kids 163
100. Kiss Your Spouse in the
Kitchen 164
101. Sometimes Say No 165
102. Stop Yelling at Referees 167
103. Turning Negatives to
Positives 169
104. Kids Want to Work 171
105. Teach a Mad Skill 173
106. Peekaboo 2.0 175
107. Bring Their Night-Light 177
108. Answer Their Questions
With Questions 178
109. Ice Pucks 180
110. Who Here Has . . . ? 181
111. Stop Trying to Be On
Time 183

112. The Amazing Sharpie	184	129. T-Shirt Quilts	210
113. Laminate Stuff	186	130. Don't Blindly Follow My Advice	211
114. Use the Classic Improv Rule	187	131. Say "I Miss You"	212
115. Annual Photos	189	132. The Potty Mouth Log	214
116. Blind Spot Awareness	192	133. S'mores	216
117. Don't Toss That Refrigerator Box	193	134. Saturday Morning Chores	217
118. On the Steps	194	135. Buy an Art Easel	218
119. Express Unconditional Love	196	136. Let Them Starve	220
120. No-Regret Parenting	197	137. Alternatives to Nagging	221
121. Exasperate Not	199	138. The Sarcastic Clap	223
122. Chess Strategies	200	139. The Cogent Power of Empathy	225
123. Match Their Deposit	201	140. Ask for Their Help	227
124. Avoiding Hypocrisy	203	141. Go Back to High School	229
125. Merge Calendars	205	142. Doing Life	230
126. Ticket Stubs	207	143. Be Happy to See Them	231
127. Spiritual Gifts	208	144. See the Seasons	232
128. Vacation Driveway Checklist	209	Topical Index	235
		Acknowledgments	239

Introduction

FYI. The following 144 quick tips for busy families are not so quick at all. You can certainly read each short chapter in a minute or two, but it may take a couple of decades before you realize the full benefit of some of these ideas.

That shouldn't be a surprise. As a parent, you know some rewards come sooner—a baby's smile or a valentine from a first grader. And some rewards will come later—a hug from a teenager or a thank-you from a new graduate. (Even later rewards include grandkids to spoil and the world-class retirement home your kids will choose for you someday.)

Not all of these tips are sneaky either. Some are gentle reminders of stuff you already know. Some are words and phrases you can speak into the lives of your kids. Some of these tips might be considered “parenting hacks.” Some are spiritual truths critical for every member of your family. And some are semi-brilliant revelations I learned in the process of raising five successful kids who still get along and still enjoy hanging out with their mom and dad.

You will also discover boundaries to set, memories to make, and life lessons to cram into their tiny skulls. Along the way, I reveal some personal parenting fails and satisfying wins. Hey, no one's perfect.

The chapters are in no particular order. We'll share a laugh at one page. And we'll get real serious a few pages later. You are invited to read the entire book in one sitting or one chapter at a time. If you're a blogger, teacher, or small-group leader, you have permission to repurpose a

reasonable number of these ideas as long as you give credit where credit is due.

As always, I love to hear any input from moms and dads who may have their own parenting tips or a fresh spin on something they found in one of my books. Track me down at jaypayleitner.com.

Realize Every Kid Is Different

Kids don't come with the word *musician*, *athlete*, *scholar*, *entrepreneur*, or *artist* stamped on their forehead. Rita and I have four sons, one daughter, four daughters-in-law, and six young grandkids. All with different gifts and personalities.

Raising our family, we assumed our five kids with the same genetic makeup would follow five similar paths. But during their formative years, we seemed to have three natural musicians, two artists, three voracious readers, two math whizzes, two techies, three writers, one scientist, three strategic thinkers, two dreamers, and five athletes. Even now, as life unfolds, we see a continuing evolution of passions and personalities.

Trust me, it's a mistake to slap a label on a kid and put them in a box.

On the other hand, part of our job as parents is to help our children head in the direction consistent with their God-given gifts and passions. Sometimes that means nudging them back on track. Sometimes it means watching uneasily as their plans naturally derail. Sometimes all we have to do is stand back and applaud.

The key might be to encourage young people to throw themselves 110 percent into life. When their best efforts come up short, then they'll know to move on to another life pursuit. In other words, encourage exploration and discourage a slacker mentality.

Take heart. The next 143 chapters offer an array of invaluable, unexpected, comforting, quizzical, and sneaky strategies for helping your kids meet their full potential.

You may be called to enter their world. Or invite them to enter your world. You may be given an assignment to implement right away. You may

read some strategy that seems insignificant and then suddenly it comes in handy in the not-so-distant future.

You will be reminded that the same child may need to be hugged or disciplined or rescued all in the same twenty-four-hour period. You will be challenged to be their best teacher and biggest cheerleader. Some chapters suggest things you need to give your kids: boundaries, compliments, chores, memories, secrets to success, and real-life lessons you learned the hard way.

Combined, these chapters are designed to celebrate and connect families, and help you bring out the best in each other.

Isn't that what you want? Every kid is different. But each one should be given every chance to live God's best plan for their best life.

Candy Land Penance

One of my wife's brilliant punishments for our boys was thirty minutes of hard labor. Specifically, one game of Candy Land with their little sister. If you've got older kids and younger kids, that's an idea worth the price of this book. Everyone wins. The younger sib gets to spend quality time with the cool, typically too-busy older sib. The older sib suffers a not-too-painful consequence for a minor offense. You get thirty minutes of peace and quiet. It's foolproof, unless . . .

Alec—thirteen years older than Rae Anne—devised a work-around. Before the game started, he stacked the Candy Land deck of cards. Rae Anne's first pick was Queen Frostine, followed by double purple, followed by another double purple, followed by a blue. Game over. Rae Anne was ecstatic with her easy victory. Alec was out of the doghouse in less than five minutes. All of which left Mom wondering if Alec should be rewarded or re-punished.

Rita decided it was all good. Until . . . the next time, when Alec stacked the deck again. But this time, he arranged the cards so *he* won in four moves, while his little sister drew red, purple, yellow, blue, which meant she crawled ahead one tiny space each turn while he leapfrogged across the finish line. Rae Anne was not happy. Alec was quite amused. And Rita couldn't help but laugh.

Next time, it got even worse. (Or better.) Alec spent a little extra time stacking the deck. This time, Rae Anne jumped out to the lead, quickly got one space from the finish line, then on the next card, she was sent all the way back to the Peppermint Forest, where she dawdled for several cards, then sprinted ahead only to be ripped back to the plums, molasses,

or whatever candy swamp was on the board back then. Alec “somehow” pulled victory from the jaws of defeat. It was a classic case of an older brother torturing a younger sister. It was also the last time we used Candy Land as punishment.

Still, Candy Land penance is highly recommended. That is, until your older child figures out the option of card stacking and sibling torture. Which isn't really so bad. You will at least get a good family story to tell for years to come.