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Twenty-One Memos from your Child

In this adult world of ours, we sometimes grow impatient over the struggles of our children, to make themselves understood. Our job as parents is to take the time to listen. These 21 memos from a child underscore the need to communicate clearly.

1. Don't let me form bad habits. I have to rely on you to detect them in the early stages.
2. Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it. It makes me feel more secure.
3. Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all that I ask for.
4. Don't make me feel smaller than I already am. It only makes me behave stupidly "big".
5. Don't correct me in front of people, if you can help it. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
6. Don't make me feel my mistakes are sins. It upsets my sense of values.
7. Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn in a painful way—sometimes!
8. Don't be too upset when I say "I hate you." It isn't you that I hate, but your power to thwart me.
9. Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. Sometimes they get me the attention I need.
10. Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
11. Don't forget that I cannot explain myself as well as I should like. This is why I'm not always very accurate.



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12. Don't make rash promises. Remember that I feel badly let down when promises are broken.
13. Don't tax my honesty too much. I am easily frightened into telling lies.
14. Don't be inconsistent. That completely confuses me and makes me lose faith in you.
15. Don't tell me my fears are silly. They are terribly real and you can do much to reassure me if you try to understand.
16. Don't put me off when I ask questions. If you do, you will find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.
17. Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too great a shock when I discover you are neither.
18. Don't think it's beneath your dignity to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me feel surprisingly warm toward you.
19. Don't forget how quickly I am growing up. It must be very difficult to keep pace with me—but please do try.
20. Don't forget I love experimenting. I couldn't get on without it, so please put up with it.
21. Don't forget that I can't thrive without lots of understanding love. But then again, I don't need to tell you... do I?