Reframing parenting

Raising thriving children by supporting parents

Annette Michaux, Nat Kendall-Taylor
We help children thrive by driving new and better ways to support families in their parenting.
How we work
Reframing parenting

7 ways to win hearts and minds
Why think about framing?

How can we reframe parenting?
Because sustained social change requires culture change
Given the **importance of free speech**, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

85% in Favor

Given the **risk of violence**, would you favor allowing a hate group to hold a political rally?

40% in Favor

Sniderman & Theriault, 2004
Why think about framing?
Because you have a problem
You Say...They Think

AAA

Expert/Advocate

BBB

Public
The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest—but the myth—persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.

John F. Kennedy, Yale University Commencement June 11, 1962
7 ways to win hearts and minds on parenting

More than 15,000 Australian Respondents
#1
Understand what you’re up against & get strategic
Cultural Models of Parenting

Individualism
- Choice and Decisions
- Information is Everything
- Good Parenting = Caring
- Good Parenting = Natural
- One-Way Parenting
- Infinite and Absolute Variation

Collectivism
- Importance of Integration and Appropriateness

Government
- Government as outside director (-)
- Government as partner/resource (+)
- Government as incapable (--)

Determinism
- Parenting Determines Parenting
- Natural State = Trouble
- Threat of Modernity
- Communities in decline
- Technology out of control
- Too much coddling
- Too many rules and laws
- Too much science

Gender
- Men = Important
- Women = Responsible (bad parenting/challenges)

Context
- What Surrounds Us, Shapes Us
- Protection Wall (context as potential danger)
- Experience Filter (context as mixed-bag)
#2 Change the Big Idea
Effective Parenting

Child Development
What does the reframe look like?

From: To raise healthy and thriving children, Australia’s parents we need support.

To: We need to invest in programs that support effective parenting.
Attitudes and policy support

- Policy Support
- Publicly Funded Childcare
- Mandated Family-Friendly Work Policies
- Publicly Funded Parenting Centres
- Support for Disadvantaged Families

* = P < .01

Effective Parenting
Child Development

Percent Change vs. Control
**Behavior**

![Graph showing the difference in behavior between Effective Parenting and Child Development. The x-axis represents different behaviors: Willingness to Pay Additional Taxes and Willingness to Engage in Civic Action. The y-axis represents the percent change vs. control. Black bars indicate a decrease in behavior, while orange bars indicate an increase. Asterisks indicate statistical significance with P<.01.](image-url)
#3 Don’t inadvertently judge or evaluate
Less obvious (but powerful) Judge-y-ness... and how to reframe it
Children look up to parents and family members and copy what they do. Some ways to be a good role model are to:
- be positive about life; talk about the good things in people;
- stay calm, even if you feel upset; deal with problems in the best way you can; admit when you have made mistakes;
- have a healthy lifestyle. Think about the messages you are giving if you use drugs, or are violent or racist.

Our children have what it takes to achieve great success in life. Good role models can help them get there!
#4 Use metaphor to provide a mental image that *sticks* and *shifts*
Navigating

Raising children is like sailing on open water. Things like health problems, financial difficulty and stress can make the waters rough and hard for parents to navigate. But we can build lighthouses and safe harbours to guide and shelter parents during heavy storms by providing things like counselling services, high-quality child care, and assistance with housing. These things offer safety and protection during hard times and help all children thrive.

Key components:

- *Raising children=navigating*
- *Challenges=rough waters*
- *Supports=lighthouses and harbours*

Strategic way to redirect:

- *Individualism*
- *Natural Parenting*
- *Fatalism*
#5 Order Is Everything
Establish wider context, *then* get into parenting practice.

Lead with "effective parenting" or advice.

Parenting is Natural; Parenting is Objective.

What Surround Us, Shapes Us.

Parenting is *contingent*; need for support.

Blame parents and/or reject message.
Show Don’t Tell: explain development
Support solutions and motivated to act
**Brain Architecture**

The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood.

**Moves thinking towards:**

- Development starts early and requires quality materials—interactions and supports that parents help provide.
- What happens early is really important and influences how things work later on.
- It's an active process.
Serve and Return

The story to tell

Brains are built through back-and-forth interaction. Healthy development happens when young children “serve” through babbling, gestures, or words, and adults “return” by getting in sync with the child.

Moves thinking towards:

• Interaction drives early development
• By getting in sync with kids, parents can support positive development
• The kinds of things that might get in the way and the need to address them
#7 Tell a story
A New Master Narrative
Support child development by supporting parents

Why does this matter?

The BIG Idea: This is about the health & development of kids & how to help parents supporting this development

How does it work and what threatens it?

Navigation Metaphor:
Navigation is essential
Waters can get rough
Success = skills + supports

Parents shape development
(Brain Architecture + Serve and Return)

What do we need to do?

Give parents what they need so kids get what they need by building skills and contexts
1. Understand what you’re up against and get strategic.

2. Set the BIG IDEA: Child Development.

3. Don’t judge; avoid evaluation.


5. Order is everything.

6. Show don’t tell: explain principles of development.

7. Tell a new master narrative.