



# 23 BLAST

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## 10 Ways to Teach Your Children to Overcome Obstacles

- 1** **Be a role model:** Kids learn most of what they know about problem solving by watching their parents deal with difficulty. So, demonstrate the deep satisfaction that comes with negotiating a challenge.
- 2** **Equip them with the right tools:** Tools such as motivation, self-confidence, perseverance, faith, strength of character, sound judgment, and experience in solving small problems.
- 3** **Play problem-solving games as a family:** Scavenger hunts, board games, word puzzles. This helps kids understand that obstacles are an important element of a rich and fulfilling life experience.
- 4** **Understand the difference between “childhood” and “irrelevancy”:** This is very important! Too many parents offer children neither responsibility nor the respect of expectation. Two truths come out of this point:
  - When we expect nothing of our children, then that’s exactly what we get. Rather than solve problems, they will likely cause them.
  - Children who are not allowed to contribute to family life tend to develop other skills instead – and those are typically destructive.It’s important to act as if our children really are an integral part of family life, and that they really do have something of value to contribute.
- 5** **Provide children with practice:** Introduce obstacles that kids can deal with; teach them how to develop strategy; encourage them to persevere; and then make a big deal of it when they succeed. Involve children with planning family outings, working out details on vacation, and handling the logistics for other family events.
- 6** **Do not reinforce giving up:** Never solve a problem for your child that they can (with guidance) solve themselves. Instead, nudge and encourage so that “hanging in there” for success is experienced as much more rewarding than conceding defeat.
- 7** **Be there when failure threatens to overwhelm:** This is the other side of the coin. There’s no benefit to abandoning children to failure when the struggle is too huge. Can you help them re-direct? Can you steer them toward success, then back off? Can you be realistic, and counsel with them when an obstacle simply will not budge?
- 8** **Facilitate solution-oriented conversations at the family table:** “Hey, kids, what do you think about such-and-such?” “I’ve got a challenging situation – any ideas?” “We’ve decided to slice 10% off the family budget – let’s all talk about what we can do together to make this work.”
- 9** **Volunteer with your children:** Find a facility where so-called “handicapped” individuals work hard to overcome obstacles. Participate in community or church projects that call for creative thinking – then let your kids take the lead.
- 10** **Don’t forget balance:** Sometimes it’s appropriate to ask for help when an obstacle won’t budge. We don’t drill our own teeth for a filling, most parents need assistance when it comes to funding a college education, and some of us really shouldn’t mess with our own plumbing. Don’t let your children confuse stubbornness with tenacity and perseverance.