**Weekly Tip – Gratitude**

**Studies show there are many benefits related to being grateful for Kids AND Adults including:**

* Improved sleep
* Improved immunity – meaning you are less likely to get sick
* Increased energy
* Healthier lifestyle – more likely to exercise & make good food choices
* Kinder to yourself, to others and the environment
* More friendships and social connections
* Increased self-esteem
* More resilient
* Less stressed and more relaxed
* More positive feelings
* More optimistic
* Helps you see the good and focus on what really matters
* You feel happier

**How to teach gratitude:**

* **Work gratitude into your daily conversation.** When you reinforce an idea frequently, it's more likely to stick. One way to turn up the gratitude in your house is to pick a "thanking" part of the day. Two old-fashioned, tried-and-true ideas: Make saying what good things happened today part of the dinnertime conversation or make bedtime reflection part of your nightly routine.
* **Have kids help.** It happens to all of us: You give your child a chore, but it's too agonizing watching him a) take forever to clear the table or b) make a huge mess mixing the pancake batter. The temptation is always to step in and do it yourself. But the more you do for them, the less they appreciate your efforts. (Don't you feel more empathy for people who work outside on cold days when you've just been out shoveling snow yourself?) By participating in simple household chores like feeding the dog or stacking dirty dishes on the counter, kids realize that all these things take effort.
* **Find a goodwill project.** That doesn't mean you need to drag your child off to a soup kitchen every week. Instead, figure out some way he can actively participate in helping someone else, even if it's as simple as making cupcakes for a sick neighbor. As you're stirring the batter or adding sprinkles, talk about how you're making them for a special person, and how happy the recipient will be.
* **Encourage generosity.** Donate toys and clothes to less fortunate kids. When your children see you giving to others, it inspires them to go through their own closets and give something special to those in need, as well.
* **Insist on thank-you notes.** When they are toddlers, the cards can just be scribbles with your own thank-you attached. As they grow, they became drawings, then longer letters. Younger children can even dictate the letter while you write. Just the act of saying out loud why he loved the gift will make him feel more grateful.
* **Practice saying no.** Of course kids ask for toys, video games, and candy -- sometimes on an hourly basis. It's difficult, if not impossible, to feel grateful when your every whim is granted. Saying no a lot makes saying yes that much sweeter.
* **Be patient.** You can't expect gratitude to develop overnight -- it requires weeks, months, even years of reinforcement. But trust me, you will be rewarded.