

Tradition from the Biblical world records a practice of mothers with their newborn infants. To stimulate the nursing reflex, a mother would rub the juice from a crushed date on the lips and palate of the infant to stimulate the sucking reflex. That idea is consistent with the meaning of the Hebrew word for “train up” (or “start”) in Proverbs 22:6. The word for “train up” is also translated as “dedicate” - as in dedicating a house or a temple. (Deuteronomy 20:5; Ezra 6:16; 1 Kings 8:63)

*Initiate, start, dedicate, train up* - all are in the semantic range of meaning when it comes to raising a child so he / she will not leave the moral and spiritual “way” when he / she is old. The book of Proverbs suggests two primary means for raising a child in “the way”: instruction and correction (discipline). Instruction identifies the way and starts him / her on it; correction puts him / her back on the way should he / she stray from it.

If you are a parent or grandparent, keep these two priorities in clear focus for the children in your family.

Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”