

Positive Parental Discipline

What's Happening

Discipline is helping children develop self-control and appropriate social behavior. It is one of a parent's most important, yet most difficult, tasks. By following proven disciplinary ideas, this job can be much easier and great results can be accomplished. Good parental discipline builds responsible children with positive self-esteem and values.



Why Children Misbehave

- Low self-esteem
- Lack of positive role models
- Frustration or anger
- Feelings of neglect
- Insecurity
- Inadequate parental interest and guidance
- Extremely high expectations from adults
- Failing grades in school
- Inadequate sleep
- Reaction to family changes such as divorce or separation
- To seek attention-negative attention may seem better than no attention

What You Can Do

Parent's Toolbox – Prevention Tools:

- **Check the Basics:** Is the child hungry, tired or sick? Some children become irritable at predictable times of the day.
- **Communicate Clear Expectations:** Children need to know what behavior parents expect. Instructions should be stated as simply as possible using words your child can understand, speaking clearly, with eye contact to be sure you have his/her attention. Tell your child why the behavior is important. After you've clearly stated your expectations, consider rehearsing the desired behavior with the child if the situation is appropriate.
- **Change The Environment:** The environment can be changed (something taken away, added, or rearranged) to avoid inappropriate behavior. For instance, if a two-year-old is pulling the leaves off your plants, the plants can be moved to a higher shelf. Make the environment fit the needs of the child.
- **Model Appropriate Behavior:** Children imitate the behavior of others. Show your children how you want them to behave. Children learn from what they see. If they see appropriate behaviors, they will act appropriately.
- **Plan Transitions:** Many people, especially young children, have difficulty changing activities without warning. (For example, your three-year-old is watching his favorite TV show; you tell him it's time for bed.) Preparing your child for transitions ("As soon as this show is over, it will be time to get ready for bed") and involving him in the next activity ("You can choose which pajamas you want to wear") may smooth this stress.
- **Use Humor:** Many times, potentially tense or difficult moments can be eased by humor, silliness, or a hug. Try using a puppet. Sometimes a child will cooperate with a puppet's request while resisting yours. Sometimes we just need to lighten up.
- **Offer A Choice Between Two Alternatives:** Offering a child a choice helps her to feel she has control over her life and helps gain her cooperation. Ask your child, "would you rather wear your nightgown or pajamas to bed?" or "What would you like to do before we leave the park, swing for five minutes or play on the slide for five minutes?"
- **Reduce Boredom:** Some children get into trouble when they are bored. Involving them in an interesting activity or conversation will redirect their energy.



Information and Resource Line (916) 244-1906 or thecapcenter.org

Source: Making Parenting a Pleasure, Parenting Now Curriculum

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