

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

9 IMPORTANT INGREDIENT OF DISCIPLINE 9

Compliment Good Behavior- Try to do this more often than having to punish or say negative things.

Empower your child- Let your child help set rules, expectations and consequences. Motivate your child to be cooperative and set guidelines. Surprisingly children are usually very reasonable. At times they may even have better ideas than us! Learn to listen and compromise and they will learn to do the same!

Don't be too strict- Try to keep your child's age and ability in mind at all times. Keep boundaries to a minimum. Break down jobs into little steps. Instead of clean your room, try saying "Put your clothes in the hamper. When finished, put this game in the box, then put your books on your shelf, etc...." Make sure that all of your consequences are age appropriate and are as close to natural consequences as possible. Ex. If your children argue about a game or won't put it away- take it away for a while. If children argue about TV- turn it off. Time out should be about a minute for each year of their age (5 years old= 5 minutes). If another rule is broken another five minutes is given. Then talk about what your child could have done different to solve his/her problem. Without this reflection a child probably will not change the behaviors you want changed.

Don't be too easy- When you cater to your child's every request and fail to impose consequences for misbehavior or find yourself making empty threats, you prevent your child from learning to act responsibly. State your expectations calmly and firmly. Try saying "We use words, we don't hit." instead of requesting "let's use words, OK?"

Be consistent- Allowing certain behavior one day and not another confuses a child and invites more testing to find the boundary. Fewer rules enforced consistently is better than many rules enforced randomly. If you really need to bend a rule for some reason- explain the reason to your child. Ensure them that this is an exception not the rule!

Don't make excuses for your child- He/she will get good at making excuses without any help. Typical excuses given for children by parents:

- He's just 5 years old- What do you expect?

Answer: I expect him/her to learn to follow rules that make life run smoother- in a teacher's case that enables her to teach without so many disruptions. Remember a teacher knows your child's age and what is capable of that age group.

- He/She wasn't feeling well.

Answer: If a child is not feeling well enough to listen and behave they should not be interacting with others- in public. A sick child should not be at school. At home a child belongs in bed if he/she is too sick to behave.

- He/she was just tired.

Answer: If a child is too tired to follow the rules he/she should be put to bed to get more sleep.

- He/she is just bored.

Answer: Most young children say they are bored when they don't want to do what they are asked to do by parents or teachers. Teach your child how to avoid being bored.

1. Do your job.
2. When you have nothing to do- think of options or ask an adult what you can do.
(Teachers normally go over options ahead of time so thinking should remind your child of choices available.)
3. Reading, writing, and imagining are great ways to occupy time!

Making excuses for your child, especially in front of your child, teaches him/her to use this action instead of accepting responsibility for his/her behavior.

Be expansive- As a child gets older give him/her more privileges. Ex. Child wants a later bedtime: Try it and state “We will TRY ½ hour later, but if I have trouble getting you up in the morning or if you are a grouch during the day that means you need more sleep and we will go back to your old bed time.” If you start a curfew of 10 PM in 8th grade and add ½ hour each year, your child can look forward to later curfews, of course there will be some special exceptions for special events. If parents agree to work together this works even better.

Let a child be angry - Teach them how to do it appropriately and productively- Everyone needs the chance to be angry and release tension without being disrespectful or hurtful to others.

- When reprimanded flying off the handle is not appropriate. Teach them to say, “I’m leaving the room for a moment to think and calm down.” (If it is a child or toddler remove them to a private place to calm down. Model this for your child as well. If it takes more than a few minutes to calm down, work on reducing that cool off period or get help for your child.
- Hitting a pillow is an appropriate way to relieve tension and anger.
- Writing an angry note (at home) and then ripping it up can help.
- Crying and screaming into a pillow relieves tension without being disrespectful or hurtful.
- MOST IMPORTANT- Talk with the person you are in conflict with in a calm, reasonable manner after the anger has been relieved. Try to understand each other and don’t blame each other. Use “I” messages. “I feel as if you don’t care when I ask you to clean up and you don’t listen. I would be a lot happier if you picked up your clothes the first time I asked. ” Instead of “Why don’t you ever clean up?” Teach your child to do the same. It takes time to learn to use these, but it can help in many situations and may help stop conflict before it begins. This also helps figure out what you can do to avoid reoccurrences.