

THE FAMILY TREE

DISCIPLINE... doesn't have to hurt

Discipline is defined as training that correct or mold, and as self-control. Unfortunately, many parents interpret discipline as “punishment”. Discipline is a valuable tool for teaching your child. Here are some tips to help you guide your child:

Prepare your child for success

Love. Your child needs lots of love and approval. Your child’s desire to please you is one of the most important tools of effective discipline. Praise and hug your child often.

Communicate with respect. As part of your love for your child, learn to take time to listen and consider your child’s point of view. If you respect your child, he/she will be more willing to listen to what you have to say.

Set clear limits. Telling your child in advance what is expected of him/her, and what the rules are, helps prevent trouble before it happens. Be prepared to repeat the rules several times before your child learns them.

Acknowledge good behavior. Praise your child for many good things he/she does each day. It is much easier to encourage acceptable behavior than to have to punish a child who misbehaves. For example, “it makes me so happy to see you studying without even being told.”

If-then incentives. “If you get the dishes done quickly, then we can play one game of

cards before homework.” Incentives encourage and reward positive behaviors while teaching the child how to compromise.

Prevent trouble before it happens.

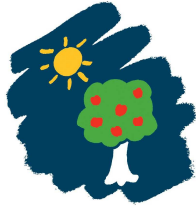
Childproofing your house can prevent a great deal of frustration for both parent and child. For small children, place valuable objects out of reach. Make sure older children know which things are off limits to them without parental supervision.

Consistency. Discuss disciplinary methods with your spouse and childcare providers ahead of time. It’s important that you support each other when disciplining your child. When one parent disciplines, the other parent should not interface.

If your child is doing something you don’t like...

Ignore. Calmly leave the room when your child has a temper tantrum. When you give in to a nagging or crying child, he will know he can use this tactic to get his own way.

Time out. Use time out for dangerous and harmful behaviors such as biting, aggressive hitting or purposeful destruction. Some guideline: the amount of time should be equivalent to the child’s age; have the child sit in a boring place; tell the child what he has done wrong and what should be done instead; use a timer; and, when time out is over, as soon as you can compliment him/her on something he/she is doing right.



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Suspend privileges. Match the discipline to the action as closely as possible, e.g. loss of T.V. Suspend privileges for a short period. Long suspensions only build resentment and lose their effectiveness as the child forgets the original wrongdoing.

Redirect behavior. If one behavior is a problem, take that energy and have the child do something positive. You may want to give a child paper if he/she has drawn on the wall with crayons.

Logical consequences. Let the action do the talking. For example, if a child misses curfew, then the amount of time he was late can be subtracted from his/her next outing. Children must learn that there are consequences for negative behavior. Do it yourself. Deal with misbehavior when it occurs. Remarks like "wait until your father gets home," tells the child that you cannot punish him/her.

Give your child choices...

Work detail. Creatively use the child's energy, especially if the child is older (8 or more) to "make-up" for rule violations. Post a list of age appropriate jobs and let him/her choose one or more "work-details," such as washing the car.

Clothing. A person's clothing is very individual. Allow your child to choose his/her clothes as long as the style is age appropriate. Your child loves a sweater your think is ugly-just ignore it and let

him/her wear it without comment. Is it worth an argument?

Rules an punishment. When age appropriate, let your child help make rules that govern his/her behavior and the punishment he/she should receive if the rules are broken. This allows the child to have accountability for his actions and understand the consequences for his/her choices.

Remember: Consistency is the key...