

Helping You Understand Discipline

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What is discipline?

- Discipline is not punishment
- There is no one right way to discipline
- Different children respond to different methods
- Discipline is helping, teaching, learning and influencing

What to expect and how to discipline your child



**Remember:
What is normal is not always okay!**

**“You can learn many
things from children.
How much patience you
have, for
instance.”
-Franklin P Jones**

Infant



What to expect with Infants (birth-1yr)

Infants 0-6 months will:

- cry for different reasons, do not have temper tantrums. They cry because they are hungry, wet, cold, hot, lonely or over-stimulated
- have a fussy time of day

Infants 6-12 months will:

- learn that things still exist after someone takes them away
- remember things for 1-2 days
- know some simple words such as “no”
- use simple expressions such as “uh oh”
- feel anxious when the adult they spend the most time with leaves the room
- need a favorite blanket or stuffed animal to feel secure
- be afraid of sounds they do not understand such as thunder

How to discipline your infant

0-6 months:

- You cannot spoil a child less than 6 months of age
- Begin thinking about setting limits for your child
- A child does not understand discipline at this age
- No discipline is necessary

6-12 months:

- Begin setting limits by telling your child “no” and removing him or her from unsafe situations
- Redirect by giving your baby a safe choice
- Distract your child with a book, toy, music or interaction with mom or dad
- Remove items that you do not want your child to play with

**“Children need love,
especially when they
do not deserve it.”
- Harold Hulbert**

Toddler



What to expect with Toddlers (1-3 yrs)

Toddlers will:

- throw temper tantrums for many reasons - some big and some small
- often fear abandonment
- ignore you
- reject you
- go to someone else instead of you
- do the opposite of what you want
- say “no” and mean “yes”
- Not be able to plan ahead
- not think before acting
- begin to understand discipline
- push away from you when you try to hug or kiss them
- get into everything
- be noisy

**Your child watches you to
learn how to behave.**

- try to get their own way
- are unable to make up their mind
- are not patient
- put themselves in unsafe situations
- bite, hit and have temper tantrums
- become disagreeable
- refuse your request
- go through negative phases
- begin to understand more
- have limited memory
- be unable to handle too many choices
- become frustrated
- not always know how to express themselves

Each toddler is different and may respond better to different discipline methods.

How to discipline your toddler

*Trying one method several times may increase your success.

Ideas for success:

- Encourage good behaviors, possibly with a reward system
- Discipline in a loving environment
- Give warnings before change
- Clearly explain what you want
- Tell them what you want them to do next time

Remember during discipline:

- Choose your battles
- Be certain and firm
- Follow through
- Set limits and be specific
- Make sure both parents agree on a safe discipline method
- Be calm
- Be the boss

Types of discipline:

- Redirect
- Distract
- Substitute
- Verbal and nonverbal disapproval
- Remove from the situation
- Restrain if necessary
- Natural and logical consequences
- Time-out

While disciplining your child:

- Act right away
- Get at your child's eye level
- Keep it simple
- Explain that the behavior is bad, not the child
- Tell them why the behavior is not okay
- Use words to help a child express his or her feelings
- Let them know you understand

**“Children seldom misquote. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn’t have said.”
- Author unknown**

Preschoolers



What to expect with Preschoolers (3-5 yrs)

Preschoolers will:

- have fewer temper tantrums
- be better able to cope
- communicate better
- become frustrated
- want to please parents
- tend to be bossy
- ask a lot of questions
- tattle frequently
- say words that may shock you
- accept suggestions
- make choices
- brag
- learn to take turns
- be able to accept reality and limitations
- act in ways to obtain other's approval
- be self-reliant for their immediate needs
- Be gullible

How to discipline your preschooler

- Do not overreact
- Focus on first time obedience
- Do not explain too much
- Use effective methods listed under “Disciplining Toddlers”

Discipline that is harsh, such as name calling, shouting and humiliating will make it difficult for a child to respect and trust a mother and father.

**“Your children will
become what you are; so
be what you want them to
be.”**

- David Bly

School-age Child



What to expect with your school age child (5 +)

Your school-age child will:

- like to imitate grown-ups
- be more tolerable of frustrating situations
- still get hungry, tired and irritable
- have better problem solving skills
- learn to get along with others
- learn to cooperate
- learn to identify and/or talk about their feelings
- be serious and/or demanding
- not always be able to put reasoning and judgment into practice

How to discipline your school age child:

- Delay a privilege
- Removal of a privilege and or activity
- As a child reaches adolescents, stop using manual guidance and time-out
- Continue discipline methods that work and modify as your child gets older

**“Children are our most
valuable natural
resource.”
-Herbert Hoover**

Understanding why children misbehave



Why children misbehave

The child:

- does not understand what you want them to do
- wants to do it their way
- is under stress, tired, hungry, bored, sick or frustrated
- is afraid of new situations
- is becoming independent
- does not have good reasoning skills
- has a short attention span

The top two reasons for misbehavior between the ages of two and five are:

- 1.Attention-seeking to get a reaction**
- 2.Jealousy**

- is self centered – which is age appropriate
- has a short memory
- is involving you in a power struggle
- has a lack of language skills
- is jealous
- does not have ability to do what he or she wants
- feels ignored
- feels that things are not going their way
- has inappropriate expectations to live up to

Things to consider before disciplining

- **Is your child tired, hungry or sick?**

A sick child needs TLC, a hungry may need a snack and a tired child might need a nap!

- **Is no doubt that your child is innocent?**

If a child continually gets blamed for things he did not do, he will feel mistreated and may start to lie

- **Did the bad behavior make your child genuinely sorry?**

Your child has learned a lesson and will probably not do it again

- **Is the behavior age appropriate?**

A toddler may color on the wall or cut their own hair. Not to be naughty, but because they are curious and do not know better.

- **Has there has been a big change?**
Example: birth of new baby, move, loss of a parent, divorce, illness, loss of a job
- **Has your child already been punished?**
Don't punish a child twice for the same behavior
- **Have you considered your child's temperament and individuality?**
Is your child strong-willed or a "compliant" child?

“If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the nice things you say about them to others.”

-Haim Ginott

Understanding temper tantrums



Preventing Temper Tantrums

- Give your child a choice when possible
- Pick one or two target behaviors
- Ask rather than tell when possible
- Keep it simple and brief
- Provide a physical outlet
- Set limits when child is in an agreeable state
- Plan ahead
- Big projects should not be done during negative phase
- Give a warning when something is about to change
- Provide times when “no” is okay and fun
- Accept that sometimes your child may need to say “no”
- Avoid problem situations

- Make sure your child has your undivided attention many times during the day
- Take breaks during household duties to interact with your child
- Teach patience and reward patience
- Tell a child what they should do rather than to stop doing something
- Set a good example
- Use kind words
- Be calm
- Remember the age and stage your child is at
- Satisfy your child's curiosity
- Reward good behavior
- Give options when options are available
- Do not yell and scream because it is disrespectful to the child

**“You will always be your
child’s favorite toy.”
-Vicky Lansky**

Understanding time-outs



Time-Outs

Introduce time-out between the ages of 18 –24 months because your child is beginning to understand right from wrong.

Time-outs are effective because they keep children from receiving attention that may encourage inappropriate behavior.

How to prepare for a time-out:

- Have a time-out area in your home where it is safe and there are no distractions for your child
- The parent should keep track of the time during time-out. Time-out should be 1 minute per year of age

Time-out for toddlers:

- The purpose of time-out for toddlers is to allow them to calm down
- It is likely that a toddler will not sit in time-out. For the child that will not stay, sit with them
- Give the child a warning before you put them in time-out. Tell them to stop the behavior or they will get put in time-out

When using time-out:

- Remain firm
- Know what your child is doing in time-out
- Be consistent. If what your child does today deserves time-out, it should deserve time-out tomorrow
- If the same thing happens immediately after time-out, follow through again
- After time-out, discuss the behavior with your child and what you want them to do next time
- When they chose to do the right thing after time-out, praise their efforts
- Following time-out, forgive and forget
- Don't punish your child for normal, harmless expressions of anger
- Use time-out with siblings when appropriate
- When using time-out, supervise, but don't talk to your child
- To be consistent, time out needs to be immediate, even if it is not in your own home

If time-out doesn't seem to be working, try:

- Returning the child to time-out if he or she escapes.
- Hold the child if necessary
- Make sure that the time-out area is boring

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.”

-James Baldwin

Should you have your child say “I’m sorry”?



All About Apologizing

- Kids are not always sorry for the things we think are worth an apology.
- Teaching children when to apologize and how to make amends is a slow process.
- Before a child can truly apologize, she has to realize she's done something wrong- a concept young children don't always grasp. Preschoolers are still in the "me" phase, so they're not considering what's right or wrong.
- Don't get so wrapped up in the apology lesson that you forget to deal with the original misbehavior. Apologies don't mean much if the behavior does not change.
- Remember that parents cannot force feelings. Trying to force feelings teaches children to fake apologies, that it's okay to be insincere or that forgiveness has to be an instant thing- which is not real life.

2 year olds:

- A 2 year old does not yet have a hard-wired, internalized conscience. Nor is she intellectually at an age of reason (which usually begins at around 2 ½).
- Making a 2 year old say “I’m sorry” and keep them in “time-out” until they say so will have no long term effect.
- This approach does not discipline a 2 year old; it just teaches them the words they have to say to get back to playing. Some kids say “I’m sorry” too easily, considering it a quick way to satisfy adults.
- With children 2 and under, consider focusing on enforcing the rules. By learning them, your child will have less to apologize for later.

3-5 year olds:

- Children 3-5 years old need to understand why it's important to say they're sorry. Keep your explanation short and simple: "We say sorry when we do something that hurts or bothers people." Since children are not empathetic, consider encouraging it by pointing out how the other child feels.

6 and older:

- Children 6 years and older have a better sense of right and wrong and are better able to understand how others feel. However, that doesn't mean apologies are any easier. Children this age are increasingly concerned about what others think of them and may be reluctant to draw attention to themselves by owning up to their mistakes.
- Teach your older child that a quick apology is not enough. It is important to state why he is apologizing and to take responsibility for his actions.

How to help your child apologize:

- React calmly and positively
This will encourage him to be honest. (“I don’t like hearing that you _____, but it took courage for you to tell me and I appreciate that.”)
- Stay neutral
If you hear “He did it” and “She started it!” Explain to both children that they don’t have to be at fault in order to apologize.
- Do it together
If he’s little, you can pick him up and say “Come on, I’ll say it with you”
- Don’t insist
Encourage, but don’t force your child to say sorry. That can make the situation worse and more embarrassing. No one will feel better following a meaningless apology.
- Keep your anger in check

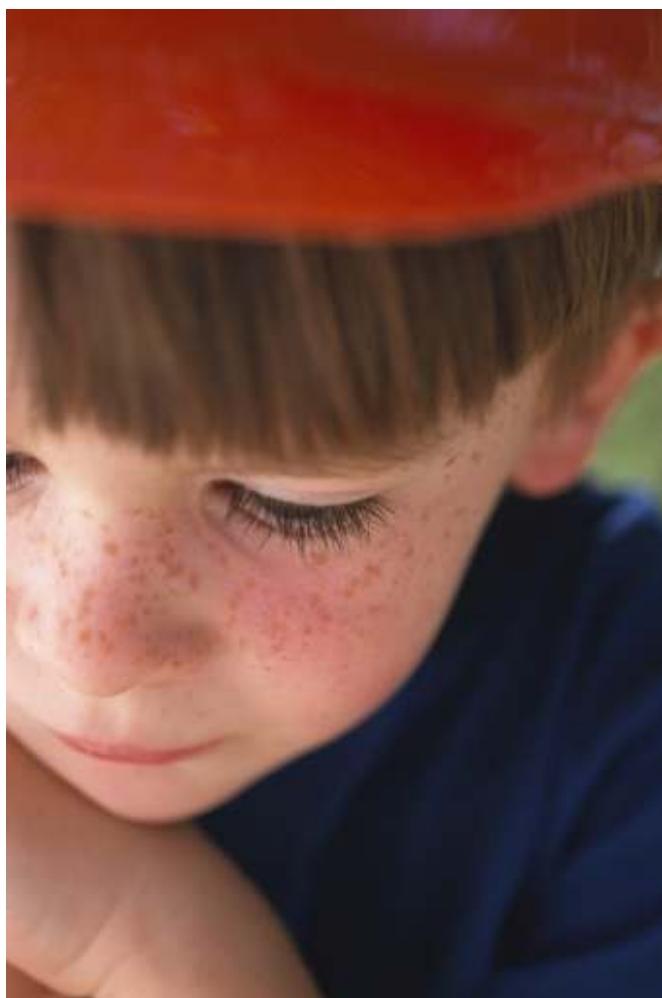
- Take the lead
If your child is too upset, you can apologize for him.
- Beware if it's too easy
Some kids say "I'm sorry" as soon as they sense they've done something wrong. When this happens, it means the child hasn't learned more than the words.
- If your child apologizes, praise him for it.
- Forgiveness follows apologies

Remember:

Say sorry to your child if you are wrong. This teaches her that apologies aren't just for kids. When you make an apology, tell your child specifically what you are sorry for and don't overwhelm her with excuses and explanations. Remember the same rule applies to adults: Apologies are meaningless unless you change the offending behavior.

**“It is better to bind your children to you by a feeling of respect and by gentleness, than by fear.”
-Terence**

Spanking



Spanking

Spanking is a big decision that should not be taken lightly!

Parents Need to Consider:

- Have to become more severe as your child gets older
- Weaken the relationship between the hitter and the one being hit
- Get misdirected at an innocent person
- Lead to child abuse
- Affect observers in unhealthy ways
- Not stop when the lesson is learned but when the spanker is tired
- Backfire on the parents, causing them to suffer emotionally or physically on account of their own behavior
- When someone hits you, does it make you more open to listening and learning? Or does it make you want to hit and hurt as well?

How Spanking Effects Children:

- Lowers your child's self esteem
- Spanking can teach the child to fear, hate or avoid the punisher. Children don't easily forget the pain of a spanking
- Spanking is not an effective way to change behavior. The effects of spanking are immediate, but usually short term
- Teach your child that might makes right
- Block the learning process
- Lead to fear, avoidance and a desire for retaliation
- Block communication
- Gives your child a model for aggression and violence
- Spanking tells children what NOT to do; it does not teach them appropriate behavior.
- Lead to other problems
- Spanking teaches children they do not have control over their behavior
- Confuse a child because it is frequently followed by affection, favors or gifts... this teaches a scary message- that love involves hitting or hurting
- What they learn from spanking is that when you are upset with someone, you should hit them

Benefits of Not Spanking

- Children who are not hit by their parents are more likely to find non-physical ways of settling their differences with siblings and friends
- People who were not hit as children tend to be proud of this fact and feel special because of it
- When parents resolve to stop spanking, they are forced to look for other alternatives for discipline, and usually like themselves as people and parents better
- When parents learn other successful techniques for discipline, there is more communication between parent and child and their relationship with the child improves
- When a child is hit for misbehaving, he or she may opt to take a spanking and risk getting caught if the child's only reason for behaving is escaping punishment
- Parents should want to give their children reasons for behaving, not reasons for misbehaving

How does someone decide whether or not to spank their child?

Consider the following factors:

- Individual personality traits of each child and motives of the misbehavior
- The parent's patience level and ability to maintain self-control
- Legal and social constraints
- Family beliefs

“I was spanked as a child and look how well I turned out?”

- Many children do not “turn out” okay and end up dead, maimed or emotionally traumatized by a parent who “went too far”
- Many adults have “turned out” okay despite being hit. Many others; however, have problems with intimacy, which several researchers have attributed to being hit as a child

Children who are spanked are from 2 to 6 times more likely to:

- Become physically aggressive
- Become juvenile delinquents
- Use physical violence against their spouses
- Suffer from depression as an adult

If you do decide to spank your child, use the following guidelines:

- Don't use objects such as belts, paddles, extension cords, etc.
- Don't spank on any body part other than the buttock
- Don't spank on the bare buttock

**“Children require guidance
and sympathy far more than
instruction.”
-Anne Sullivan**

Understanding my discipline practices



Is My Discipline Effective?

Do you:

Find yourself screaming or yelling a lot?

Descend to your child's level? (if he hits you, you hit back.)

Punish your child more than you want to?

Always saying "no" to a child?

Feel you have to repeat yourself all the time?

Battle your child a lot?

Constantly explain yourself to your child?

Always negotiate with him?

Often get him to promise he'll never do it again?

Threaten things that you really don't intend to carry out?

Over react with a major punishment to something that you realize later is relatively minor?

Overcompensate by spoiling the child in between punishments?

React differently than your partner to the same behavior?

Sometimes not know how to respond?

Think that your child feels more powerful than you?

Find the more you punish the child, the more he does what he's not supposed to do?

Nag him all the time?

Frequently change your mind about your methods of punishment?

Give in a lot?

“Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime.”
-Herbert Ward

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