



Discipline with Love

Discipline is about teaching and learning. As parents we discipline our children when they are unable to understand what we want to teach them, so that they learn how to discipline themselves. Discipline should not be harsh or unfair. It should be positive and used to encourage good behaviour as well as to stop behaviour that you don't want your child doing.

Discipline is about understanding what happens when the rules are broken. It is about learning to be responsible.

The methods you use to discipline need to fit with your child's age, abilities and needs. This may mean you will use different ways for each child within your family, which will change as the child grows older.

When telling your child what you want him to do make sure you: 0 are clear 0 both understand what you mean 0 time it well (e.g. saying something while your son is watching his favourite television show is not likely to be heard.) 0 don't confuse (e.g. laughing at your son's mischievous behaviour while you say "no" may leave him wondering whether you approve or not.) 0 are prepared to back up what you say with action.

Physical Punishment

Research tells us:

- While a mild smack occasionally may not cause harm, the danger is the possibility of accidental injury or loss of control by the parent.
- A hit may stop your child's immediate behaviour but he will probably repeat it because a hit does not teach him what to do instead.
- Children's feeling of anger and hurt are often so strong after being hit that they can have difficulty remembering the reasons for the punishment.
- If punishment is frightening, your child can learn ways to avoid being hit by lying, cheating or blaming others.
- Some children can become fearful, anxious, rebellious, or withdrawn. *Children tend to copy and may show bullying behaviour at school.
- Physical punishment teaches children that violence is acceptable and is a way to solve problems to get what you want.

Giving consequences ,

ACT Council of P&C Associations

Room 51, Majura Primary School, Knox Street, Watson A.C.T. 2602

Telephone: (02) 6241-5759 Fax: (02) 6241-8839

Email: parents@canberra.net.au Internet: www.schoolparents.canberra.net.au

Consequences (what happens when we do something) are an important part of discipline and will help teach your child responsibility. When you set rules everyone needs to be clear about the consequences.

They can be natural e.g. when your child leaves his toys in a mess the natural consequence is not being able to find what he wants.

They can be given by others e.g. when your child's bike is run over because it was left on the driveway he has to share the cost of repairs or do without it for a time.

Consequences should be short or they will lose their meaning and should happen as soon as possible. They should be linked to the original problem where possible (e.g. when your child makes a mess she should clean it up).

Time out

Many parents use time out. This can be in the same room or a separate place. This can be for your child or for yourself. It is never helpful to use time out for children under the age of three years. For those older, allow one minute for every year of your child's age.

Behaviour is the way children tell us how they are feeling.

Children will learn more by what they see you doing and how you live your life than by what you tell them.

Why is my child behaving this way?

- It may be the only way he can get your attention and angry attention is better than none.
- It may be because something is going very wrong for your child (e.g. new baby, difficulty in making friends in a new area, scared by parents' arguments, family break-up).
- It may be that parents' lives are so busy that he feels left out.
- It may be that he is trying to cope with changes and feels overwhelmed.
- It may be that he is irritated and frustrated by something you've done.
- It may be that your child feels unfairly treated by you and wants to punish you.
- It may be that your parenting style is too strict or very lax.
- It may be that your child may be needing more independence than you have allowed.

Think about what is happening in your child's world.

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Discipline (5+ years)

- If your children share in making some of the rules and the consequences for when they are broken, they will begin learning what self discipline is all about.
- If a rule is broken, the consequence should follow.
- Time out can be used. Always teach as well.
- Try to be in step with other parents who have children the same age. If you are too far away from what most parents do, you will have difficulty getting your children to co-operate.
- Teaching children how to work out ways to solve their problems is a useful skill at this age.

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