

## **Positive Guidance and Discipline**

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# Positive Guidance and Discipline

## Program Description

As a parent, one of your most challenging jobs is guiding your children. The job seems easy when your children are cooperative and happy. It is not so easy when they have temper tantrums or refuse to pick up their toys! Most children are not well behaved all of the time.

Parents need to be consistent when they try to help their children understand what is expected of them. Young children lack self control. They slowly improve in behavior as they learn what is expected at home, in school, and in public.

The lesson and activities in this section explores parenting styles and child outcomes as well as specific prevention and intervention strategies which parents can use to guide their children's behavior. There is also a variety of tools that can be used with various audiences and situations.

## Program Objectives

1. Participants will develop a clearer understanding of discipline and appropriate limits.
2. Participants will learn styles of parenting and explore their individual parenting style.
3. Participants will understand what to expect from their children at different ages and stages.
4. Participants will develop effective discipline techniques.
5. Participants will gain confidence in their parenting skills.

## Intended Audience

Parents and grandparents who are in a parenting role

## Materials needed

1. Overhead projector, screen
2. Overhead transparencies
3. Handouts - multiple copies for each participant

Parenting Styles Self-Evaluation (Handout #1)

Parenting Styles Checklist (Handout #2)

Responsive Discipline Prevention Tools (Handout #3)

- 4. Name tags or Name tents for each participant
- 5. Modeling clay or play doh for self sculptures activity

Topics and Time Frame

Participant Introductions.....	10 minutes
Topic Introduction.....	5 minutes
Parenting Styles.....	25 minutes
Reducing Frequency of Misbehavior.....	15 minutes
Break.....	10 minutes
Strategies For Coping with Change.....	30 minutes
Summary Activity.....	10 minutes
Evaluation.....	10 minutes

Introduction

Conduct the "Self Sculptures" activity listed in the icebreakers Section of this notebook. Distribute play doh and instruct participants to mold the doh into something reflective of themselves. As participants are making their mold you can introduce yourself and provide a short explanation of the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

You may also mention your own children and their ages to build rapport with the group. Ask each participant to share their mold and what it represents then list their name, his/her children and their ages. This will give the presenter a good overview of the ages and stages of children the audience is interested in.

A Definition of Discipline

Discipline is a positive parenting approach to teach a child self-control and confidence. As opposed to punishment, discipline techniques focus on what it is we want the child to learn, and what the child is capable of learning. Discipline is a process, not a single act. It is the basis for teaching children how to be in harmony with themselves and get along with other

people. The ultimate goal of discipline is for children to understand their own behavior, take initiative and be responsible for their choices, and respect themselves and others. In other words, they will internalize this positive process of thinking and behaving.

Punishment, on the other hand, focuses on the misbehavior and may do little or nothing to help a child behave better in the future. The adult who punishes the child teaches the child that the adult, rather than the child, is responsible for the way the child behaves. Punishment has negative effects on children, such as inducing shame, guilt, anxiety, increased aggression, lack of independence and/or lack of caring for others, and greater problems with parents or caregivers and other children.

## Story to Introduce Parenting Styles

I want to tell you a fairy tale that was told by Bruce Baldwin, author, speaker and practicing psychologist:

"Once upon a time there were two beautiful butterflies who were delighted when their own baby caterpillar came into the world. As most parents do, they looked forward to seeing their young one turn into a butterfly just like they were. Because they cared so much, they gave their child everything a young caterpillar could possibly want. They were very busy trying to fill his unlimited wants.

P R E S E N T S, Yes! P R E S E N C E, NO!"

"When the time came, they even helped build the protective cocoon within which the metamorphosis would take place. Then they waited with eager anticipation for a beautiful young butterfly to make a grand entrance into the adult world."

"At last, they saw the cocoon breaking away. To their shock and dismay, their young caterpillar emerged without changing at all! The small caterpillar greeted them with an explanation: "It's too tough being a butterfly these days. You have to fly on your own and find your own food. There's no one around to take care of you. I've decided to stay just the way I am and keep you company." (Pause at this point in the story and let it catch the audiences attention.)

"To the parents distress, that is just what that apprehensive young caterpillar did.

Parents need to accept the challenge of family discipline or we may find that we have an immature caterpillar (or several of them) hanging around eating us out of house and home indefinitely ... literally ... figuratively ... disappointingly." We must realize that as parents and teachers, we are the most important people on the face of the earth for our children. What we think of them, say to them, and do not say to them, our actions and reactions are more important in the shaping of their development than what anyone else in the world says or does to them.

## Parenting Styles Activity

Much of our understanding about how to discipline children comes from what we experienced with our own parents. Think about when you were a child. What kinds of discipline techniques were used by your parents? *Let volunteers contribute to the discussion. Distribute copies of the Parenting Styles Self-Evaluation (Handout #1) and Checklist (Handout #2) to each participant. The first copy is to be filled out about the participant's style of parenting, and the second about the participant's parents' style of parenting. Ask participants to read each statement and circle the ones that they agree with. After they complete it, allow participants to comment on how their parenting is different or similar to the parenting they experienced during their own childhood.*

Then conduct a discussion of parenting styles using the overhead transparencies.

Over the years, researchers have categorized parenting patterns of behavior into three major styles. Though these styles are described distinctly and separately, it is believed that most parents fall somewhere in the middle, showing characteristics of more than one style. (Use overhead transparencies to describe styles)

The first style, **Strict** (Overhead #1), is demanding, punishing and does not allow the child choices. Parents who exhibit this style value obedience, tradition, order and discourage independence and individuality. It is important for them that children conform to the group norms. They discourage verbal give and take (interpreting that as back talk) and make rules without discussion. They do not like their authority questioned. These parents exercise physical punishment and resort to yelling and threatening as control or discipline measures. This strict style of parenting can be thought of as "limits without freedom" and can be described as a closed circle (draw on transparency). **Likely Child Outcome of Strict Parenting:** A parent who follows this style may love the child very much but does not allow the child to think for him or herself. One risk to strict parenting is that children become followers and may follow those who do not have their best interest at heart. They may have low self-esteem and may be aggressive and defiant.

The second parenting style is the **Permissive** (Overhead #2). The permissive parent makes little demand, sets no guidelines and provides no structure and avoids asserting authority. This parent is often referred to as uninvolved because she/he spends a minimal amount of time and effort with the child. This parent is unresponsive, distant and unavailable to assist and parent the child. Drug misuse, and immaturity of a parent are possible reasons for permissive parenting. The permissive style of parenting can be thought of as "freedom without limits," and described as a squiggly line (draw on transparency). **Likely Child Outcome of Permissive Parenting:** The parent who follows this style may raise children who are irresponsible and who are so accustomed to having their own way that they become very frustrated when they encounter situations where they can not have their own way. Children of permissive parenting are likely to lack self-control, remain immature in their thinking processes, and may become aggressive at home.

The third type of parenting is the **Moderate** (Overhead #3). Although a moderate parent is not a perfect parent, she/he however has more balance in style. She/he often sets high standards and expectations, firmly enforces rules and encourages independence and individuality. At the core of this style, is the recognition of individual rights and choices. Moderate parenting allows communication with the ability to listen, and a more democratic

give-and-take arrangement. The moderate style of parenting can be thought of as "freedom within limits," and can be described as a squiggly line within the limits of a circle, but possibly extending beyond those limits (draw on transparency). **Likely Child Outcome of Moderate Parenting:** The child of this parent is more likely to become competent, responsible, independent and develop high sense of self-esteem and confidence, and a greater capability to control aggression.

*Now, refer back to the parenting styles questionnaire and explain the code. Have them count their responses for each parenting style. Notice if most statements refer to more than one style. Code is S = strict, P = permissive and M = moderate.*

*Summarize by saying that parenting should aim toward achieving balance between setting limits and granting autonomy. Additionally, it is important for parents to assess their parenting style and make adjustments if and where they feel it is necessary in order to achieve the best child outcome. This will help participants understand that each time they chose a positive technique, it contributes to the overall end goal of the positive discipline process. (For more information on parenting styles order from Ag Communications the video entitled "Styles of Parenting").*

## Ages and Stages of Children

Understanding how children develop will help parents and other caregivers know what to expect. Children constantly change and develop as they grow. Researchers have found that young children pass through specific stages of development along the way. The idea behind these "ages and stages" is that certain behavior is normal or appropriate at certain ages and not at others. There are four reasons why knowing what is normal behavior at different stages is helpful:

- *Helps you understand your child's major job at different ages.*  
Sometimes when you think your child is misbehaving, he may really be just trying to do his job. For example, a two-year old's major job is to be "Boss" and if he says, "No, I don't want to ...!" you don't have to get upset, he is just doing his job of testing you.
- *Helps you not expect too much from your child too soon (like expecting a three-year old to tie his shoes).*
- *Helps you prevent serious problems.*  
Once you know the kinds of things your child will do at his age, you can anticipate problems. For example, once you know that one-year-olds explore, you will expect your one-year-old to explore anything you leave on the floor, such as marbles.
- *Helps you provide safe ways for your child to do her job and be ready to move on to the next stage.*

Sometimes children simply can't do their jobs without coming in conflict with their parents one way or another. That's where we need to step in to help children do their jobs safely by providing safe limits. There are many ways to do this, and some are more effective than others.

(More detailed information on Developmental Ages and Stages of children is in the "Child Development" section of this notebook).

## Reducing Frequency of Misbehavior in Children

It is unlikely or impossible to prevent all misbehavior in children. However, there are some tools that you can use with your children to reduce frequency of misbehavior.

*Distribute Responsive Discipline: Prevention Tools handout (Source: Minnesota Positive Parenting curriculum PEL24). Briefly discuss each tool with the group, answering questions as they arise. (Copy is included, Handout #3)*

## Positive Discipline Techniques

True misbehavior occurs when a child **chooses** to behave **inappropriately**. Before you take action, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is the child doing something truly wrong? Is there a real problem here, or are you just tired and out of patience?
  - \* If there is no real problem, release your stress away from the child.
  - \* If there is a problem, go to the next question.
  
2. Think for a moment. Is your child really capable of doing what you expect here?
  - \* If you are not being fair, re-evaluate your expectations.
  - \* If your expectations are fair, go to the next question.
  
3. Did your child know at the time that she was doing something wrong?
  - \* If your child did not realize she was doing something wrong, help her understand what you expect, why, and how she can do that. Offer to help her.
  - \* If your child knew what she was doing was wrong, and she deliberately disregarded a reasonable expectations, your child misbehaved.

If the behavior was an accident, like wetting her pants while sleeping, it was not a misbehavior. If the behavior was not an accident, ask your child to tell you the reasons she has for doing what she did. Listen carefully and assess before you respond.

## Reasons Children Misbehave

According to some child development experts, children usually misbehave for one of four basic reasons: attention, power, revenge, or inadequacy. (Refer to the handout "Appropriate Limits for Young Children: a guide for discipline, part one FCS-455)

*Attention* - When children believe they "belong" only when they are noticed. They feel important when they are commanding total attention. Parents can respond by giving positive attention at other times, ignoring inappropriate behavior, setting up routines, encouraging, redirecting, or setting up special times.

*Power* - When children believe they "belong" only when they are in control or are proving that no one can "boss them around." Parents can respond with kind-but firm respect, giving limited choices, setting reasonable limits, encouraging, and redirecting the child to a more acceptable activity. When children test their limits and use a public display to assert themselves, parents can continue to stick to the basic rules letting them know their behavior is unacceptable. Leave the situation if possible (store or home in which you are a guest). Talk when things are calmer at a later time.

*Revenge* - When children believe they "belong" only by hurting others, since they feel hurt themselves. Sometimes the reason for misbehavior is not clear. When there is a new pattern of acting out, children and parents should talk about how they are feeling. Parents can respond by avoiding harsh punishment and criticism, building trust, listening, reflecting feelings, practicing sharing of feelings, encouraging strengths and acting with care.

*Inadequacy* - When children believe they "belong" only when they convince others not to expect anything of them since they are helpless or unable. Parents can respond by encouraging their children to try things, focusing on the child's strengths, not criticizing or giving in to pity, offering opportunities for success and teaching skills in small steps.

## Discipline Techniques

The type of discipline a parent uses influences the type of person a child becomes. What type of discipline do you use? What type of person do you want your child to become?

*Fix-up* - When children cause trouble or hurt another child, expect them to fix it up - or at least try to help. If they break a toy, ask them to help you fix it. If they make a child cry, have them help with the soothing. If they throw toys around the room, ask them to put them away.

*Ignore* - The best way to deal with misbehavior aimed at getting your attention is to simply ignore it. But be sure to give attention to your children when they behave well. Children need attention for good behavior, not misbehavior.

*Be Firm* - Clearly and firmly state, or even demand, that the child do what needs to be done. Speak in a tone that lets your child know that you mean what you say and that you expect the child to do as he is told. Being firm doesn't mean yelling, nagging, threatening, reasoning, or taking away privileges. Keep suggestions to a minimum, and always speak kindly, even when speaking firmly.

*Stay in Control* - Act before the situation gets out of control -- before you get angry and overly frustrated and before the child's behavior becomes unreasonable.

*Separation* - When children irritate one another, fight, squabble, hit or kick, have them rest or play apart for a time. Being apart for a while lets each child calm down. Then you can use other ways to encourage better behavior.

*Behavior Management* - Talk with children calmly to learn what caused a disagreement. Then talk about ways to deal with it. Come to a solution that's agreeable to both you and the children. This helps children learn to be responsible for their behavior.

*Redirection* - When children get rowdy, stop them, explain why you are stopping them, and suggest another activity. When they knock over paint, give them a cloth and a pail of water to clean up the mess. When they race dangerously indoors, if possible, take them outside for a game of chase. When they throw books at each other, gather them for a story time or organize a beanbag toss.

*Praise* - Give more attention and praise for good behavior and less for naughty behavior. Don't make punishment a reward. Let the child know that you appreciate a good attitude and cooperation. Children respond positively to genuine respect and praise.

## Summary

Summarize the main points of the lesson. The message from the literature on child development is clear. Human development is not influenced by one factor but by a whole mosaic of factors. (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, Segal, 1983). Children are influenced first and foremost by their parents. Discipline is a special form of love. Discipline tells your child that you care enough to help him/her manage his/her behavior.

Hand out My Personal Plan worksheet (Handout #4). Give participants about five minutes to complete them. End with a poem, quote, saying or "101 Ways to Praise a Child".

## Evaluation

Use generic evaluation tools included in Evaluation section of this notebook.

## Reference

Missouri Parenting notebook - *Positive Guidance and Discipline* lesson

## Supplemental Activities

It is important to be selective in choosing which of the activities you use with a target audience. Keep in mind the characteristics of the audience, their needs and concerns, and the objectives of your program.

- Think of one and share it with the group. (e.g., one thing you like about your child; one time you were angry at your child but remained calm; one reason you don't like spanking your child; one discipline technique that you think works well for your child.)
- List "X" number of times you and "X" number of times you. We'll discuss similarities and differences. (e.g., List three times you used time out and three times you used logical consequences. What were the similarities among the incidents? What were the differences? How successful was each in changing your child's behavior?)

- Stories - Write two stories about situations when children need to be disciplined (e.g., lying and hitting another child). Ask parents to think about what behaviors they want/hope to encourage. Then ask them to brainstorm disciplinary options and the pros and cons of each.
- Inventories - Ask parents to make lists (e.g., of disciplinary techniques; of inappropriate behaviors their children do; of the "good" behaviors their children show).
- Problem solving - present them in the following formats:
  - \* advice column - such as Dear Abby
  - \* question cards
  - \* board games
- Script - develop a script of a situation where a child needs to be disciplined and have parents read parts.
- Role play - Set up a hypothetical situation or ask parents to come up with one.
  - \* role-reversal - Parent plays the part of a child.
  - \* role-rehearsal - Parent plays himself or herself and tries out a new behavior.
- Discuss childhood recollections.
 

Ex. How did your parents discipline you? How did you feel when they used this type of discipline? did it improve your behavior and for how long?
- Facilitated drawing.
 

Ex. Parents finish vignettes represented through cartoons.
- Give homework assignments.
 

Ex. Have parents keep track of the number of times they recognize their children's appropriate behavior.
- Work together on defining punishment and discipline.
- List alternatives to punishment based on age of child.

## Exercises When Teaching Key Concepts

Listed below are some developed exercises that could be used when teaching key concepts in the area of discipline. Educators in CES throughout the country have contributed activities that they have found effective in working with parents.

### ***Activity 1*** - RECOGNIZING POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR CHILD

The following activity helps parents recognize the positive characteristics of their children. Often parents focus only on their children's negative behavior.

Ask parents to: Describe their children in an advertisement. The ads must emphasize or accentuate positive qualities/traits. The ads may be in writing or in a poster format using pictures and words or phrases. Then share their advertisements with the group. This could be an in-class activity or a homework assignment. During the sharing time: Elicit participant's feelings about their advertisement and the assignment. Emphasize that everyone has good traits and less desirable ones. Encourage parents to concentrate more on positive traits of children and play down or ignore the negatives. A fun companion activity is asking teens or preteens to advertise their parent(s), too.

Contributed by - Ann M. Rhinesmith, Rutgers Cooperative Extension

### ***Activity 2*** - FEELINGS AND DISCIPLINE

Ask the group to form a circle with you. After you're all in the circle, explain that you are going to give them some simple instructions. When everyone is ready say, "Face left." At this point you leave the circle. Next, say: "Walk." If you are feeling playful, say, "Skip" or "Hop." Then say, "Stop." Finally, say, "Turn around."

(Note: The command to turn around is deliberately ambiguous. Some will face right, some will turn completely around and the rest will be looking around trying to figure it out. Single out one of the parents with whom you have good rapport and pretend to be an angry, disgusted authority figure. Get the permission of this parent before class. Ask the parent to "go along" with you in this activity. Be sure to get the parent's permission.)

Yell at the parent, "Can't you follow simple directions! You just never listen. Look here. WE all have to stop because of you!" Use words of your own to express how "dumb" or "bad" the person is. You may tell them they won't get any refreshments or they must sit in the hall. To stop your "act" yell, "Cut!" Hug your victim and thank the parent for cooperating with you. Make certain the other parents realize you and the "victim" were role playing.

Then ask the victim, "how did you feel? Angry? Hostile? Dumb? Confused? Hurt?" Direct the same question to the group: "How would you have felt?" Next, ask "What did you want to do? Run away? Punch? Hide? Kick?" Ask the parents who witnessed this interaction how they felt.

Conclude this activity by saying that sometimes we want "good" behavior for our own convenience. A quiet, obedient child isn't any trouble. Sometimes we jump to conclusions, as here, when the teacher assumed that the student was not listening. And, sometimes our directions are vague and unclear or do not take into account the child, but punishment is making them "pay" for wrong doing.

Contributed by - Norine Barnes, Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service

### ***Activity 3*** - APPROPRIATE METHODS FOR SETTING LIMITS

The short case studies below can be discussed using the following methods for setting limits:

**Encouragement:** consistently reinforce specific appropriate behavior you observe. "You picked up ALL your toys," "You colored the apple," or "You walked away from the fight. That took guts!" When misbehavior seem to be attention-getters, reinforce a good behavior and ignore the bad. (Remember that frequent encouragement fills up cups of self-esteem.)

**Natural or Logical Consequences:** Allow children to accept the consequences of their actions. For example, the first few times a preschool child spills milk, teach him/her to clean it up. Once you think the child is capable of cleaning up the milk, ask him/her to clean it up alone. Remember, it is not only what is said, but how it is said that teaches. If the parent

screams, "Clean that up!" What might have been a "lesson" becomes a punishment because the child will be acting out of fear. Calmly asking the child to clean up the milk takes self-control on the parent's part, but it is more likely to leave an impression in the long run.

**Negotiating Rules:** Talk about family rules and the consequences of breaking them. Make the consequence appropriate for the rules. Be sure both children and parents follow through on the rules and suffer the consequences when rules are broken. That's mutual respect!

**Exploring Alternatives in Solving Problems:** Encourage using this problem-solving strategy as a way to avoid repeated misbehavior. First, define the problem using I-messages. Generate a list of alternatives together. After the list of possible solutions has been developed, go back and evaluate the pros and cons of each alternative. Select one that is mutually agreeable and put it into action. After a week or so, evaluate your choice. Is it working? If not, go through the process again.

**Case Studies** - Discuss limit-setting strategies in the following situations:

\* Twelve year old Robert is consistently avoiding his 8:30 bedtime, sometimes stalling, sometimes refusing to go to bed, often yelling from his bed after he has settled down. Robert and his mom are arguing about this nightly. Robert complains that his bedtime is too early. The parent is upset with Robert because he refused to go by bedtime rules. There is a constant power struggle.

- As a group, determine the problem. Different parents will have different ideas according to how they see the problem. For this example, I suggest you define the problem as: Robert is refusing to cooperate at bedtime because he is not tired at 8:30. He wants a later bedtime. Mom wants to stick with her rules.
- Ask the group what kind of limit-setting technique they would use in order to get Robert to cooperate and go to bed at a reasonable time, minus the power struggle. Probably, through problem solving, Robert and Mom could agree on a more appropriate time. Set the time and expect Robert to do his part in cooperating. Talk about how negotiation and joint problem solving promote good decision-making skills and enhancement of the parent-child relationship.
- What other limit setting method could have been used here, especially if Robert were younger? Discuss the use of natural consequences.

\* Fifteen year old Thomas is struggling with algebra. By the second marking period Thomas' father decides to go to talk about the problem with the algebra teacher. Thomas' father learns that Thomas is not doing his homework. This is bringing his mark below passing. Thomas' father is furious. As he drives home, he thinks about the lecture he will give Thomas.

- Ask the group members to define the situation in terms of limit-setting.

- Ask one trainee to role-play Thomas. You, the educator, pretend to be the father. Pretend that you are very angry. When you see Thomas, fly off the handle and let him know what a disappointment he has been. Lecture him about how he should be doing better and will not be playing any more sports until he shapes up. (By now you and Thomas should be in the midst of a power struggle.)
- Stop the action. Discuss what problems may result from this approach.
- Role play the problem situation again, this time first taking the time to get some composure (between the first time Dad talked to the teacher and then talked to Thomas). Then talk about the problem with Thomas and negotiate a solution.
- Discuss how Thomas' low grades are the natural consequence of his failure to do homework. If this natural consequence is insufficient to motivate Thomas, what logical consequences could be implemented?

\* Saturday mornings are cleaning time for the Olsen household. Whenever there are special plans on Saturday, the kids know they must spend their Friday evenings getting their room in order. On this particular Saturday morning, ten year old Elaine has been reading comic books. She has picked up a few things, but has spent far too much time with her nose in those books. At eleven o'clock the phone rings. It is Elaine's best friend asking her to go to the beach. Elaine begs her mom to let her go.

- Role play this situation. Elaine could learn from logical consequences that she cannot go to the beach. She had a chance to clean her room. She knew the rules. By her behavior, she chose to experience the consequence. Elaine could be firmly, but kindly, told that she cannot go this time, but next time maybe the situation will work out better.
- Discuss why it is important to follow through with logical consequences. Remind the group that, especially in this case, tone of voice can change a logical consequence into a punishment (e.g., You could yell, "See, Elaine, now you can't go because you didn't do what I told you to do!").
- Are there other limit setting approaches that could be used here? What will Elaine learn from these approaches?

Contributed by - Margaret D. Slinski - Massachusetts Cooperative Extension

#### ***Activity 4*** - USE OF NATURAL OR LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

An important aspect of learning is experiencing the consequences of our actions. If those consequences are good, we are likely to repeat the behavior. If those consequences are bad, we are less likely to repeat the behavior. This is true for both adults and children. If we fail to show up for work, we don't get paid. If we get caught speeding, we get a ticket.

Parents sometimes try to protect their children from the consequences of their actions. We don't like to see our children unhappy. But repeatedly shielding them from the consequences

of their actions prevents them from learning important lessons. These lessons are a necessary part of growing up into mature, responsible adults.

*What are "natural" consequences?*

Natural consequences are the direct result of a child's behavior. For example, if the child does not place dirty clothes in the laundry, then those clothes do not get washed. As a result, the child may not have that favorite sweater or pair of jeans ready to wear when wanted. Note that the parent did not have to take action. The consequence occurred naturally. What would be natural consequences of the following behaviors?

- Your 12 year old is watching TV and fails to respond when told dinner is ready.
- Your child fails to walk the dog.
- Your 6 year old refuses to eat dinner.
- Your child is unkind to other children.

Natural consequences of an undesirable behavior should not be allowed to occur if dangerous. For example, a parent cannot let a toddler get hit by a car in order to learn that running out in the street is dangerous. At other times, it may take too long for a natural consequence to occur or the undesirable behavior may infringe upon the rights of others. Then parents may need to arrange for a logical consequence.

*What are "logical" consequences?*

Logical consequences are arranged by the parent. Logical consequences are used when natural consequences would be too dangerous for a child to experience. They can also be used when natural consequences take too long to occur or the undesirable behavior infringes upon others' rights.

Logical consequences should be related to the undesirable behavior. For example, your child borrows the car and does not return it by the agreed upon time, causing you to miss an appointment. When you asked why the child was late, and had not called, you are told, "I just forgot."

Your child has abused the privilege of using the car. One logical consequence would be to forbid your child to use the car for a specified period of time. Making the child wash dishes for the next week would not be an appropriate logical consequence in this case. Washing dishes has nothing to do with responsible use of a car. What would be some logical consequences of the following behaviors?

- Your child borrows your tools and leaves them out in the rain.
- Your child went to play at a friend's house after school instead of coming straight home as expected.
- Your preschooler is teasing the neighbor's dog.

- Your teen has a midnight curfew but doesn't come in until 2 am. When asked why he was late and hadn't called, he says, "I was having a good time and wasn't ready to come home."

*How do I use "natural" or "logical" consequences?*

1. Make sure the rule is clearly understood by all members of the family.

- Discuss the possible consequences of failure to follow the rule.
- Allow the natural consequences of a child's actions to occur, or, apply the logical consequences in a firm and consistent manner.

Contributed by Karen Morgan, Ph.D Rutgers Cooperative Extension

## Reference for Supplemental Activities

Parents, Children, and Discipline: An Extension Guidebook for Programming. A project of the Children-At-Risk National Coordinating Committee. Karen Christman Morgan, Ph.D., Editor

## Additional Resources

*1 2 3 4 Parents! Parenting Children Ages 1 to 4* by Michael H. Popkin, Ph.D.

All Families Have Strengths - *Discipline That Works* by Bette M. Hovey, Becky L. Dahl, Mary Lou Ruby; University of Idaho.

Materials available in Ag Communications

*Appropriate Guidance* 30 minute video

*Discipline* - 13 minute video

*Corporal Punishment: What to do instead* - video

*Styles of Parenting* - 20 minute video

*Shaking/ hitting/ spanking What instead?* - 30 minute video

*Responsive Discipline: Effective Tools for Parents, Leaders's Guide, Video and Discipline Toolbox cards* - Kansas State Cooperative Extension Service.

*Positive Discipline = Positive Children video and facilitators guide* - Creative Educational Video PO Box 65265, Lubbock, TX 79464-5265; 1-800-922-9965.

NC Cooperative Extension Service Educational brochures

Effective Ways To Discipline Young Children - HE-416

Effective Ways to Discipline School-Age Children - HE-407

Appropriate Limits for Young Children - a guide for discipline, part one - FCS-455

Appropriate Limits for Young Children - a guide for discipline, part two - FCS-456

## Packaged Curriculum/Programs that Include Discipline Lessons

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (For parents, general). Seven lessons are included, one of which is Discipline Makes Sense. Kit includes: Leader's Resource Guide; Videocassettes, Participant's Handbook and poster. English and Spanish versions available.

Available from: AGS - 4201 Woodland Road

P. O. Box 99

Circle Pines, MC 55014-1796

1-800-328-2560

Complete kit - \$344.95

E-Mail: [agsmail@agsnet.com](mailto:agsmail@agsnet.com)

Website: [www.agsnet.com](http://www.agsnet.com)

Early Childhood STEP (For parents of children 0-5). Seven lessons included, one of which is Effective Discipline. Kit includes: Leader's Resource Guide; Videocassettes; Parenting Young Child parent handbook; Workshop Announcements. English and Spanish versions available.

Available from: AGS -- 4201 Woodland Road

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Circle Pines, MC 55014-1796

1-800-328-2560

Complete kit - \$214.95

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Cooperative Discipline (For Teachers K-12). A realistic, positive approach to tough discipline problems. Kit includes: Teacher's Handbook; 3 videos; Implementation Guide; and posters.

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Cooperative Discipline Elementary Package \$495

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Cooperative Discipline Elementary and

Secondary Package \$895

E-Mail: [agsmail@agsnet.com](mailto:agsmail@agsnet.com)

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1, 2, 3, 4 Parents! Program is part video and part group discussion. Divided into three, one and one-half hour sessions. Session II includes *The question of discipline*. Kit includes: Videotape; Leader's Guide; Parent's Workbook; 1 Tips booklet; parent completion certificate; promotion poster and promotional brochure.

Available from -- Active Parenting Publishers

810 Franklin Court, Suite B

Marietta, GA 30067

1-800-825-0060

Complete Kit - \$199

Items also priced individually

E-mail [CService@activeparenting.com](mailto:CService@activeparenting.com)

## VIDEOS:

Discipline Strategies. Staff development video series on managing challenging behavior for secondary staff development. Includes 6 videos on discipline problems: Annoying Behavior; Non-Compliance Behavior; Off-Task Behavior; Confrontational Behavior; Rude Behavior; and Mean Behavior.

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Set of six videos - \$399.95

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Positive Discipline. A creative Alternative for Parents and Teachers. Twenty one minutes.

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Website: [www.meridianeducation.com](http://www.meridianeducation.com)

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Cost: \$69

Disciplining Children. Contrasts between "discipline" and "punishment" while demonstrating the benefits of teaching self-control. A detailed study guide includes hypothetical discipline situations which can be used for practicing disciplinary skills. 9 min.

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1-800-727-5507

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Website: [www.meridianeducation.com](http://www.meridianeducation.com)

Free preview

Cost: \$69

Considerations of Discipline. Deals with the basic approaches to disciplining children, outlining the strengths and weakness of each strategy. 12 min.

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Bloomington, IL 61701

1-800-727-5507

E-mail: [meridian@ice.net](mailto:meridian@ice.net)

Website: [www.meridianeducation.com](http://www.meridianeducation.com)

Free preview

Cost: \$49

#### World Wide Web Links

National Network for Child Care - Guidance & Discipline -  
<http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/pages/families/ncc/Guidance/guide.disc.page.html>

National Network for Family Resiliency - Parent Education  
<http://www.nnfr.org/parented>

National Association for the Education of Young Children - NAEYC  
<http://www.naeyc.org>

National Clearinghouse on Child abuse & Neglect Information  
<http://www.calib.com/nccanch/>

# Summary Thoughts

*I tried to teach my child with books  
He only gave me puzzled looks*

*I tried to teach my child with words  
They passed him by often unheard*

*Despairingly I turned aside  
"How shall I teach this child?" I cried*

*Into my hand, he put the key  
"Come, he said, play with me."*

--Anonymous

(Handout #1 )

Parenting Styles Self -Evaluation

(Handout #2 )

Parenting Styles Checklist

(Handout #3 )

Positive Parenting

Responsive Discipline: Prevention Tools

(Handout #4) (in pdf)

Additional Materials (in PDF)

Effective Ways to Discipline Young Children, Working with your 2- to 5-year-old

Effective Ways to Discipline School-Age Children

Appropriate Limits for Young Children a Guide for Discipline, part one

Appropriate Limits for Young Children a Guide for Discipline, part two

Overheads follow in this text:

## **Strict**

Demands continuously

Punishes harshly

Values obedience

Discourages independence and individuality

Exercises physical punishment

Resorts to yelling and threatening

Does not allow reasonable choices to the child

(Overhead #1)

# Permissive

Sets no guidelines

Asserts no authority

Remains distant

Remains uninvolved

Uses excuses for not spending quality time with child

(Overhead #2)

# Moderate

Sets reasonable standards

Has reasonable expectations

Encourages independence and individuality

Enforces rules firmly and consistently

Allows choices

Builds a more democratic relationship

Recognizes individual rights

(Overhead #3)

# Examples of Constructive Discipline Techniques

Allow natural consequences.

Allow logical consequences:

Reasonable loss of privileges

Repayment and compensation Grounding

Negotiate contracts.

Use reasonable time out.

Redirect their attention.

(Overhead #4)

## Parenting Styles Self-Evaluation (Handout #1)

Circle all the items you believe to be true about your practices of child rearing:

1. I believe that it is better not to have rules than to worry about breaking them.  
s
2. Children should obey their parents and not talk back.  
s
3. Children should be given choices.  
m
4. Children can get along pretty well if you just leave them alone.  
p
5. My work and home responsibilities are too stressful to worry about what the children are doing.  
p
6. Sometimes children have a point. I try to listen to them.  
m
7. Children should do as I say until they are old enough to make their own decisions.  
s
8. The children won't listen to me, so I have quit trying.  
p
9. I was spanked when I was a child, and I turned out ok.  
s
10. Although it takes hard work, parents and children should try to talk about family decisions and each person should share his/her feelings.  
m
11. When children don't mind, I yell at them and threaten them with many different things.  
s
12. At a young age, parents should do as much as they can for their children (making their beds, getting their snacks, dressing them).  
p
13. Children should be allowed their own sense of individuality.  
m
14. I have high standards which I expect my children to understand, and I enforce rules firmly.  
m
15. I will make the rules of my household. Children should be punished for not following these rules.  
s

Source: Karen DeBord, NCSU Extension Child Development Specialist

## Parenting Styles Checklist (Handout #2)

Circle all of the items you believe to be true about your parents' practices of child rearing:

1. I believe that it is better not to have rules than to worry about breaking them.  
P
2. Children should obey their parents and not talk back.  
s
3. Children should be given choices.  
m
4. Children can get along pretty well if you just leave them alone.  
P
5. My work and home responsibilities are too stressful to worry about what the children are doing.  
p
6. Sometimes children have a point. I try to listen to them.  
m
7. Children should do as I say until they are old enough to make their own decisions.  
s
8. The children won't listen to me, so I have quit trying.  
P
9. I was spanked when I was a child, and I turned out ok.  
s
10. Although it takes hard work, parents and children should try to talk about family decisions and each person should share his/her feelings.  
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12. At a young age, parents should do as much as they can for their children (making their beds, getting their snacks, dressing them).  
P
13. Children should be allowed their own sense of individuality.  
m
14. I have high standards which I expect my children to understand, and I enforce rules firmly.  
m
15. I will make the rules of my household. Children should be punished for not following these rules.  
s

Source: Karen DeBord, NCSU Extension Child Development Specialist

# Appropriate Limits for Young Children

## a guide for discipline, part one

**D**enita is 5 years old. She whines not only when she is left in child care, but during most other times when she goes from one place to another. Once she gets interested in an activity, Denita's attention is completely focused until another child tries to join her or she is asked to put the activity away. Then she lashes out, usually throwing a toy or disrupting a corner of the room. During group time, she cries until she is allowed to sit on the teacher's lap. Teachers give her time-outs in the beanbag chair, which she doesn't seem to mind. When it is time to go home, she cries. Her teachers and parents are frustrated.

How can Denita's teachers and parents work toward more desirable behavior?

Should she be punished or disciplined?

**Punishment** is taking some action against the child as a pay-back for a child's behavior.

**Discipline** is shaping a child, teaching the child to understand limits at home or in other settings. While you can make rules for how they should behave, most children do not begin acting with self-control until their middle childhood years (around ages 7 to 9). For children younger than this, discipline is learning self-control.

Children must pass through several learning and developmental stages as they mature. Discipline problems are a normal part of child development. While it appears that there are "good" and "bad" behaviors, each stage does have a positive and a negative side. Parents and teachers alike must understand these developmental stages in order to determine what behavior they can realistically expect and to decide whether a child's behavior is appropriate.

### Why Do Children Misbehave?

According to some child development experts, children usually misbehave for one of four basic reasons: attention, power, revenge, or inadequacy.

**Attention** — When children believe they "belong" only when they are noticed. They feel important when they are commanding total attention.

*While Mother was getting ready for work, Amanda jumped up from her breakfast and asked Mom to come help her in the bathroom. Encouraging her that she could manage alone, Amanda began to pull on Mom's leg and whine, "But I may not be able to." Mom replied, "Yes, you can, Amanda, just try it." After a few minutes, Amanda was back asking Mom to snap her pants. Helping her, Mom resumed her routine. Amanda called to her again, "Can you come here?"*

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Parents can respond by giving positive attention at other times, ignoring inappropriate behavior, setting up routines, encouraging, redirecting, or setting up special times.

**Power** — When children believe they belong only when they are in control or are proving that no one can “boss them around.”

*Whitney was ready to go shopping when Dad announced they were going to the mall. She grabbed her jar of pennies, ready to shop. At each store, she asked for items too costly for her budget. When she found an item for less than a dollar, she counted out the pennies and paid. Having spent her money, she continued to whine for other things “she needed”. Mom said, “We will need to just leave if you can’t quit asking for things.” She begged not to leave, so browsing continued.*

*A short time later, she asked for another special item she had seen and loudly insisted she have it. This time Dad tried to get her quiet but had lost patience. “You’re mean!” she screamed. She gave a glaring stare and mumbled “You don’t love me.” Dad took her hand and led her to the car. When she got home, the dollar toy was left in the car, forgotten.*

Parents can respond with kind-but firm respect, giving limited choices, setting reasonable limits, encouraging, and redirecting the child to a more acceptable activity. When children test their limits and use a public display to assert themselves, parents can continue to stick to the basic rules letting them know their behavior is unacceptable. Leave the situation if possible (store or home in which you are a guest). Talk when things are calmer at a later time.

**Revenge** — When children believe they belong only by hurting others, since they feel hurt themselves.

*Larry had been whining when Mom left him each morning with the child care provider. That evening, Dad was cooking dinner while Mom worked late. Suddenly Logan screamed. Dad threw down the potato peeler and ran to see what the problem was. Larry had pinned Logan in a wrestling position and was twisting his ear. Dad hollered to Larry, saying “Why can’t you leave your brother alone? Go to your room and wait for me!”*

Sometimes the reason for misbehavior is not clear. When there is a new pattern of acting out, children and parents should talk about how they are feeling. Parents can respond by avoiding harsh punishment and criticism, building trust, listening, reflecting feelings, practicing sharing of feelings, encouraging strengths and acting with care.

**Inadequacy** — when children believe they belong only when they convince others not to expect anything of them since they are helpless or unable.

*Jorge’s teacher asked his parents what might be affecting Jorge’s work at school. His teacher says, “He doesn’t complete assignments and no matter how much I help him, he gets further behind.” Mom replied, “He doesn’t do anything at home either. I have quit asking him to do any chores at home because when he does them, he is so sloppy and does it so badly, I have to do it again.”*

Parents can respond by encouraging their children to try things, focusing on the child’s strengths, not criticizing or giving in to pity, offering opportunities for success and teaching skills in small steps.

## Developmental Milestones

### The First Two Years

From birth to about age 2, infants need to build close relationships with their parents or other important people around them. These attachments make it possible for infants to build a sense of love and caring. They are learning to make sense out of permanent objects and developing a sense of trust. Only as children experiment through touching, dropping, pushing, and pulling do they begin to learn.

During this time, children do not believe that things exist unless they can see them. This is why it is so difficult for them to be away from their parents.

To feel close to someone, infants need to be able to count on having their needs met in a timely manner. Gaining a sense of trust is the first stage of their emotional development.

### The Preschool Years

These years are the most significant in a person’s life. Language and social skills are developed. Children at this age also learn symbols. For example, they learn to see a picture of a ball and recognize that the picture represents a real ball. Recognizing symbols is an important step toward developing important skills such as the ability to read.

Toddling, exploring, and pounding may worry parents, but they are normal behaviors. When children touch, feel, look, mix, turn over, and throw, they are developing skills. Exploration is intellectually healthy and helps children test their independence. Although these behaviors create a struggle between child and parent, they should be expected and should plan for them.

Independence is an emotion to be encouraged during the early preschool years. The alternative is shame and doubt. Many significant events occur during these years (between 2 and 3, toilet training and language in particular). In responding to a child's misuse of language or accidents when toileting, parents and caregivers should be sensitive to avoid using guilt and punishments for what are most likely normal acts of development.

Once children learn to handle independence, they are ready to develop a healthy sense of initiative. Initiative means starting activities, creating, and working. Children who learn to start their own activities lay the groundwork for positive and productive school experiences. Again, explorations, questions, and investigations play major roles in development.

## **Middle Childhood**

From the time they begin school until around age 12, children are in middle childhood, when learning skills become better defined. Children at this stage have higher-order thinking skills and can use them to make more complex decisions. As children they have always believed what adults say as basically true, but they now begin to question the pedestal upon which they have placed adults.

Rules become more significant and children learn not only rules for games, but rules that will help them understand math concepts and social rules, such as saying "please" and "thank you." Rules make formal education possible.

Closely on the heels of developing a sense of initiative in the preschool years is the development of a sense of industry. Groundwork is laid during this middle childhood for becoming productive members of society. Children can learn to be inferior (or inadequate). Adults should seek to build a sense of confidence that children in the middle childhood can do jobs well. Many children have their sense of industry undermined by well-meaning parents and teachers who mistakenly try to use criticism to motivate them.

## **Questioning Adult Responses: A Group Teaching Guide**

Children spend their young years trying to figure out how they fit into the world. How independent or dependent will they be allowed to be? What will be the consequences of various actions? Who will give them direction? Who will be their role models?

In addition to the reasons for behaviors, parents must determine if they have provided a stable, loving, understanding place to help children learn and grow. The questions that follow may be used as small group activities or between parenting partners. It may be helpful to consider these questions:

**Are expectations for the child clear?** Children develop at different rates, have different interests, and certainly have different kinds of homes and families. Are attempts made to prepare the child for new situations? Offer explanations of what the occasion is about and what behavior will be expected so guessing isn't necessary. To prevent reactions, use continuous two-way communication and allow the child a certain amount of responsibility in setting his or her own rules or limits.

**Is behavior driven by the child's need to test the boundaries of particular relationships?** There is security for children who realize that the adult will "still love them" if they are "bad." This may be particularly true when there have been many changes in the family home.

**Are consistent limits understood and followed?** Children may resist limits if there is too much adult control and not enough room allowed for their choice. Discipline allows children to develop their own "inner voice," which will sensibly guide their behavior as they grow. Often adults must be careful that they, too, follow the rules they make for children. Consistency plays a major role in parenting.

### **Key Points**

- Discipline is shaping and teaching a child to understand limits.
- Children may act out because they want attention.
- Children may act out because they need some control.
- Children may hurt others because they don't feel important.
- Parents can ask questions such as, "How can you behave differently the next time?"
- Parents can prepare the child for new situations by describing expected behaviors.
- Parents who understand stages of behavior will know better what to expect.

## Appropriate Limits for Young Children: A Group Teaching Guide

The group leader sets the tone for the group to allow informal sharing, a sense of understanding and confidentiality without ridicule. Parenting is a very personal topic. Often to set the participants at ease and ease transitions, activities are needed. Some suggested activities are presented here as a stimulus for group leaders.

### Activity:

Ask the group participants to imagine a child with whom they have come in contact, one who they see daily or quite often. Ask them to think of ways to characterize this child. List these terms on easel paper or on a writing board before the group.

### Activity:

Scene setting descriptions of children to use for discussion. How would you respond to these situations:

Daryl is 4 years old. He cries when Mom leaves him at day care. He plays but is subdued. He can't seem to concentrate to finish puzzles and other tasks. He won't zip his jacket and tries to leave the group. The teacher shouts to the child to stay with the group and thinks he is just trying to get attention.

Marilyn is an attractive 2-year-old child with an advanced vocabulary. She enjoys most learning activities but has trouble sitting still during group time and during meal time and naps.

Marilyn is very loving but independent, often creatively precocious. When asked to "come here" by parents and teachers, she often plays games and runs away.

### Activity:

On index cards, ask parents to list the characteristics of ideal children, one characteristic per card. Take the cards and mix them up, then have each participant draw a card and read that characteristic aloud.

### Activity:

Ask participants to describe their definition of discipline. After this has been discussed, ask for their definition of punishment.

### Activity:

Ask participants to brainstorm in small groups or as a large group regarding their ideas about why children misbehave.

### Activity:

Divide into small groups, allowing parents to share misbehavior incidents. Try to decide which goal may have generated the child's behavior at that time.

Dreikurs, R. (1964) *Children the Challenge*. New York: Hawthorne Press.

Dreikurs R. & Grey, I. (1968). *A new approach to discipline: Logical consequences*. New York: Hawthorne.

Prepared by  
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# Appropriate Limits for Young Children

## a guide for discipline, part two



Although researchers have characterized the three basic parenting styles as: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative, many parents do not fit neatly into any of these categories. Parenting knowledge comes from a variety of sources and parents combine many styles depending on any given situation. With this in mind, this publication will examine these three parenting styles, referred to *The Enforcer* (authoritarian), *The Negotiator* (authoritative), and *The Yielder* (permissive). By examining the statements given for each parenting style, parents and caregivers can think about their basic style. Parenting styles influence the way in which children develop.

### Parenting styles\*

#### The Yielder

- It is better to have no rules than to worry about breaking them.
- Children can get along pretty well if you just leave them alone.
- My work and home responsibilities are too stressful; I can't worry about what the children are doing.
- The children won't listen to me, so I have quit trying.
- Children should realize that my work is stressful and I am tired at the end of the day.

These statements were written to describe the permissive parent or the yielder. This parent makes few demands, administers little punishment, sets no guidelines, has little structure, and avoids asserting authority. He or she is often referred to as uninvolved and spends minimal time and effort with the child. The parent sometimes

uses stress and work to excuse himself or herself from spending time with the children; drugs and immaturity can also be reasons for their lack of involvement.

The child of this parent lacks self-control, is immature, may be aggressive at home, and may behave irresponsibly. These children tend to have poor self-esteem, low emotional development, and a low threshold for frustration. They may be school-skippers and resort to drugs or become involved in legal problems in their search for attention.

#### The Enforcer

- Children should obey their parents and not talk back.
- Children should do as I say until they are old enough to make their own decisions.
- I was spanked when I was a child and I turned out okay.

\* Group leaders may turn this section into a questionnaire as an alternate activity for parents to respond to their parenting style or beliefs.

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- When children don't mind, I yell at them and threaten them with a variety of punishments.
- I expect my children to conform to my decisions without discussion.

These statements reflect the general nature of the enforcer or authoritarian style. This parent is demanding and strict, uses punishment, and generally doesn't allow choice or freedom of expression. They value obedience, tradition, and order, and discourage independence and individuality. These parents dislike having their authority questioned. They may use physical punishment, yelling or threatening for disciplinary measures.

What kind of child comes from this discipline pattern? Research indicates an enforcer parent may produce a child who lacks spontaneity, curiosity, and creativity, and often has limited independence and assertiveness. These children don't learn how to decide for themselves, depending instead on others for their sense of control. They may have low self-esteem and be aggressive and defiant.

### **The Negotiator**

- Children should be given choices.
- Sometimes children have a point. I try to listen to them.
- Although it takes hard work, parents and children should try to talk about family decisions and let each person share his or her feelings.
- Children should be allowed to be individuals.
- I take care not to criticize my children or call names even when I cannot understand why they act as they do.

The negotiator (authoritative) parent, although not the perfect parent, has a better balance in discipline style, setting high standards and expectations for mature behavior, firmly enforcing rules, and encouraging independence and individuality. Children's individual rights are recognized and choices are given. There is better communication and listening and a more democratic give-and-take arrangement.

Children of these parents generally are competent, responsible, independent, have higher self-esteem and confidence, and are better able to control their aggression.

### **How to Reduce Discipline Problems**

It is important for parents to realize that in order for children to grow-up, they *must* pass through the experiences of childhood. There is no way around it. The experience of growing up causes distress and frustration. Reducing behavior problems can be best practiced through *prevention*. If parents can understand what to expect from children as they develop, this knowledge can be used to build a healthy environment and a clear set of expectations that can reduce some of the tensions.

Major concepts to remember are *consistency, forethought, respect, recognition of a child's limits, cooperative relationships, common sense, and sense of humor*. Discipline is guiding children toward learning behaviors and self-control for later life.

The following list may help parents and teachers to evaluate their environment as well as their interactions with children.

### **Prepare the Environment**

- Are there enough supplies and materials so that children will not have to share too many items and wait too long for others?
- Is the environment well organized? Are some areas cluttered?
- Are there areas where the child can feel in control (one-person corner, own room)?
- Are there a variety of play materials to allow choices?
- Do offered activities suit the child's ability?
- Can barriers to success be removed to avoid frustration (turn over the puzzle pieces)?
- Is waiting kept to a realistic level (for turns, meals, listening)?
- Is the area childproofed?

### **Set Limits**

- Are older (school-age) children involved in designing limits or rules?
- Are limits reasonable?
- Are limits based on the child's ability to meet and understand limit?
- Are explanations and reasons for the limits appropriate to children's language skills?
- Is positive language used (do and should)?
- Is the child given time to comply with the limit?
- Are comparisons avoided to prevent resentment and damaging self-esteem?
- Are adults acting as positive role models?
- Is moderation used in reactions? For example: "I like the way you are playing!" or "I see you are ready to begin. Here is the glue."
- Are desirable behaviors reinforced, remembering that the child is not a "good" or "bad" child?

### **Use Empathy**

- Is support and kindness used in all communication?
- Are the child's words reflected to clarify understanding ("you mean ...")?
- Does the tone of voice and a smile convey empathy?
- Is a relationship being developed with the child?
- Is the child aware of the adult's "hot" button?

## **Share the Control**

- Are children allowed some of the control, or is it important for the adult to call every shot?
- Are children listened to for their newly developing ideas?
- Is there an atmosphere of give-and-take?
- Is a menu of choices presented?
- Can incomplete sentences and open-ended questions be posed to compel the child to think and formulate decisions? ("What do you think will happen if ...?")
- Are questions sincere? (How are you going to solve that? What should we do about that?)

## **Share the Reasoning**

- Are children encouraged to figure out solutions?
- Are nods and positive responses given as children begin to make choices and decisions?
- Are options presented when guidance is required?

## **Use Choice**

- Is choice allowed at an early age no matter how small the decision (such as sock color)?
- Is the child given two choices that the adult is willing to live with and experience?
- Are the choices given all safe ones?

## **Maintain Self-Control and Understand the Development of Self-Control**

- Are discussions held following tantrums or angry outbursts?
- Are outlets for anger provided?
- Is time-out used appropriately?
- Are alternatives and redirection used instead of threats and bribes?

## **Be Consistent**

- Are personal consequences considered before making suggestions?
- Is there a plan for following through to check on these suggested activities?
- Is there trust between the child and adult?

## **Some Ways to Deal With Endless Undesirable Behaviors**

Besides learning about child developmental stages and planning ways to prevent situations that can lead to undesirable behavior, parents and teachers may need to decide how to manage some behaviors.

## **Natural Consequences**

Many times, children learn as a result of natural consequences. For example, a child who will not eat supper during mealtime may feel hungry when he or she is not be allowed to eat again until breakfast. Or a child who forgets to put skates away each night may one day find that they have been stolen.

## **Logical Consequences**

When natural consequences are not safe or appropriate, logical consequences may be used. Children often can help set these (and are often stricter on themselves than a parent would have been). The consequences of behavior should relate somehow to the behavior. Referred to as logical consequences, the child can directly see how the behavior and the consequence relate. For example, if the child oversteps his or her boundaries when riding a bike, taking away the bike for a reasonable amount of time may be the consequences. Or if toys are not put away, a reasonable consequence may be to collect the toys for charity or at least put them in temporary storage.

## **Time-Out**

In early childhood, children are very self-centered. It is normal. Children believe the world revolves around them! Children become confused and frustrated when they must face the fact that they are not the center of the universe. They need adult guidance as they begin to find appropriate ways to vent their feelings and develop a sense of self-control.

Time-out is often used with children who have briefly lost self-control. Self-control is a developmental process. Until the young child has learned to see beyond themselves and has the ability to see things through someone else's eyes, it is difficult to change self-centered behaviors.

Most children will be 7 and older before they can begin to talk about the consequences of and plan for their own behavior. A big part of self-evaluation is social comparison. Social comparison is the act of learning from role models, imitating them, and using appropriate behaviors in a variety of settings.

Time-out can be very effective when used sparingly and appropriately. Time alone gives the child a chance to calm down. Then the child may rejoin the activity. Children who view time out as a punishment may not use the time out situation as the caregiver intends. Rather than calming down or reflecting on how he or she should behave, the child may spend time figuring out how to get even!

These questions may help you decide when to use time-out:

- Is time-out being used as a time for the child to regroup?
- Is time-out used as a retreat for the child; not the adult?
- Is time-out used out as one answer among other alternatives?
- Are children given the chance to have some control by making choices about their daily activities?

Use time-outs sparingly. When a time-out is used, do so because the child needs it and not because you are angry. Also, be sure the length of time is appropriate and is made clear to the child.

Instead of yelling "Go to the time-out area and sit there until I say to get up," try saying "I see you are having trouble keeping your feet to yourself. It hurts other children when they are kicked. You need to sit alone for 5 minutes. Then you will be able to come back to the group." Or you might say, "If you continue to play rough with the ball, you will have to sit out the rest of the game."

Think carefully about time-out as an aid in handling inappropriate or unsafe behaviors while preserving self-esteem and control for children and adults.

- Are assurances used to support the child who has lost self-control?
- Are assurances made by the adult to maintain self-control (mental counting, leaving the room)?

## Redirection

Another way to help children gain control is to redirect them to another activity. This allows the child to get away from the problem situation and yet still have something constructive to do. Redirecting children may be preferable to time-out.

Suggest an alternative activity or setting when a situation is about to get out of hand. Pose timely questions to avoid heated confrontation and conflict.

## Setting Appropriate Limits for Young Children: A Group Teaching Guide

The group leader sets the tone for the group to allow informal sharing, confidentiality, a sense of understanding and confidentiality without ridicule. Parenting is a very personal topic. Often to set the participants at ease and to smooth transitions, activities are needed. Some suggested activities are presented here as a stimulus for group leaders.

### Activity:

Ask the group participants to imagine a child with whom they have come in contact, one who they see daily or quite often. Ask them to think

of ways to characterize this child. List these terms on easel paper, or on a writing board before the group.

### Activity:

In small groups, ask parents to work together to think of all the methods they use to discipline children. Have them bring the list before the total group before beginning to outline those in the guidesheet.

### Activity:

On index cards, ask parents to list things about their child that they do not like; one characteristic per card. Take the cards and mix them up, then

have each participant draw a card and read that characteristic aloud. Use this activity to turn that characteristic around into a positive aspect; such as talking back could mean that the child will learn to question things, which may come in handy during adolescence when tempted with illegal or immoral practices; or that asking for everything in sight in a store may mean that the child has not gained a sense of self-control yet.

### Activity:

Ask participants to describe their definition of discipline. After this has been discussed, ask for their definition of

punishment. See Part 1 of this guidesheet series for further definitions.

### Activity:

Ask participants to brainstorm in small groups or as a large group about the types of parents with whom they have come in contact. Summarize characteristics. Define a "perfect" parent.

### Activity:

Discuss what you consider to be ongoing undesirable behavior. When do children's behaviors seem to be in need of "professional" counsel or parents in need of outside assistance?

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# Effective Ways To Discipline Young Children

*Working with your 2- to 5-year-old*

Disciplining children between the ages of 2 and 5 is one of a parent's most important and on-going jobs. Young children misbehave, do things for which they have no or little understanding, engage in inappropriate behavior, get into hassles with other children, attempt things they cannot do, throw temper tantrums and get into trouble. They hit, quarrel, disobey and embarrass adults. It's the parents' job to teach children how to control their behavior, how to behave in acceptable ways, how to get along with others and respect the rights of others, and how to distinguish between right and wrong.

Children's misbehavior is often the result of curiosity, growing independence and unclear rules. Because young children grow at a rapid pace, parents need to know when a child is acting his age and when he is misbehaving. For example, a 2-year-old will take a toy from another child because of his egocentric nature. He has not yet learned to share, wait his turn or ask to play with the toy. The parents' roles in discipline are guidance and supervision, not punishment.

It is discipline that allows us a chance to learn how to live in society. The long-term goal of discipline is self-discipline or self-control. Children need to become responsible for their own behavior and actions. Children have to know how to make decisions and to take care of themselves. They have to rely on themselves rather than on their parents or other adults. Children must also learn to govern their own behavior.

There are no guaranteed strategies to use with young children, especially 2-year-olds. By the time children are 3, however, they are developmentally ready to learn to control

their behavior because they want to be liked and accepted. Young children need more direct control than older children. The aim of discipline for young children is their safety, both physical and emotional. *Parents have to be the eyes and ears for their young children.* As children get older, parents can use reasoning and less direct control.

There is no one right way to discipline. Parents are best able to discipline their children by identifying the cause of the behavior and by using a variety of techniques to meet the needs of their children under different situations. Parents can also encourage responsible behavior.

## WHY CHILDREN MISBEHAVE

Parents may not always be able to figure out the cause of misbehavior. Children misbehave for a variety of reasons. They lose control most often when they are tired, bored, over-stimulated, overly excited, have to wait and when routines are changed without warning. Changes in daily routines can create problems for young children.

Some other reasons for misbehavior are:

- having parents expect too much of them
- needing to get attention or to protect their feelings and property
- trying to act grown up
- becoming ill or coming down with an illness
- feeling angry, frightened or frustrated
- being under a lot of stress or tension
- having an unclear understanding of what is "right"
- having unexpected visitors
- having poor family relationships at home
- feeling hungry or sleepy

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“Reading” a child’s behavior and knowing what triggered the behavior will help parents decide upon discipline techniques and strategies.

## STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Strategies and techniques should best fit the family values, standards and the child’s temperament. The method chosen to comfort and control a child will affect his self-esteem and teach him the concepts of parenting, love and respect. It is best to choose a method that matches the child and the situation. Different children respond differently to discipline. Even the same child reacts differently to the same situation. Different situations may require different techniques. Parents must feel comfortable with whatever method they select. However, the following methods have been proven to work well in guiding children.

**Give Choices.** Let the child make some decisions and selections. Give him simple responsibilities, such as selecting between two colors of socks, fruit juice or lemonade for lunch, stories to read at bedtime or a toy to take to bed. Giving a choice is appropriate *only* when there is a choice. It’s easy for young children to make good choices when they are given two selections. Choosing between more than two items becomes too complicated and frustrating for preschoolers.

**Have Rules.** Make a few, simple, fair rules to let children know how far they can go and what they can do. They need to know what’s “off limits” and the boundaries of their play. They also need to understand the reasons for the rules. They need rules and limits to keep them safe. Talk to children about the importance of the rules. Be firm with the rules and reinforce them often.

**Prevent Problems.** Prevention is the most effective way to manage problems. Foreseeing, forestalling and correcting problems can save a lot of discomfort. Prevent problems before they occur. This will save the child a lot of discomfort. Child-proof the home. Put valuables, medicines or breakables out of the child’s reach. Plan the child’s activities and time. This will reduce time for the child to get into mischief.

**Change a Situation.** Remove the child from a situation or change the situation a child can’t handle. For example, a 3-year-old is tempted to play with a valuable piece of art. Redirect the child to play with something else, take the child to a safer play area or remove the valuable. Keep things a child should not touch out of his reach. Structure the environment so that the child is more likely to do what is acceptable.

**Be Consistent.** Provide firm and consistent guidance. Be

consistent with requests and follow through on them.

Parents who are lenient on a child for a certain behavior one time, but then turn around and punish for the same behavior the next time confuse the child. Parents need to agree on how they will discipline their child.

**Give Attention.** Give more attention to the child when he or she is doing what is acceptable and less than when the child is behaving unacceptably. Young children need attention when they behave appropriately. Children work very hard for adult approval and a “that’s great” goes a long way. Provide opportunities for a child to express emotions and feelings. Praise the child’s effort. Let the child know you appreciate a good attitude and cooperation. Reinforce good behavior. This includes giving encouragement, approval and kind words.

**Supervise.** Young children need your constant guidance and direction. They need to have their limits defined and they need limits that protect them from danger. A child needs to know dangerous areas exist and that he is not to play there. If necessary, rope off an area if it is off limits.

**Use Time Out.** Physically remove a disruptive or out-of-control child from the group, family or activity for a few minutes so that he or she can be alone. Explain why he or she is in isolation. Do not send a child in “time out” to an area where there are toys, a television or other entertainment. A quiet corner will do.

**Fix-It-Up.** When a child has an accident, expect him to fix it up—or at least to help. For example, if he spills milk, give him a cloth to clean it up. Do not make an issue of the accident.

**Ignore.** If a child breaks a crayon, sings loudly or interrupts a conversation to get your attention, ignore it. Be sure to give attention to your child when she behaves well. Children need attention for good behavior, not misbehavior.

**Model Good Behavior.** Set a good example of things you want a child to learn, such as manners and ways of behaving and expressing feelings. Young children learn appropriate or okay behavior best from good role models. Children imitate older children and adults. It is imperative that good examples of acceptable behavior are set for young children.

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# Effective Ways to Discipline School-Age Children

- Discipline is:**
- Helping children learn to get along with family, adults and friends.
  - Teaching children to behave in an agreeable way.
  - Helping children learn to control behavior.

## Parenting Styles

The type of discipline a parent uses influences the type of person a child becomes. What type of discipline do you use? What type of person do you want your child to become?

**A parent is extremely permissive when he or she...**

Has few rules and allows the children to do as they please.

**When parents are extremely permissive...**

Children are cranky, whiny. They are very aggressive and want their way all the time.

**A parent is extremely strict when he or she...**

Expects immediate obedience, gives no explanation for demands and uses physical punishment.

**When parents are extremely strict...**

Children are timid and withdrawn and are very dependent—or they rebel and defy authority.

**A parent is moderate when he or she...**

Has rules and enforces them consistently, and is firm with kindness, warmth, and love. The parent takes the chil-

dren's ages and uniqueness into account, and tries to understand why they act the way they do.

**When parents are moderate...**

Children are responsible and cooperative. They have good self-concepts and are considerate of others. Moderation works well when disciplining children.

## Discipline Techniques

Here are some discipline techniques that are effective with children 6-12 years old.

**Ignore.** If a child breaks a crayon, sings loudly, or interrupts a conversation to get your attention, ignore it. Be sure to give attention to your children when they behave well. Children need attention for good behavior, not misbehavior.

**Be Firm.** Clearly and firmly state, or even demand, that children do what needs to be done. Speak in a tone that says that you mean what you say and that you expect the children to do as they are told. Being firm doesn't mean yelling, nagging, threatening, reasoning, or taking away privileges.

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Keep suggestions to a minimum, and always speak kindly, even when speaking firmly. Keep eye contact while talking with a child.

**Stay in Control.** Act before the situation gets out of control—before you get angry or frustrated. Respond before the children's behavior becomes unreasonable.

**Separate.** When children irritate one another, fight, squabble, hit, or kick, have them rest or play apart for a time. Being apart for a while lets each one calm down. Then you can use other ways to encourage better behavior.

**Manage Behavior.** Talk with children calmly to learn what caused a disagreement. Then talk about ways to deal with it. Come to a solution that's agreeable to both you and the children. This helps children learn to be responsible for their behavior.

**Make it Better.** When children cause trouble or hurt another child, expect them to fix it up—or at least try to help. If they break a toy, ask them to help you fix it. If they make a child cry, have them help with the soothing. When they knock over paint, give them a cloth and a pail of water to clean up the mess. If they throw toys around the room, ask them to put them away.

**Redirect.** When children get unruly, stop them, explain why you are stopping them, and suggest another activity. When they race dangerously indoors, if possible, take them outside for a game of chase. When they throw books at each other, gather

them for a story time or organize a beanbag toss

**Make Rules.** Make rules that fit your child's age. Let children help make the rules. Keep rules simple and stick to them. Make rules for homework, bedtime, chores, friends, and places they can and cannot go. Praise children when they follow the rules. Post rules where all can see, such as on the refrigerator door, on a bulletin board; or on the child's bedroom door.

**Praise.** Give more attention and praise for positive behavior and less for negative behavior. Say good things to a child for doing well in school. Give help where needed. Let the child know that you appreciate a good attitude and cooperation. Children respond positively to genuine respect and praise.

**Set an Example.** Your actions and words affect a child's behavior. Practice what you preach.

## More Information

For more information on discipline, check with your county extension center or the public library. A few books for parents are:

Dinkmeyer, Don. *Next Step: The Effective Parent*. Circle Press, MN: American Guidance Service, 1987.

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Nelson, Jane. *Positive Discipline*. New York: Bantam, 1987.

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# Positive Parenting

## Responsive Discipline: Prevention Tools

by Laurel Swanson, Extension Educator and  
Susan Hansen, Parent Facilitator/Early Childhood Educator

Stop misbehavior before it starts! As a parent you can use discipline tools to prevent a problem from happening in the first place. There are 17 prevention tools to choose from.

The tools are organized into three groups: basic, intermediate and advanced. The basic tools are a core group for you as a parent to learn first, instead of trying to learn all 17 tools at the same time. Basic tools are not more important than others. However, for many parents the basic tools may be the easiest to learn and may have the greatest impact on children. Once you know the basic tools, begin to learn the tools at the intermediate and advanced levels.

### Basic Tools

**1. Change your thinking about the misbehavior (all ages).** Know what behavior is expected for your child's age, ability, and personality and accept that behavior. Allow your child to make mistakes. Don't accept behavior that hurts others.

*Parents no longer become angry when their toddler keeps climbing out of the stroller, because they understand that's how toddlers act.*

**2. Demonstrate the desirable behavior yourself (all ages).** Show your child what you'd like him to do. Keep the demonstration simple.

*You want your child to say "please" and "thank you" when asking for things, so you ask for things using the words "please" and "thank you."*

*Each evening after dinner you pick up items lying around the house because you want your child to learn to pick up his toys at the end of the day.*

**3. Give specific instructions (all ages).** Children don't always know the rule or know what you want them to do. Tell them, but be careful not to be too controlling.

*Say "Hold my hand in the parking lot," or "Pick up your glass with both hands."*

**4. Catch your child being good (all ages).** Let your child know immediately when she's done something good. Give her affection and encouragement.

*For example, "Kristen, it was nice of you to help Meagan get her jacket on."*

**5. Show interest in what your child does (all ages).** When you think your child is about to misbehave, ask her to talk about what she is doing or what she has. This may distract her from misbehaving.

*Your child is about to throw her crayons on the floor. You ask "What are you going to color?" or say "Let's draw a picture together."*

**6. Provide real affection (all ages).** Express unconditional positive feelings for your child.

*Give a hug when your child is happy or sad. Let him know you love him unconditionally.*

**7. Enjoy each other's company (all ages).** Become a partner in your child's activities. Respond to your child's interests and avoid taking over. Participate in your child's play as an equal.

*Father and daughter build with blocks together. Or the family enjoys going to the park or on a picnic.*

## Intermediate Tools

Allow minor misbehavior (*all ages*). Don't respond to misbehavior if you have a more important goal you want to reach. Continue to watch the behavior in case it becomes troubling to others. Confront the misbehavior when the competing goal becomes less important.

*Allison is playing with her cousins and wants to go outside. It is cold outside so her father insists she put her jacket on and zip it up. Allison has her good shoes on and knows that she is not supposed to wear them outside. She keeps refusing to let dad zip her jacket because he might see her shoes and make her change them. Because the jacket is more important, Dad ignores the shoes and she lets him zip her jacket.*

**9. Prepare the child for a difficulty (4-18 years).** When your child is faced with a problem that can't be changed or avoided, give him information to help him handle the situation.

*A 4-year-old is going shopping to help pick out a toy for his cousin's birthday. Before leaving, mother tells her child that he can't get a toy for himself. They will only buy one toy for his cousin. She makes sure he understands the purpose of the trip before they leave.*

**10. Change the surroundings (all ages).** Your child is sometimes led into misbehaving when she can't resist the temptation to explore something that looks interesting. Remove taboo objects or change the environment to prevent the problem or misbehavior.

*Two-year-old Jenny is always climbing up the step stool in the kitchen. Mother folds the step stool and stores it in a nearby closet.*

**11. Change the activity (2-11 years).** When your child is about to misbehave because he is tired or bored, find another interesting, acceptable activity.

*When she notices her toddler becoming frustrated and irritable, mother prepares a warm bath and lets the child play in the tub.*

*Three-year-old Tommy will not stay in his car seat because he is bored. Dad gives him his tape player and tape story so he has something to do.*

**12. Physically redirect the child (2-4 years).** Physically steer your child away from a possible problem to a place where he can do a more acceptable activity. Remember you need space available to redirect a child to another activity.

*Mother sees her toddler about to empty a drawer of pens and pencils. She picks him up and gives him a bucket full of blocks he can empty.*

**13. Provide reassuring routines (2-16 years).** Your child may sometimes misbehave because of stressful changes in her life. When routines are upset, be sure your child has familiar experiences.

*Every morning breakfast is eaten after Ken is dressed for the day.*

*Each evening after Mary is tucked in bed she listens to her tape recorder.*

## Advanced Tools

**14. Tell stories to make a point (all ages).** Read or tell stories to your children to help them understand why something is important.

*You read "The Little Engine That Could" to your child who is frustrated about not being able to do something.*

**15. Give progress reports (5-18 years).** When your child takes steps toward achieving a goal, talk with her and recognize her for her progress.

*Say to an 8-year-old: "Michelle, I am proud of you. With school, homework, and playing with your friends you still find time to practice the piano every day. I'm glad to see music is important to you."*

**16. Move physically closer (all ages).** Move near your child when he may lose self-control and misbehave. Your being nearby, in a warm and friendly way, may reduce his temptation to misbehave.

*Your toddler bites when other children take toys from him. You notice a child has just taken a toy from him so you move to your toddler and help him find another toy.*

**17. Provide transitions (3-8 years).** When young children have to change from a busy to a quiet activity, prepare them for the change.

*After lunch mother reads Emily a story to quiet her down and get her ready for her nap.*

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Smith, Charles A., Ph.D. February, 1993. *Responsive Discipline Effective Tools For Parents*, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS.

