

Effective Discipline

Discipline is a positive approach to teaching your child right from wrong and how to respect others in a secure, loving environment. Young children live very much in the moment. They can be impulsive and at times demanding. They do not always think of how their decisions will affect others and do not realize the consequences of their behaviors. We can guide our children's behaviors and help them to make appropriate choices through **effective discipline**.

Guidelines to **Effective Discipline**:

- **Be Consistent!** It is confusing to children when you do not follow through with what you say. When you give a direction or need your child to do something, state it simply only once or twice. Be clear, firm but loving.
- **Stay Calm!** Show your child how to stay in control by example. Never get into verbal battles or arguments. They usually just make your child argue more.
- **Ignore Temper Tantrums!** Do not talk to your child while he or she is having a temper tantrum. When your child is back in control, that is the time to talk about what your child did and how your child can make the right choice next time. Always make sure your child cannot get hurt or cannot hurt someone or something while having a temper tantrum.
- **Attention Getting Behaviors!** Decide what negative behaviors can be ignored because they are just for attention!
- **Avoid Threats and Bribes!** They may get your child to do what you want that moment but they do not help to change behavior over a period of time.
- **Establish House Rules!** Decide on what behaviors need to be changed. You cannot change all misbehaviors at one time. Pick the most important ones. Let your child help you to decide on two or three family rules and post them on your refrigerator.
- **Natural Consequences for Misbehavior!** Make the punishment match the crime. For example: If your child is being disruptive at the table, your child should be removed.
- **Time Out!** For the most challenging behaviors, you may want to remove your child from the situation to a designated chair or step for a short period of time. You can set a timer for one minute for each year of age (3 minutes for a 3 year old and 4 minutes for a 4 year old). Do not talk with your child while in time out. You may discuss what happened after time out is over and your child is calm. Be consistent!
- **Give Praise and Rewards!** Tell your child exactly what pleased you! Catch your child making the right choices and being good!

Just remember growing up and making the right choices is always a work in progress! You are important in helping guide your child through **effective discipline!**