

TIPS FOR PARENTS

DISCIPLINE DOESN'T HAVE TO HURT

The word discipline comes from “disciple,” which means to teach. However, many parents take the word discipline to mean punishment. You as a parent should see the value of discipline as a means of teaching your child to become a better person. One of the most important aspects of teaching your child is to show respect for your child’s views and to let your child have some say in decisions that concern him.

Here are some guidelines to help you teach your child to respect you and household rules:

1. **Love**. Your child needs lots of love and approval. Your child’s desire to please you is one of the most important tools of effective discipline so praise and hug your child often.
2. **Communicate With Respect**. As part of your love for your child, learn to take time to listen and consider your child’s point of view. If you respect your child, he will be more willing to listen to what you have to say.
3. **Acknowledge Good Behavior**. Praise your child for the many good things he does each day. It’s much easier to encourage acceptable behavior than to have to punish a child who misbehaves.
4. **Do It Yourself**. Remarks like “Wait until your father gets home” tell your child that you can’t punish him. It’s better to deal with the misbehavior when it occurs.
5. **Prevent trouble Before It Happens**. Childproofing your house can prevent a great deal of frustration for both parents and child. For small children, place valuable objects out of reach. Make sure that older children know which items are off-limits to them without parental supervision.
6. **Set Clear Limits**. Telling your child in advance what is expected of him and what the rules are also helps to prevent trouble before it happens. Be prepared to repeat the rules several times before your child learns them.
7. **Be Consistent**. Whatever style of discipline you choose, use it in every situation, even in public or when you have guests visiting. Consistency is the key to effective consequences.
8. **Make Sure The Punishment Fits**. Punishment is most effective when it is directly related to the child’s misbehavior. Your child will learn by experiencing the logical consequences of his actions. For example: “If you don’t come home on time today, you can’t play after school tomorrow.” This will also help your child learn to consider the consequences before he breaks the rules.
9. **Be Firm and Consistent**. Don’t say you will do something unless you are prepared to carry it through. When you give in to a nagging or crying child, the child will know he can use this tactic to get his own way.
10. **Be Prepared**. Discuss disciplinary methods with your spouse, babysitter and other child caregivers ahead of time. It’s important that you support each other when disciplining your child. If you disagree on discipline, talk about it in private. Try not to “gang up” on your child; when one parent starts to discipline, the other should not interfere.
11. **Check Your Emotional Pulse**. Before you discipline a child who has done something to anger you, frustrate you or push you to your limit, take a time out. Give yourself and your child a short period of time to calm down. Then, immediately address the situation.