

BUILDING CAPABLE KIDS - DISCIPLINE

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

When a child misbehaves there are two things you must deal with.. their feelings and their actions. Actions are often called behavior. Many times, we do not think about why the child acts as the child does. We react only to what the child has done. To understand children's behavior, you must be able to distinguish between the two.

It takes time and experience for young children to learn which behavior is acceptable to others. As children mature, they develop some control over their emotions. Improved language skills also make it easier for children to communicate their needs and feelings in acceptable ways.

Behavior's Message

A child is sending you and those around the child a message through their behavior. You must be alert to understand how the child feels and why. A child's behavior may be a clue for you that:

The child needs some limits so that they know what they can do.

The child needs clear explanations of what to do.

The child needs some help and encouragement.

The child needs someone to pay attention to what they say and do.

The child needs consistency so that they know what to expect and that you mean what you say.



DISCIPLINE

These needs are the basics of good guidance. If a child has proper guidance from their family, and other caregivers, the child will eventually learn how to act. The child will also become a more independent and responsible person. Good guidance helps a child learn to manage their feelings and think for themselves.

Why Discipline?

Discipline is the setting of rules and limits to help children know how to act and what they can do. Discipline helps children to develop self-control and to become more responsible for their own actions. A key to effective discipline is consistency. Children feel more secure and are less confused if they know what to expect. Families need to set rules and stick with them!

Effective discipline helps the child feel good about himself. Discipline based on love and respect for the child's ideas and feelings helps the child feel good about himself. When children are respected and encouraged by others, they develop confidence and become more self-reliant.

To be effective, discipline must fit the child's needs and abilities. Children are individuals; no two children are exactly alike. To provide effective discipline, you must know what each child understands and can do.

Some people use punishment to control children's behavior. Punishment may be physical, such as spanking or slapping a child when the child does not mind you. Threatening or shaming a child to control their actions is also punishment.

Punishment is usually not very effective because it only stops the misbehavior. It does not change the child's feelings and does not show the child how to act. Many times the child does not even understand why the child is being punished.

You Can:

You can help young children learn to behave when you practice these pointers:

Set a good example of how to behave for the child to follow.

Give positive directions so the child will know what to do.

Give the child simple reasons for the behavior you want them to learn.

Be consistent in what you ask the child to do so they can learn what you expect.

Remember, punishment does not help a child to know what the child should do, and it cannot stop a child's feelings.

Praise the child for their accomplishments. Let the child know that you are pleased with their behavior.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON DISCIPLINE

Discipline is not controlling children but teaching children to control themselves.

Offer praise for accomplishments--do not use it indiscriminately, or untruthfully.

Never use techniques which destroy the child's self-image.

Teach children by example, whenever possible.

Humor often eases a tense situation.

Use positive directions with simple words.

Refrain from threats or promises unless you intend to carry them out.

Tensions must be released in a constructive manner. Provide means for releasing them.

Choices are important in learning self-discipline, but the choices must be within the realm of safety and common sense.

Help the child to talk out their emotions.

Ignore situations where children are able to work things out for themselves.

Limits are important and children really want and need them.

Don't let your own emotions affect your reactions to your children.

Routines are essential and provide a sense of security to children.

Encourage the child to accept others as individuals.

Never make the child feel that you love the child less for misbehavior, only that you disapprove of their actions.

Sincerely,

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