

what is positive discipline?

Discipline means to teach or to develop by instruction. Discipline is often confused with punishment. Punishment does not teach, but rather focuses on negative behavior and responds to it with a negative result. Positive discipline has the goal of changing or preventing negative behavior. Positive discipline encourages development of life skills so children can grow to be socially and emotionally sound individuals, get along with others, and feel good about themselves. Positive discipline strategies not only include interventions to be used with children when they misbehave, but also techniques to create a respectful, fair, consistent program.

Learning proper behavior takes practice. Children are taught to tie their shoes, to read, to ride a bike; and they also need to be taught how to behave. Children learn by watching the behavior of their parents, teachers and peers, as well as by testing their own behaviors. Each behavioral episode is a chance to teach a child what is expected in that particular situation.

each experience is
an opportunity to
teach
behavior



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PUBLICATIONS ON POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Don't Take It Out On Your Kids, A Parent's and Teacher's Guide to Positive Discipline, Katharine C. Kersey, Ed. D., Acropolis Books Ltd., Washington, DC.

Positive Behavioral Support, Including People with Difficult Behavior in the Community, Lynn Kern Keogel, Ph. D., Robert L. Keogel, Ph. D., Glen Dunlap, Ph. D., Paul H Brooke's Publishing Company.

Win the Whining War and Other Skirmishes, A Family Peace Plan, Cynthia Whitman, MSW, Perspective Publishing, Los Angeles, California.

How to Handle a Hard-To-Handle Kid, A Parent's Guide to Understanding and Changing Problem Behaviors, C. Drew Edwards, Ph. D., Free Spirit Publishing Company.

Kids Are Worth It! Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline, Barbara Coloroso, Avon Books, New York, New York.

Battles, Hassles, Tantrums and Tears: Strategies for Coping with Conflict and Making Peace at Home, Susan Beckman and Jeanne Holmes, The Hearst Corporation, New York, New York.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Mental Health Association (NMHA)

2000 N. Beauregard Street, 6th Floor, Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1748
Toll free: 800.969.6642

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
csefel.vanderbilt.edu



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USING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

A guide for child care providers

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key elements

The key element when using positive discipline techniques is to show respect in all cases. Children watch adults' behavior more than they listen to their words. Therefore, children who are shown respect will learn to give it in return. Caregivers should consider using three guidelines in their child care programs:

- respect yourself,
- respect others,
- respect your surroundings.

In addition, it is important to separate your response to inappropriate behavior from your response to the child. Make sure to clearly tell the child that he or she is liked, but not the behavior, and ask that the behavior be changed.

why do children misbehave?

It is important to understand why a child is misbehaving. The origin of the behavior, if identified, can help the caregiver to teach the child a more appropriate behavior. In some cases, just meeting the child's basic needs, such as offering food and/or a chance to rest can change a child's behavior. Sometimes the child's misbehavior is more complex, such as trying to get attention or testing limits, and requires more time and attention from the caregiver.

positive discipline techniques

Between the ages of birth and 5 years, there are many different stages of development. Positive discipline should complement the child's current developmental stage. Child care providers can use various positive discipline approaches to shape their programs. These include techniques to modify inappropriate behaviors and offer children rewards in an effective, positive way.

approaches for child care programs

Set children up for success. Develop routines, schedules and planned activities with a back-up so children are involved in constructive activities and interacting positively. Establish simple, clear, consistent rules. Simplicity and consistency are key elements to preschool children learning appropriate behavior. Offer limited choices. Offering a few choices is a good way to teach decision-making, while allowing children input into their day.

approaches for changing behavior

IGNORE NEGATIVE ATTENTION-SEEKING BEHAVIORS. When you address negative attention-seeking behaviors, you are rewarding these behaviors, and they will only continue.

REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR. Give lots of attention to children who are behaving in ways that are appropriate.

REDIRECT. Create another activity or event to draw a child's attention away from inappropriate behavior.

SHOW APPROPRIATE WAYS OF SEEKING ATTENTION. Biting and hitting often indicate a need to communicate. Demonstrate appropriate ways to communicate and get attention, like a gentle tap on the arm.

OFFER ALTERNATIVES TO UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIORS. Model appropriate behaviors such as negotiating for a toy instead of grabbing it.

REWARD CHILDREN FOR ACHIEVING. When a young child has several triumphs at changing a behavior, take a moment to tell the child that you noticed the change. When a young child makes an effort to do the right thing, recognize the effort with a kind word, a hug, or a sticker.



young children need to know they are special

Find ways to reward children
just for being themselves.



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