

To discipline means to teach!



What discipline is:

Discipline is a *strong effective way to teach...*

- Positive behaviors
- Positive ways to express feelings
- Positive ways to play
- Family values
- Safety for the child, other people and things.

What discipline is not:

Discipline is *not punishment*. Punishment may:

- Make young children feel unloved
- Make them feel they are bad
- Focus on what is wrong without teaching what is right.

What's important to remember:

- **Your toddler is beginning to find out that she is her own person.** She may say, "No!" and "Me do it!"
- **Your toddler has a memory, but it is very short.**

He needs to repeat something over and over before it stays in his memory. He is not trying to be bad when he plays with the TV buttons after you've told him to stop. He just doesn't remember the rule yet!

- **Toddlers act without thinking.** If they see something to climb, they'll climb it... without thinking how to get down.

- **Toddlers can't plan ahead.** They can't wait. They want things NOW! This doesn't mean your toddler is greedy, selfish or bad. It's just a normal part of growing up.

Here's the secret to teaching a toddler:

- **Help the toddler want to do what you want him to do!** For example say, "I'll bet you're not strong enough to carry your plate to the sink."
- **Teaching a toddler with love and respect will earn you two rewards.** Right now, you will have more fun and fewer messes. In the future, your child will see you as loving and caring and will want to please you.

Smart discipline

- **Make your house safe for your toddler.** She is curious and will taste and touch everything she sees. Move things out of reach if they are dangerous or can be broken. That way you won't have to fuss or say, "No!"
- **Distract your child from something you don't want him to do.** For example, if he starts to chew on a crayon, give him a toy or cracker instead.
- **Praise your toddler again and again for doing something right.** For example, "You are growing up. You put the jello in your mouth instead of your hair."
- **Use DO rules so your toddler can learn what to do instead of what not to do.** For example, "Use your inside voice" instead of "Don't yell in the house."
- **Set routines for meals, bedtime, bath time.** Toddlers behave better when they know what to expect.
- **Make sure your correction fits the situation.** For example, if your child draws on the wall, take away her crayons for a while – and help her clean up the wall.

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Time Out!



It's been around since dunce caps and corners. With a modern twist, Time Out can be a valuable discipline tool.

As we go about the business of teaching our children proper behavior, there are times when emotions threaten to get out of control. When this happens, it's wise to separate yourself from your child so that you can both cool off. *Time Out* can be used as an effective, positive tool. There are three different ways to use *Time Out*, each having a different purpose.

1. To give the child the time and space to cool off and calm down.

The key here is in the attitude of the parent. In advance, let your child know that when her behavior is out of control she'll be asked to go to her room. Tell her that when she is calm and under control she may join the family. How she chooses to use the time is her business, as long as it's respectful of people and property. Screaming or pounding the door is not acceptable, reading a book or other activities is fine. This is a valuable life skill that will prevent your child from "*flying off the handle*" and saying and doing things she might regret later. Never drag a child to his *Time Out*. This

robs you of the upper hand and makes you look foolish. Let him know in advance that when asked to remove himself he needs to do so immediately. If he does not, he'll be choosing to give up a privilege [one you have specified in advance], in addition to *Time Out*.

2. To give a parent the time and space to cool off and calm down

There are times when we get so angry at our children that we want to scream, hit or ground them for life! This is the time to use a four-letter-word: EXIT. Make a brief statement, "*I'm so angry, I need a minute to think.*" Then go to your room or send the child to his room so that you can calm down and regroup. This will help you get yourself under control, and it provides good modeling for your children.

3. As a method for stopping a specific misbehavior

This can be an excellent way to put an immediate stop to a child's action. It brings a strong message, "*This behavior is unacceptable and it will stop now.*" There are several keys:

- **Be quick.** Catch your child in the act. Delayed reactions dilute the effect.
- **Use selectively.** Use for hitting, talking back, and whining or other specific problems. Don't over-use.
- **Keep calm.** Your anger only adds fuel to the fire and changes the focus from the behavior of the child to your anger. This prevents you from being in control.
- **Stick with it.** Once you say "*Time Out*" don't back down or be talked out of it. If you decide to use *Time Out* to control hitting, for example, use it every time your child hits, even if he spends most of the day in *Time Out*! Eventually, he'll decide that it's more fun to play without hitting than to sit alone in his room.

Time Out is one more effective discipline tool for parents. When used with other positive parenting methods, it helps you feel good about the job you are doing with your kids.

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of "Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting."

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