

Discipline: it doesn't have to mean bad



Discipline: Instruction or Punishment?

Ever wonder why some parents never seem to have problems with their children's behavior? Do they spare the rod and indulge the child? Or use the rod to keep their kids in line?

Most likely, it's not a matter of spoiling or punishing. It's just that these parents realize that discipline in their homes is the daily practice of pre-determined rules...rules they've agreed on with their children...rules that encourage the development of responsible behavior in the family, the school, and the community.

Teachers know that repeated physical punishment is ineffective in maintaining discipline. So are unjustified rewards. The solution? Think positively. Let's praise good behavior. Let's help correct misbehavior. Let's set the pattern for **self-discipline** ...the key to your child's success.

Is your child misbehaving?

You can improve your children's behavior. Here's how:

- Share the problems that cause your children distress. Ask, and then really *listen* to them.



- Encourage your children's respect for authority.
- Create an atmosphere of trust — let them know they can turn to you.
- Be firm but not dominating; children should be able to express their views.

- Examine your own attitudes toward authority

and discipline. Are they clear? Firm? Consistent? Most important, are they fair?

- Watch for signs that your child is "turned off" — to you, to school, to valuable friends.
- Help your child understand the need for personal precautions — to avoid danger spots in school, with friends.
- Allow your children to experience the results of their actions...to take responsibility for what they say and do.
- If your child gets into trouble in school, get all the facts before reacting — and get the teacher's point of view. If necessary, visit the school and talk to the teacher.
- Remember that children do not feel comfortable with more responsibility than they can handle and often wish their parents would take over. *The responsibility of discipline starts with us!*

Discipline + love = growing together

Discipline starts with communication, telling your children what you need, listening to their needs, developing fair rules — together.

- Keep cool. Don't lose your temper. Children need to know that you're in control.
- Don't give your children a mixed message by behaving in one manner and asking them to behave in another.

— More on back —



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- Be strict but consistent. Children like the security of strong support.
- Be a parent. Don't try to dress, act or talk like another child.
- Be a guide. Let them know about your beliefs and encourage theirs.
- Impress on children the importance of not repeating wrong behavior. Stealing, lying, cheating, being cruel, getting tough – all hurt other people in ways we would never want to be hurt ourselves.
- Punish no more than the misbehavior warrants – and always do it with love, not anger.
- Be honest. Be truthful and straight. Be generous with sincere praise. Even criticism is more easily accepted when it's sprinkled with praise.
- Have fun together. When parents and children share fun time, few serious discipline problems arise.



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Discipline should mean constructive guidance ...positive guidelines to help your child now and later. That's not an easy job. You will, at times, lose your temper, do things you wish

you hadn't, but if those times are few and only temporary setbacks, you will still accomplish a great deal.

If a child misbehaves in school, it may be a carry-over from something that happened at home...just as a blowup at home may have started in the classroom. That's why everyone on the school staff wants to keep in touch with you about school programs, school policies – and especially your child.

Get the facts about your child's school: the good things and the trouble spots. What's a fact? What's a rumor? Find out at school.

Remember:

- The old "do it or else" just doesn't work with today's children, especially older children.
- Create an atmosphere of mutual respect ...a sense of give and take.
- Let your children learn the satisfaction that comes from their own sense of contribution and participation.

Your caring makes a teacher's caring mean so much more. Caring is more than a matter of love and dedication. Your children's teachers have plenty of both. But teacher's caring alone is not enough. Your children should know you care too.

You should be involved, interested and concerned. Then and only then can your children get the most out of the caring their teachers give them.



*Teachers and parents:
The more we work together,
The more we help our children!*

For more information, visit the "Parenting" page of the JCEA website: www.jcea-cea.org.