

# FAMILY TIMES

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## Discipline: Help your children develop feelings of self-esteem

One of the major tasks of parenthood is disciplining children. Discipline does not mean harsh rules or spanking; it means creating guidelines. Children develop feelings of self-esteem, competence, independence, cooperation and responsibility when they grow up with guidelines. Two effective ways to discipline children and create sensible guidelines are through rewards and punishment.

### What are rewards?

A reward is a pleasant consequence for behaving in an appropriate or desirable way. The purpose of rewards is to reinforce good behavior. Rewards help children learn right from wrong.

### How to reward children's behavior

- Praise. Use Praise for Being (I love you; You're a great daughter) and Praise for Doing (What a great job washing the clothes; Good effort in tying your shoes) two to three times each day with each child.
- Nurturing touch. A gentle hug is an example of nurturing touch and is a nice way to let children know you value them. Use nurturing touch with praise for a powerful combination.
- Privileges. A privilege can be extra TV time, getting to stay up past bedtime, getting a few extra stories read at night or other activities your children enjoy.

### What is punishment?

Punishment is a penalty for purposefully doing something inappropriate. The purpose of punishment is to reduce the likelihood that inappropriate behavior will happen again, not to hurt children. Spanking, slapping, hitting and punching physically hurt children, but are not effective in changing their behavior.

### How to punish children's behavior

- Loss of privilege. A privilege is a right granted by the parent, such as watching TV, playing with a toy or riding a bike. If a child misuses the object or privilege, she loses it for a short time. Examples of misuse are throwing a toy or riding a bike into the street.
- Being grounded. When a child leaves the yard without permission, an appropriate punishment is being grounded to the house. The child must know that it wasn't appropriate to leave the yard. If the child does not understand the behavior was inappropriate, grounding will not work as a punishment.



- Parental disappointment. Parental disappointment is a simple statement that expresses your disappointment in the child's behavior. "I am disappointed that you chose to hit your brother. The next time you're upset, tell your brother not to take your bike instead of hitting him."
- Restitution. Restitution means that there is a "payback" for a specific misbehavior. The goal of restitution is to right the wrong. If children choose to color on the walls, the payback is cleaning the wall. If stealing occurs, the child should repay stolen money.
- Time-out. Time-out is a temporary isolation of the child from others because he chose to act inappropriately. Time-out is not solitary confinement in a dark room. It is not a threat of the loss of a parent's love or protection. It is a technique that lets children know that when they misbehave, they have to be by themselves for a while. Time-out is for children 3 and older and should only last one minute per year of the child's age. For example, a 4-year-old would have a four-minute time-out.

## The Ten Rules of Discipline

### ✓ Rule 1

Children do what they see others do. Set the example of how you want your kids to behave. If you want your children to say "please," then say it to them.

### ✓ Rule 2

What you pay attention to is what you get more of. Try to catch your children behaving instead of misbehaving.

### ✓ Rule 3

Punishments only work effectively when used along with rewards to reinforce appropriate behavior.

### ✓ Rule 4

Punishments are never used to abuse, injure, cause harm or threaten harm to children.

### ✓ Rule 5

Time-out will only work when "time-in" is quality time. If time-in is not quality time, the child is already emotionally in time-out.

### ✓ Rule 6

Time-out should be used sparingly with young children. Other forms of punishment are more appropriate for pre-teens and adolescents.

### ✓ Rule 7

The punishment must fit the crime. It must also be reasonable, respectful and related.

### ✓ Rule 8

Effective punishment is meaningful and quick. Punishments that last for long periods don't provide motivation or the opportunity to do better.

### ✓ Rule 9

If you misuse or abuse it, you lose it for a while. Then, you get another chance to use it. If children never get another chance, how are they going to learn?

### ✓ Rule 10

If you break it, you pay for it. If you mess it up, you clean it up. Restitution teaches children there are consequences for inappropriate behavior.

## Family activity: Playing board games



Discipline means creating guidelines for children. The word "discipline" comes from the Latin word *disciplina*, which means "instruction." Parents can instruct children through fun activities such as playing games.

With your children, choose a board game

that no one has played before. After a game is selected, have your children take turns reading the rules for the game. Be sure the children understand the basic rules before play begins. Keep the rules handy just in case. Offer your kids the opportunity to take turns assisting throughout the game by moving tokens, being the official rule reader, or perhaps being the banker. Give the children plenty of opportunities to succeed during the game.

Sometimes children can become emotional while playing board games. Laughter and even tension may be present during play. Children may have difficulty controlling frustration if they fall behind or lose. If this is the case, remind them of the rules of the game. If their behavior persists, gently tell the children that the game will be put away for a while until everyone can play without yelling, fighting or getting mad.

Even when playing with their children, parents have an opportunity to teach life lessons. Playing games provides parents with a chance to teach their kids about fair play, good sportsmanship and how to win or lose gracefully. Through play, children can learn to be cooperative, respectful and caring.

## Redirect young children to achieve healthy discipline

Infants and toddlers should not be punished. That's because they cannot distinguish between bad, safe and interesting! However, there are times when a child's behavior is inappropriate because it could injure the child or damage something valuable in the home.

Redirection is a disciplinary technique that helps kids learn appropriate behavior but still maintain their sense of exploration and discovery. Parents can use redirection to prevent personal injury, promote desirable behavior, learning and exploration, and reduce negative interactions between their children and themselves.

The two types of redirection are verbal and physical. Verbal redirection tells children what is and is not acceptable. Physical redirection removes children from dangerous activities or locations. Verbal and physical redirection work best when used together.

When used appropriately, verbal redirection is a way to express a command or request. Bend down to eye level with the child. Be stern and use a serious face. You want the child to understand that you are not pleased, but you should not yell or make threats. You want to direct the child's attention and behavior to more acceptable activities.

Appropriate: "Chairs are for sitting. No standing, please."

Inappropriate: "No standing on the chair! You'll fall and break your neck."

When correctly using physical redirection, parents should touch their child in a nurturing manner to move or direct them. Preschool children are unable to make a connection between harsh physical touch administered by a parent and the danger inherent in an object they want to touch. They do not yet comprehend the concept of danger. They only know that Mom or Dad is unhappy, and that they feel pain and fear from harsh physical punishment.



Appropriate: Physically redirecting a child away from an electric socket to a safe toy. It may even mean going into a different room.

Inappropriate: Physically jerking a child away from an electric socket and possibly spanking him.

The most important thing to remember with any disciplinary technique is to be consistent. If you are inconsistent in your redirection, the child will also be inconsistent in his behavior.

## 4-H: Discipline and the volunteer leader

The 4-H program is composed of paid staff and volunteer leaders and youth ages 5 to 19. Adults in 4-H guide youth and help them learn life skills. Have you ever wondered, "What kind of youth leader would I be?" or "What type of leader would work well with my child?"

Working with youth means using discipline to ensure physical and emotional safety as well as providing limits. There are several basic ways people use discipline. Certain styles are unacceptable in 4-H, and some are more suited to different age groups. As you read the styles below, think about your own style. Perhaps you are the ideal 4-H volunteer. What type of leader would your child best respond to?

**Rejecting/Neglecting:** Leaders with this style use very little structure, and show very little warmth toward members. There are few 4-H leaders that fall in this category. Volunteers are generally caring people who provide a structured club for youth members.

**Authoritarian:** Leaders with this style use plenty of structure but show very little warmth toward members. Again, this style is not common in 4-H. However, the authoritarian style is more suited to 4-H than the rejecting/neglecting, because the leaders will provide

for youth's physical safety and make sure everyone follows through on what needs to be done.

**Permissive:** Leaders with this style are warm and supportive but set few limits. Permissive volunteers work best with older 4-H members who need encouragement but can work with less guidance. Permissive volunteers can pair up with authoritarian volunteers to provide a more balanced club environment.

**Democratic/Balanced:** Leaders with this style give lots of warmth and support and provide reasonable limits. This is generally the type of volunteer we have in 4-H. Democratic leaders encourage members and lead by example. This style is especially important with Cloverbuds, who are 5 to 8 years old and need both limits and loving attention.

Well, did you see some of yourself in these styles? Did you see someone you would like as your child's leader? For more information on how you and your child can become involved in 4-H, please contact your local county Extension office.

## Build your own self-discipline when using credit cards



When credit cards are used wisely, they can be useful financial tools. But if used carelessly, credit cards can cause serious financial problems.

Advantages of credit cards include:

- Buying goods at a temporary sale price
- Convenience and safety (no need to carry large amounts of cash)
- Buying items you need but can't afford to pay for immediately

Disadvantages to using credit cards include:

- Buying more than you need because it's so simple to say "charge it"
- Shopping where you have credit instead of comparison shopping for the best price
- Forming a habit of using credit cards
- Paying 20 percent or more for an item through service charges

Many families use credit to make ends meet, then find it hard to make all the monthly payments. Keep track of what you charge to eliminate end-of-the-month surprises. If you have trouble meeting your monthly obligations, cut back on using credit. Pay cash instead. If you have a hard time avoiding impulse buying, leave the credit cards at home. You may need even to close some accounts and cut up your cards.

Finding ways to reduce spending to pay off credit card debt is difficult and requires self-discipline. Try to include everyone in the family in the effort: eating out less, buying cheaper jeans, waiting to buy a CD. The more that family members work together, the more likely you will succeed.

## Stepfamilies and Discipline

Being a stepparent can be both rewarding and challenging. One of the rewards is a positive relationship between adults and children.

In the beginning, stepparents are better off leaving the role of primary disciplinarian to the biological parent. Stepparents need to develop a relationship with stepchildren before taking on disciplinary duties. In the meantime, stepparents should support the biological parent in his or her discipline.

Children in stepfamilies often have to cope with two sets of adults, two homes, and two ways of doing things. One way to decrease stress is to set family rules. In an ideal world, both households would have similar rules. However, you cannot control what goes on in someone else's household. What you can do is make the rules in your household clear and consistent. This helps children develop self-worth, independence and responsibility.

If children are older, a stepparent may never take on the role of a parent. Instead, they may become friends, mentors or confidants. Reassure children that you're not trying to replace the other parent, and that you can work together to define a meaningful relationship.

## An alternate viewpoint: Sparing the rod does not spoil the child

Many parents believe that they have to spank their children to teach them right from wrong, but spanking a child can have many negative consequences.

Perhaps the most important reason parents should not spank children is that spanking communicates to children that not only what they did was wrong, but that they themselves are wrong, that they're a bad person. Hitting a child does not teach them the right thing to do. It only teaches children what is not acceptable.

Children who are spanked might do what their parents want them to do—but only to avoid being hit. They have not learned right from wrong. These children often disobey if they think they can get away with it, or if their parents are not around.

Spanking children can damage the parent-child relationship. Spanked kids feel angry toward their parents, and may begin to fear them. When fear takes over the parent-child relationship, a love-hate feeling develops. Children love their parents for what they provide, but hate them for the price they must pay for closeness.

Spankings given out of love can distort the definition of a close relationship. Children who are spanked experience closeness as something that can bring about pain. Many adults who have difficulty getting close to others can trace that back to childhood's double message of "I love you, and I can hurt you."

Spanking can also lead to childhood depression. No one likes to be in a negative environment. Children have no power to escape a bad situation, and this can result in feelings of helplessness and depression.

Respect is important to parents, and many parents spank to get respect from their children. However, using violence to get respect is disrespectful. Spanking teaches children that hitting others is OK if the other person is doing something wrong and won't stop.

The other problem with this philosophy is that children will grow up and hit back. Research shows that children who are spanked are more aggressive than children who were not spanked. Parents who spanked are often surprised when their angry teenagers hit them. But, spankings teach children to accept violence and sometimes rely on it to get what they want.

The greatest limitation of spanking has to do with the negative impact it has on a child's psychological development. The more frequently that spankings occur, and the greater the severity, the greater the negative impact. Research has proven that nonviolent discipline such as time out is more effective than spanking. Plus, spanking increases the likelihood of problems later in life such as delinquency, domestic violence, and depression. Guidance, not violence, is the best choice.

## When you take away food to punish, you take away trust



What's the difference between punishment and discipline? Punishment is seldom directly related to misbehavior and includes an action that produces discomfort or pain. In contrast, discipline teaches the child acceptable behavior. When punishment is linked with food, a dangerous combination is created. A child depends on regular meals to know that she will be fed and taken care of by adults. When parents take away food from the child as a form of punishment, she begins to lose trust in her parents.

Withholding food or water from a child does not teach the child how to act properly. On the contrary, if a child is sent to bed without dinner, he may focus on being hungry and not even think about the wrongdoing. Discipline, however, allows the child to experience the consequences of his own behavior. Excusing a child from the table because he is throwing food teaches logical consequences: Food is not to be thrown and, if it is, the child may not eat with the rest of the family but must eat alone.

Just as food nourishes the body, good training and teaching nourishes the mind. When parents give a child consistent limits enforced by kind firmness, the child will learn appropriate behaviors. Plan to use mealtime as a time to build healthy family relationships.

## Couples' Corner



### How to handle parenting differences

Even well-adjusted, happy couples disagree from time to time. Couples can differ on issues such as how to handle money or how much time to spend with in-laws. Some of the most intense arguments start when parents disagree over how to discipline their children. The fact that couples disagree on parenting issues is expected. If mom was raised one way and dad was raised another, they will expect different things from their children. Conflict about parenting happens, but how couples deal with the conflict will determine how it affects their relationship. Couples who disagree can get their point across but still show respect to the other person.

One way to disagree on parenting issues but still have a good relationship is to focus on solving the problem at hand instead of getting caught up in who is right and who is wrong.

Couples who focus on solving a problem resolve an issue without hurting one another's feelings. For example, setting a bedtime for children can be difficult when the child constantly gets out of bed or asks for just one more drink of water. One partner might want to let the child go to sleep anytime because that's how he/she was raised. The other partner might want to develop a soothing nighttime routine that would signal to the child that it's time to go to bed. The couple can focus on what technique might best solve the problem of the child getting enough sleep to be well rested and ready for school the next day. By using this approach, couples can resolve the disagreement without disrespecting one another.

## Asthma: Simple ways to help your children breathe easier

Asthma is the most serious chronic disease of childhood. Wheezing, shortness of breath and coughing are its symptoms. During an attack, the airways narrow, making it difficult for a child to breathe.

The air your children breathe at home can trigger an attack. Common asthma triggers are secondhand smoke, dust mites, pet dander, mold and cockroaches. Here are a few things you can do to avoid these triggers:

- Don't smoke in your home or car, and don't let others do so.
- To reduce dust mites, wash sheets and blankets each week in hot soapy water. Choose washable stuffed toys. Wash them often in hot water and dry thoroughly.
- Keep pets out of bedrooms and other sleeping areas, and away from furniture, carpets and stuffed toys. It is best to keep pets outdoors.
- To avoid mold, fix leaky plumbing or other sources of moisture. Keep drip pans in air conditioners and refrigerators dry. Wash mold off hard surfaces and dry completely. Ceiling tiles and carpet with mold should be replaced. Vent clothes dryers to the outside to avoid mold. Use exhaust fans or open windows in kitchens and bathrooms when showering, cooking or using the dishwasher.
- To prevent roaches or rodents, clean all food crumbs or spilled liquids right away, and store food in airtight containers. Avoid leaving out food or garbage. If you spray, carefully follow instructions on the label. Make sure there is plenty of fresh air when you spray, and keep the person with asthma out of the room.



## Question and Answer

### Time-Out as punishment

I have tried time-out with my kids, and it doesn't work. I put them in time-out every time they misbehave, and they still don't understand that when they act up, they will go to time-out. What can I do to make time-out work better?

Time-out should not be used for all misbehaviors. Examples of appropriate use of time-out are breaking something on purpose; throwing objects in anger; ignoring a request to stop doing something; hitting, kicking, swearing, or pulling hair; back talk or showing disrespect.

The time-out location should be boring and quiet. A stairway, hall or a chair near a wall are all appropriate possibilities for time-out since there's not much to do at these places except sit and wait. A child's bedroom, however, is not a good choice for time-out because it contains interesting items. NEVER lock a child in a room for time-out, or use a dark scary room or closet, or a room without ventilation.

The length of time-out depends on a child's age. Time-out should be used only with children 3 years and older and should only last one minute per child's age (5-year-old=five minutes). Parents should use a kitchen timer or other reminder so they don't forget a child in time-out. Afterward, give the child another chance to behave appropriately.

Remember, "time out" is only effective when you spend enough "time in" with your kids. They need attention and affection, so be sure to set aside time for both every day.

## Resource Corner

### Books for Parents

- *Without Spanking or Spoiling*, by Elizabeth Crary, second edition, Parenting Press, 1993.
- *Go to your Room! Consequences That Teach*, by Shari Steelsmith, Parenting Press, 2000.
- *Positive Discipline for Teenagers: Empowering Your Teens and Yourself Through Kind and Firm Parenting*, by Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott, Crown Publishing Group, 2000.

### Books for Children

#### BIRTH TO 3

- *Counting Kisses: A Kiss & Read Book*, by Karen Katz, Little Simon, 2003.

- *Ten Little Ladybugs*, by Melanie Gerth, Piggy Toes Press, 2001.

#### AGES 4 TO 8

- *The Kissing Hand*, by Audrey Penn, Child & Family Press, 1993.

- *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth*, by Douglas Wood and Jon J. Muth, Scholastic Press, 2003.

#### AGES 9 TO 12

- *Holes*, by Louis Sachar, Yearling, 2000.

- *On My Honor*, by Marion Dane Bauer, Yearling Newberry, 1987.

#### TEENS

- *The Pigman*, by Paul Zindel, Starfire, 1983.

- *Kinship*, by Trudy Krisher, Delacorte Press, 1997.

## FAMILY TIMES

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### Contact our county Extension offices for information and resources concerning parenting and health education.

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Albuquerque	1510 Menaul NW	243-1386	•	Los Ojos	72 State Road 162	588-7423
Aztec	213-A S. Oliver	334-9496	•	Lovington	100 N. Main, Suite 10-C	396-2819
Bernalillo	811 Camino del Pueblo	867-2582/2951	•	Mora	County Courthouse	387-2856
Carlsbad	1304 W. Stevens	887-6595	•	Mosquero	County Courthouse	673-2341
Carrizozo	County Courthouse	648-2311/2312	•	Portales	705 E. Lime St.	356-4417
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Fort Sumner	County Courthouse	355-2381	•	Silver City	2610 N. Silver St.	388-1559
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Las Cruces	808 N. Alameda	525-6649	•	T or C	2101 S. Broadway	894-2375
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