

Understanding discipline tricks

Children at home ...to some it means more time to control and discipline children. When it comes to disciplining many parents recognize the harmful effects of physical and verbal punishment. They know that yelling, slapping, hitting, and spanking teach violence, destroy self-esteem, create anger, interfere with learning, and damage the relationship between parent and child. But knowing what *not* to do is only the first step; parents frequently ask me what they should do instead. I would define desirable alternatives to punishment as ways that help the child to learn and grow in a healthy way.

There are few greater joys in life than allowing our child to teach us what love is! Few things you could be careful about while dealing with your child are:-

- ☛ Meet the underlying need that led to the behavior. If we punish the outward behavior, the still unmet need will continue to surface in other ways until it is finally met. Questions such as "Are you angry because I was not at home when you returned from school today? Would you like to go for a walk with me?" can help a child feel loved and understood.
- ☛ **Listen and then say it in your words –it validates your child’s feelings** so she knows that you understand and care, and that she will never be rejected for having any particular kinds of feelings. For example, "That scared me too when I was little."
- ☛ **Provide alternatives and let the child choose** . Children need to feel they have a voice. Offering choices, even if they seem unimportant to you ("Do you want the green cup or the red one?") will help a child feel that he has some say over his life, especially if he has had to cope with recent changes.
- ☛ **Try saying it slowly**. When tensions are high, whispering can help to get a child's attention and also help to calm the parent.
- ☛ **Wait Give your child time**. A statement like "Let me know when you're ready to share the toy / climb into the car seat / put on your jacket" will give the child a sense of autonomy and make it easier for him to cooperate.
- ☛ **Take time, Give yourself some time there is no hurry**. Count to ten (silently). Sometimes we just need a bit of time to think more clearly and to see things more objectively.
- ☛ Remember that children create images from our words: "Slow down!" is more effective than "Stop running!". The first statement creates an image of slowing down, while the second creates a picture of someone running (the word "don't" is too abstract to overcome the more concrete and compelling image of running). Similarly, a specific request is more effective than a general one: "Please put down the glass" instead of "Be careful".

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