

## Hand-out for Parents

# DISCIPLINE TIPS

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE is about teaching children to behave in acceptable ways. But it's also about the long term: helping them to mature into young adults who can exercise self-discipline, treat others fairly and make wise, ethical choices. The most powerful discipline tool parents have is the behaviour they model to their children every day.

### A POSITIVE DISCIPLINE TOOL-BOX

**Catch Her Being Good.** When you appreciate your child's good behaviour, it encourages her to keep trying. Try to make your feedback specific, so she knows what she got right: "You really remembered your manners tonight – thanks!"

**Describe the Behaviour (Not the Child).** Comments like "bad boy!" or "you're so lazy!" are hurtful and discouraging. Your child will respond better if you stick to the facts: what he did wrong and how he should behave instead: "You may not play ball in the living room! Balls belong outside or in the basement."

**Link a Reward to the Task.** Each day is a mix of things we enjoy and things that are not so fun. When we structure the day so that kids get the part they like *after* a task is done, it motivates them and gives the lesson that responsibilities come first. So trying saying things like, "We can go to the park once these toys are put away" or "You can use the computer when the dog has been walked."

**Use Logical Consequences.** Many parents withdraw privileges, like TV time or outings, to punish misbehaviour. Logical consequences are different – they are directly related to the misbehaviour and teach kids to take responsibility for their mistakes.



For example, if your child deliberately breaks a sibling's toy, a logical consequence might be that she has to use her savings to replace it. Consequences should be age-appropriate – a teen could be expected to cover the whole replacement cost, while a younger child might donate a few weeks' allowance.

**Give Time Out – Or Time In.** Children (like adults) sometimes need some time alone to calm down. Time out doesn't have to be in a special chair; if your child goes to her room and reads or plays by himself for awhile, that may be just what he needs. But very young children often need a grown-up's help to calm down. It may be better to go with them to a quiet spot, and use your own quiet presence to help them regain control.

**Offer a Choice** Kids are often more cooperative when they can choose between acceptable alternatives. A young child needs simple choices: she can choose her pink pyjamas or her blue snowman pyjamas (but not when to go to bed). As she gets older, her choices can be more complex.

For more discipline ideas, check out *Yes, You Can! Positive Discipline Ideas for You and Your Child*, available (along with the other titles in the Parenting for Life series) on our website: [www.psychologyfoundation.org](http://www.psychologyfoundation.org)