

Disciplining Your Child

Is there a difference between discipline and punishment? YES!!

What is discipline?

Discipline is guidance. When we guide children toward positive behavior and learning, we are promoting a healthy attitude. Positive guidance encourages a child to think before he acts. Positive guidance promotes self-control. Different styles of discipline produce results that are different. Discipline requires thought, planning, and patience.

What is punishment?

Punishment is usually hitting, spanking, or any type of control behavior. Basically there are four kinds of punishment:

- **Physical.** Slapping, spanking, switching, paddling, using a belt or hairbrush, and so on.
- **With words.** Shaming, ridiculing, or using cruel words.
- **Holding back rewards.** Example: *"You can't watch TV if your chores aren't done."*
- **Penalizing the child.** Example: *"Because you told a lie, you can't have your allowance."*

Punishment is usually used because:

- a. quick and easy
- b. don't know other methods
- c. asserts adult power
- d. vents adult frustration

Punishment does not promote self discipline. It only stops misbehavior for that moment. Punishment may fulfill a short-

term goal, but it actually interferes with the accomplishment of your long-term goal of self control.

The consequences for children include the following lessons:

1. Those who love you the most are also those who hit you.
2. It is right to hit those you are closest to.
3. It is okay to hit people who are smaller than you are.
4. Violence is okay when other things don't work.

Parents and teachers would rather teach their children other more positive lessons.

Children who are disciplined without affection respond only to power—which means punishment and "have to be made to do."

When discipline is administered in such a way as to hurt a child's self-esteem or self-worth, the child's standards may become rigid or self-punishing. However, affection without discipline may result in children who deny responsibility or blame others. Parents and teachers of successful children maintain control.

Discipline is

- *Helping* a child learn to get along with family and friends.
- *Teaching* a child to behave in an agreeable way.
- *Helping* a child learn to control behavior.

Effective Discipline

The use of discipline is a thinking and trying process. Remember:

- Effective discipline is good for parent and child.
- A child learns to take responsibility for his or her behavior.
- The parent keeps a warm relationship with the child.
- The goal is to teach the child how to behave, not to make the child suffer.

Guidance Tips

- When you discipline, explain why.
- Set clear and safe limits. Be sure children know these limits. Be consistent.
- Keep discipline positive. Tell children what to do instead of what not to do.
- Teach by example. Be a good example. If you hit children for hitting others, they won't understand why they can't hit.
- Guide through consequences. If a child leaves his toys outside and the toys are stolen or damaged—no toys.

- Build self-esteem and respect. Avoid words that reduce self-esteem.
- Plan ahead. Prevent misbehavior by eliminating situations that spell trouble. For example, make sure children have been fed and are rested before going to the grocery store.
- Address the situation; do not judge the child. This is important because diminished self-esteem leads to insecurity, even hostility.
- Be firm. Clearly and firmly state that the child does what needs to be done. Speak in a tone that lets your child know you mean what you say and you expect the child to do it. This doesn't mean yelling or threatening. Being firm works for any age child and for many situations.
- Keep your cool. Listen calmly to your child's explanation of the problem; talk about ways to deal with it. Come to a solution that's agreeable to you and the child—this helps the child learn to be responsible for his behavior.