



CHILDREN'S
HOME
SOCIETY OF
CALIFORNIA
www.chs-ca.org

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Family Education Program materials and podcasts, and information on CHS programs can also be found on our website at www.chs-ca.org.



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POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

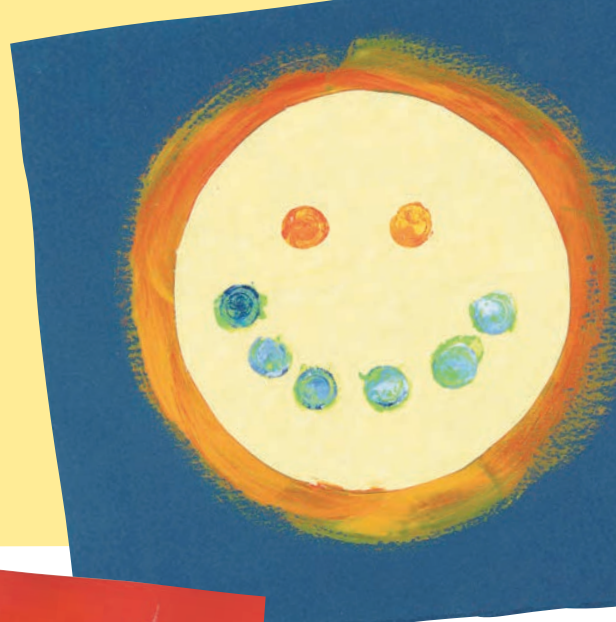
APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE FOR YOUR CHILD



Every parent and caregiver struggles at one time or another with how to set limits on children's behavior. The goal of positive discipline is to teach children to develop safe, socially responsible behavior that promotes self-respect and respect for the feelings and property of others.

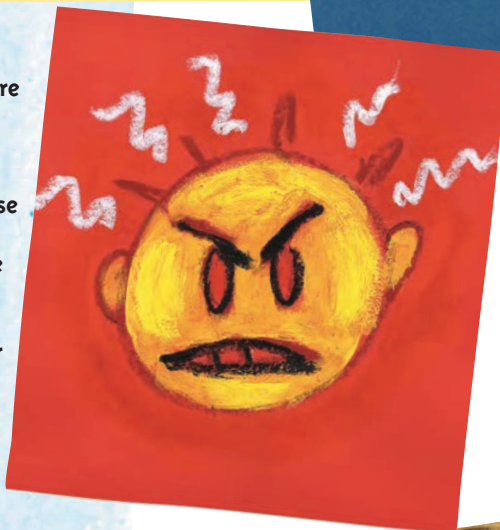


Remember that discipline and punishment are not the same. Discipline is guidance and teaching that promotes positive behavior. Punishment is a penalty imposed in reaction to unacceptable behavior. Positive discipline is more effective than punishment because desirable behaviors that last a lifetime must come from within the child rather than be imposed by external force.



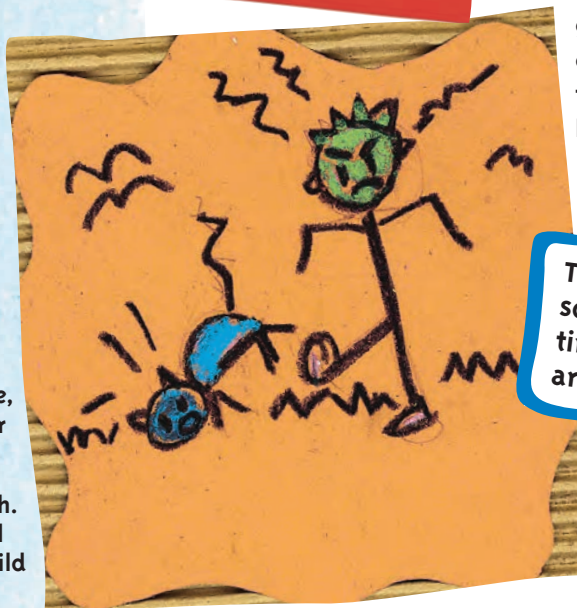
★ GUIDELINES FOR SETTING LIMITS

- When you discipline children, always make sure they understand that they are accepted and loved, but their behavior is not. Humiliating children, scolding them in front of others, or telling them that they are “bad” will only cause them to feel badly about themselves and do little to promote good behavior. Focus on the unacceptable behavior, teaching the child to correct the mistake. For example, “Hitting me is not ok, use your words instead,” rather than, “You are a bad girl for hitting me.”
- Keep rules simple and specific. When a rule is broken, state the rule and direct the child toward correcting the mistake. For example, “Sand is not for throwing; keep it in the sandbox, please.”
- Avoid a power struggle, especially with two- to four-year-olds.
- Don't confuse children by offering choices when the choices should be yours. For example, “It's nap time,” instead of, “Do you want to take a nap?” which offers the child the chance to refuse.
- Avoid overusing “no.” Instead, save it for when you really need it. For example, if a child asks for a cookie too close to lunch time, say, “Yes, you may have a cookie right after we finish lunch.”
- Use a warning first, and then follow through. “The next time you throw the sand, you will have to leave the sandbox.” Redirect the child toward acceptable activities.



★ PROBLEM-SOLVING

State the problem and ask the child to brainstorm some solutions. Point out the effects of the different solutions, and help the child decide on a course of action. With older children, problem-solving can also be used to set family or group rules. When children help to make the rules, they are more likely to follow them.



Teaching problem-solving skills takes time, but the results are long-lasting.

Natural Consequences

Help children understand that behaviors and choices have consequences. Natural consequences — what naturally results from actions — can be powerful teaching tools. For example, if you stand in the rain, you get wet and you are more likely to remember your umbrella next time. When possible and safe, use natural consequences to help children limit their behavior. Gently point out what happened and why. For example, if you break your toy, you have no toy.

Logical Consequences

When natural consequences are not appropriate or safe, set a logical consequence — something that is related to the behavior. If a child does not stay in the yard to play, the natural consequence may be that he gets hurt. But parents and caregivers can't allow that consequence to happen! So a logical consequence of leaving the yard would be having to play inside the house instead. You could say: "When you leave the yard I'm afraid you could get hurt, so I need you to stay inside the fence. If you leave the yard again you will have to play inside today." Then, always follow through with your actions. Make sure the consequence is respectful of the child and is reasonable for him to follow. For example: "We must not use marker pens on the wall. Let's get some soap and water and I'll show you how to get the marks off. Then you can color on paper at the table."

★ SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS

Children prefer positive attention rather than negative attention, and you can encourage desirable behavior through the following positive techniques:

- Make sure your expectations for your child are developmentally appropriate for his or her age.
- Model desirable behavior. Your children will learn from your example.
- Be consistent. Children need to know what the rules are, and that they can trust the rules not to change.
- A child-proof and appropriate environment can reduce behavior problems.
- Provide age-appropriate materials and a safe place where children can use them.
- Maintain a balance between quiet and active play.
- Empower children by providing choices and decision-making opportunities whenever possible.
- Set rules that are respectful of children and keep their interests in mind.
- Always acknowledge children's feelings, especially when you must set a limit on their behavior. How they feel is important!
- Establish regular routines for busy times like meals, getting ready in the morning, and going to bed. Children need structure.



TO LEARN MORE

BOOKS

BECOMING THE PARENT YOU WANT TO BE

Laura Davis & Janis Keyser

HOW TO TALK SO KIDS WILL LISTEN AND LISTEN SO KIDS WILL TALK

Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

WITHOUT SPANKING OR SPOILING

Elizabeth Crary

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Jane Nelsen, Ed.D., Cheryl Erwin, M.A., & Roslyn Duffy