

**Positive Discipline, Not Punishment**

**Hints for positive discipline:**

* Understanding your child’s behavior is important. For example, most children can’t sit still for a long time, most are normally active and clumsy. Such behaviors are to be expected
* Some children have problems like bedwetting after age 5. It’s not their fault. If they could control this, they would. Discuss such problems with your child’s doctor or nurse
* Know your child’s triggers, such as when they’re told “no” or ending an activity they enjoy
* Avoid expecting too much when your child is tired, hungry or grumpy
* Correct bad behaviors when they happen. But, if you’re very upset, make sure your child is safe and take a time out to cool-off before going back to your child
* Most “difficult” behaviors are minor and not dangerous, destructive or hurtful; try ignoring them. Prioritize tackling behaviors that are dangerous, destructive or hurtful
* It’s important to tell and show your child how to behave; you teach by being a good role model
* Be patient – young children are learning how to express and control their emotions
* Reward and praise good behaviors you want to encourage
* Show and tell your kids you love them, like giving hugs and saying you’re proud of them
* Spend quality time with your child doing activities they enjoy – without using your phone!



**Positive discipline is necessary.**

**It takes self-control, patience and time!**

**It’s a way to teach your child how to behave well.**

**Being a parent can be hard. We all want kids to learn to behave.**

**Kids learn to manage feelings and disappointments when discipline is clear and consistent.**

**If you’d like help with discipline, please talk to your child’s nurse or doctor.**

**More hints for positive discipline**

* Decide which behaviors are OK or not OK
* Decide how you’ll reward good behavior, and let child know, in advance
* Decide what will be the consequences of bad behavior, and let child know, in advance
* Keep rules clear and simple - based on your child’s age and development
* Be sure to convey that you disapprove of the behavior, not that the child is “bad”
* Be consistent – all caregivers should follow the same approach; if not, it’s confusing to young children
* Positive discipline works better than physical punishment. Physical punishment can hurt children’s health, development and safety; it may create more fear than respect for parents; it does not encourage thinking about what was done wrong and how to behave. Remember, you’re your child’s best teacher!



**Helpful Resources**

**The National Parent Helpline |** *www.nationalparenthelpline.org*

Call **1-855-427-2736** for English and Spanish, Monday – Friday, 10am to 7pm PST

**The Helpline is for parents and caregivers. A trained advocate will:**

* Listen to you
* Help you problem-solve
* Help you take care of yourself
* Help connect you to local services
* Help you build on your own strengths and be a great parent

**If you’re interested in learning about discipline:**

* “**1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children Ages 2-12**”by Thomas Payton; Child Management, 1996.
* “**How to Talk so Kids Will Listen, How to Listen so Kids Will Talk**” by Faber and Mazlish; First Avon Books, 1999.
* Learn how to “Organize your home for your child” for your child:
* **www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/structure/building.html** (English)
* **www.cdc.gov/parents/spanish/essentials/structure/buildingblocks.html** (Spanish)