



Parenting Tips: Positive Discipline

Infants: 0-12 months

- Recognize and respond flexibly to the infant's needs
- Check for signs of needs (e.g. sleep, food, hot, cold or needing comfort)
- Provide structured daily routines
- Develop a mutually satisfactory schedule of feeding, sleeping, and awakening
- Keep your infant safe, secure, and stimulated
- Create safe spaces for infant to explore and play
- Protect infant from potential hazards (e.g. covering up outlets, putting dangerous things out of reach, blocking "off-limit" places with baby gates)
- Take infant away from the source of dangerous behavior
- Take the dangerous object away or remove your infant to a safe place. (Remember that small objects can be very dangerous for infants, as they can cause babies to choke on them.)
- Redirect and distract infant to a safer activity

Toddlers: 1-2 years old

- Provide structured daily routines
- Ignore minor misbehavior
- Distract and redirect your child with an appropriate activity
- Tell your child what he/she can and cannot have, in a flat and factual tone, with an explanation and love
- When your child has a tantrum, remain calm. Consider whether your child has an unmet need (he may be hungry, tired, bored, etc.) and think about how you can meet that need. You can also make sure the child is in a safe spot, and then don't pay much attention to the tantrum – if a tantrum doesn't bring the desired attention, a child is more likely to stop.
- Remove your child from the source of inappropriate or dangerous behavior
- Give choices
- Natural consequences (e.g. feeling cold when not wearing coat)
- Logical consequences (e.g. a child who throws food would have his/her plate taken away)
- Time out (i.e. remove parental attention and praise or being placed in a chair for 1-2 minutes with no adult interaction)
- Praise – Be on the lookout for positive behavior, and acknowledge your child for it (e.g. *"You did a great job picking up your toys today."*)

Preschoolers: 3-5 years old

- Provide structured daily routines
- Give structure and clear expectations
- Remove your child from the source of inappropriate or dangerous behavior
- Say “No” in a lower and firm tone, with an explanation and love
- Give choices
- Natural consequences (e.g. feeling cold when not wearing coat)
- Logical consequences (e.g. a child who throws food would have his/her plate taken away)
- Time out (i.e. remove parental attention and praise or being placed in a chair for 3-5 minutes with no adult interaction)
- Praise – Be on the lookout for positive behavior, and acknowledge your child for it (e.g. *“You did a great job picking up your toys today.”*)

School age children: 6-8 years old

- Increase child’s sense of responsibility (e.g. help with chores) and self-control (e.g. walk away from a frustrating situation for a few minutes to cool off instead of having an outburst)
- Clear and concise rules and limits
- Give choices
- Natural consequences (e.g. feeling cold when not wearing coat)
- Logical consequences (e.g. a child who throws food would have his/her plate taken away)
- Removal of privileges (e.g. no TV or PSP or something your child likes)
- “I Statements” (e.g. *“When the toys are not being picked up, I feel mad and tired because I have just cleaned up the room.”*)
- Listen – Give your undivided attention, open your heart & mind, don’t interrupt, reflect back what you heard
- Teach – Teach your children appropriate behavior by **SHOWING** them, not just telling them
- Praise – Be on the lookout for positive behavior, and acknowledge your child for it (e.g. *“You worked really hard on that homework assignment. I’m proud of you!”*)

School age children: 9-12 years old

- Increase child’s sense of responsibility (e.g. help with chores) and self-control (e.g. encourage child to think about what’s causing him/her to lose control and then analyze it)
- Talk about expectations and reasons behind rules
- Clear and concise rules and limits
- Give choices
- Natural consequences (e.g. feeling cold when not wearing coat)
- Logical consequences (e.g. rewards for good grades and privileges taken away for poor grades)
- Removal of privileges (e.g. no TV or PSP or something your child likes)
- “I Statements” (e.g. *“I feel annoyed when I am interrupted on the phone because I have to try to listen to more than one person.”*)
- Listen – Give your undivided attention, open your heart & mind, don’t interrupt, reflect back what you heard
- Teach – Teach your children appropriate behavior by **SHOWING** them, not just telling them
- Praise – Be on the lookout for positive behavior, and acknowledge your child for it (e.g. *“You worked really hard on that homework assignment. I’m proud of you!”*)

Adolescents: 13 and up

- Increase child's sense of responsibility (e.g. help with chores) and self-control (e.g. pause to evaluate upsetting situations before responding and talk through problems rather than losing control, slamming doors, or yelling)
- Involve child in setting rules and decision-making
- Talk about expectations and reasons behind rules
- Clear and concise rules and limits
- Allow for negotiation and flexibility
- Give choices
- Natural consequences (e.g. feeling cold when not wearing enough clothes)
- Logical consequences (e.g. rewards for good grades and privileges taken away for poor grades)
- Removal of privileges (e.g. no driving privilege)
- "I Statements" (e.g. *"When I don't see you at home on time, I feel worried because I don't know if something terrible has happened."*)
- Listen – Give your undivided attention, open your heart & mind, don't interrupt, reflect back what you heard
- Teach – Teach your children appropriate behavior by **SHOWING** them, not just telling them
- Praise – Be on the lookout for positive behavior, and acknowledge your child for it (e.g. *"Thank you for calling me to let me know where you and your friends were going this afternoon. I feel better when I know where you are and that you are safe."*)

More tips for parents/caregivers:

- No spanking, swatting, yelling or name-calling
- Create a positive, supportive, secure, harmonious and loving parent-child relationship
- Provide consistency in the form of regular times and patterns for daily activities
- Respond consistently to similar behavioral situations
- Identify behaviors that you value and want to encourage and let your children understand it
- Shape behaviors and skills through parental attention and encouragement
- Reinforce emerging desirable behaviors with frequent praise
- Deliver instruction and correction calmly and with empathy
- Consequences should be within the limits of your child's age and stage of development
- Be clear about what you mean. Be firm and specific
- Pay attention to your child's feelings
- Help your child to express his or her feelings
- Be patient and listen
- Modify discipline approach and use different strategies as child grows
- Model positive behavior. Children learn by watching
- Educate yourself through parenting classes and coaching
- Take care of yourself
- Take a whole village to support you
- Don't give up! The best resource your child has is you