



Building Blocks

for Parents

Positive Discipline

Positive Discipline is an ongoing teaching process for guiding a child to use appropriate behavior and to avoid undesirable behavior. Some suggestions for positive discipline are:

1. Set a good example, modeling is one of the best ways of learning.
2. Treat children with respect and courtesy. If we don't, we are teaching disrespect, while trying to teach acceptable behaviors.
3. Give children the experience of being appreciated and understood. They need to feel important to the adults in their lives.
4. Enjoy them as children; don't expect them to be small adults. Try to understand and "see" things from the child's perspective.
5. "Catch the child being good." Avoid ignoring them when they are quiet. Notice and comment on the appropriate things they do or try to do.
6. Give children credit for progress. Be sure the goals that you set for them are ones they are capable of reaching.
7. Let them know that everyone makes mistakes by calling attention to our own mistakes. Show them you are human.
8. Be honest about your feelings and own them. Instead of saying "you make me angry when you . . ." try, "I feel angry when you. . . ." Model for them how to handle feelings. When they have negative feelings, accept the feelings (but not hurtful behavior).
9. Add stability to the young child's life by establishing routine and referring to it frequently.
10. Have a few simple rules for each situation. Communicate them clearly at the child's level. Be consistent in carrying them out.
11. Prepare the child for situations that will require a new behavior or one that is difficult for him or her.
12. If it is necessary to remove a child from the situation or restrain him/her, do it as calmly as possible and reassure the child that it is to help them get control. Encourage "trying again."
13. Keep the fun and humor alive with children. Laugh with them. Take time to listen to and play with them.
14. Separate the action from the child. The child is not a "bad boy or girl" but rather the behavior may be unacceptable. "I like you but I don't like hitting, etc."

"Disciplining a child is like holding a very wet bar of soap — too firm a grasp and it shoots from your hand, too loose a grasp and it slides away. A gentle, but firm grip, keeps it in your control." — Hannagan

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Spec: ; GA 9230/4-91

Distributed by Early ACCESS/Early Childhood Services, Grant Wood Area Education Agency, 4401 Sixth Street SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404-4499



If your child is 0-3 years old and you have concerns about development, call Early Access at (319) 399-6746 or 1-800-332-8488. If your child is 3-5 years old and having difficulty with vision, hearing, speech, coordination, or the ability to learn, call (319) 399-6874 or 1-800-798-9771, Extension 6874, or TDD (319) 399-6766 (Early Childhood) for services at no cost to you.

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