

Positive Discipline

GUIDELINES

From the book *Positive Discipline*, by Jane Nelsen

1 **Misbehaving children are "discouraged children"** who have mistaken ideas on how to achieve their **primary goal—to belong**. Their mistaken ideas lead them to misbehavior. We cannot be effective unless we address the mistaken beliefs rather than just the misbehavior.

2 Use **encouragement** to help children feel "belonging" so the motivation for misbehaving will be eliminated. Celebrate each step in the direction of improvement rather than focusing on mistakes.

3 A great way to help children feel encouraged is to **spend special time** "being with them." Many teachers have noticed a dramatic change in a "problem child" after spending five minutes simply sharing what they both like to do for fun.

4 When tucking children into bed, ask them to **share with you** their "saddest time" during the day and their "happiest time" during the day. Then **you share with them**. You will be surprised what you learn.

5 Have **family meetings** or **class meetings** to solve problems with cooperation and mutual respect. This is the key to creating a loving, respectful atmosphere while helping children develop self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and problem-solving skills.

6 Give children **meaningful jobs**. In the name of expediency, many parents and teachers do things that children could do for themselves and one another. **Children feel belonging when they know they can make a real contribution.**

7 **Decide together** what jobs need to be done. Put them all in a jar and let each child draw out a few each week; that way no one is stuck with the same jobs all the time. Teachers can invite children to help them make class rules and list them on a chart titled, "We decided." Children have ownership, motivation, and enthusiasm when they are included in the decisions.

8 **Take time for training.** Make sure children understand what "clean the kitchen" means to you. To them it may mean simply putting the dishes in the sink. Parents and teachers may ask, "What is your understanding of what is expected?"

9 **Teach and model mutual respect.** One way is to **be kind and firm at the same time**—kind to show respect for the child, and firm to show respect for yourself and "the needs of the situation." This is difficult during conflict, so use the next guideline whenever you can.

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10 Proper **timing** will improve your effectiveness tenfold. It does not "work" to deal with a problem at the time of conflict—emotions get in the way. Teach children about **cooling-off periods**. You (or the children) can go to a separate room and do something to make yourself feel better—and then work on the problem with mutual respect.

11 **Get rid of the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first you have to make them feel worse.** Do you feel like doing better when you feel humiliated? This suggests a whole new look at "time out."

12 Use **Positive Time Out**. Let your children help you design a pleasant area (cushions, books, music, stuffed animals) that will help them feel better. Remember that children do better when they feel better. Then you can ask your children, when they are upset, "Do you think it would help you to take some positive time out?"

13 Punishment may "work" if all you are interested in is stopping misbehavior for "the moment." Sometimes we must **beware of what works** when the long-range results are negative—resentment, rebellion, revenge, or retreat.

14 Teach children that **mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn!** A great way to teach children that mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn is to model this yourself by using the Three Rs of Recovery after you have made a mistake:

- (1) **Recognize your mistake.**
- (2) **Reconcile: Be willing to say "I'm sorry, I didn't like the way I handled that."**
- (3) **Resolve: Focus on solutions rather than blame.**
(#3 is effective only if you do #1 & #2 first.)

15 Focus on **solutions** instead of **consequences**. Many parents and teachers try to disguise punishment by calling it a logical consequence. Get children involved in finding solutions that are:

- (1) **Related**
- (2) **Respectful**
- (3) **Reasonable**
- (4) **Helpful**

16 **Make sure the message of love and respect gets through.** Start with "I care about you. I am concerned about this situation. Will you work with me on a solution?"

17 **Have fun!**
Bring joy into homes and classrooms.

VISIT US ONLINE AT www.positivediscipline.com

THESE GUIDELINES CAN BE VIEWED OR DOWNLOADED AT
www.empoweringpeople.com/guidelines.html

Positive Parenting
www.positiveparentcoach.com

Positive Discipline Tools

(Tools to Avoid Punishment, Rescuing, Controlling, Power Struggles, Revenge)

- Ask **What, Where** and **How** questions instead of telling what, how and why. Make sure you listen to what the child says.
- Offer limited choices
- Act, don't talk
- One word . . . i.e., "Jacket" (when you notice a jacket left on floor)
- Ten words . . . "I'm concerned someone might step on this jacket on the floor."
- Message of caring.
- Special Time
- Use humor (respectfully, avoid sarcasm)
- Mirror: **"I notice . . ."**
- Compliments
- Kind and firm
- Emotional honesty: **"I feel . . . , because . . . , and I wish . . ."**
- Encouragement vs. Praise and Rewards
- Chores for a feeling of belonging and significance
- Positive Time Out: Let kids help design
- See Mistakes as Opportunities for Learning
- If you say it, mean it: and if you mean it follow through
- Understand the Belief Behind the Behavior: Use perception and modification instead of behavior modification
- Joint Problem-solving with Mutually Agreeable Deadlines
- Go beyond consequences – brainstorm for solutions.
- Do nothing – Allow Natural consequences
- You kids can figure it out: come back with your plan.
- Put Everyone in same boat
- Family Meetings
- Decide what you will do.

From Positive Discipline, Jane Nelsen

How to Avoid Saying “No”, Hearing “No” and knowing when to accept “No”

Parent: “*What do I do when my child won’t cooperate?*”

Prepare ahead of Time

- Set up consistent routines with your child.
- Plan ahead and allow enough time
- Let your child know what’s on the agenda
- Find ways for child to contribute/help in meaningful ways
- Use songs for regular transitions
- Take the time to Teach. Show them what you want them to do.
- Special Time – 10 minutes per day with each parent for children under 6
30 minutes per week for children over 6 years of age.

How do I contribute to resistance or defiance?

- Avoid giving too many orders or directions
- Ask curiosity questions. “Where do your shoes go?”
- Check your attitude! Am I trying to make my child do something that is important to me and disregarding their wants and desires? A friendlier attitude can go along way towards winning a child over.
- Talk too much. Use non-verbal cues instead
- Avoid “Don’t.” Put it in the positive. “Please tell your feet to go under the dinner table.”
- When you take away an inappropriate activity child is enjoying, substitute for appropriate activity. “You may jump over here on this cushion/ trampoline, but not on the bed.”
- Avoid nagging. Say it once and act.
- We try to convince a child to *want, like or be happy* about what we want them to do. Ignore the grumbling or acknowledge the feeling, but don’t give in.

Invite Cooperation:

- Offer limited choices. “Would you like to hold Daddy’s pant leg or ride in the cart while we are in the store?”
- Ask for child’s help. Can you figure out what would be the most helpful thing you could do right now?”
- Thank child ahead of time for their cooperation. “Thank you for carrying that tray so slowly.”
- Have a sense of humor. Act silly instead of mad. Sing a funny song. You will feel better and your child might join in the fun.
- Decide what you will do, not what you will make ‘em do! Walk away from a child who hits you and say. “I don’t deserve to be hit, I’m going to move over here.”
- State a given (i.e., a rule or condition) “This is inside time.” Avoid defending or explaining, simply continue to restate the rule.
- Be careful not to protect children from their actions. If child chooses not to get dressed, avoid a battle and bring clothes with you so child can get dressed at

destination, ie., school, daycare or grandma's house. Or leave them in their PJ's. You can't make 'em!

- Focus on solutions. Involve your children in helping to find solutions.
- Negotiate an agreement:
- "Would you like to hold Daddy's pant leg or ride in the cart while we are in the store?" Restate the agreement: "We agree that you will hold onto Daddy's pant leg while we walk through the store. When you let go of my pant leg and wander away, I will put you in the cart to keep you safe." (Some families like to shake hands upon agreements such as these.)
- Family Meetings – put problems on the agenda.
- Let the message of love get through!!
- **Hugs, hugs, hugs, hugs, hugs.**

Many discipline problems can be prevented by careful thought and planning. Taking into account the needs of the situation, the child's temperament, and possible challenges in advance can make new experiences and *outing a pleasure for everyone.*

- Needs and expectations of the situation
- Danger signals and pitfalls
- Temperament/priorities
- Plans and ideas