

Laying foundations...

When you respond to your infant's cries, you are teaching her that you are there, you can be counted on when she needs you, and that she can trust you. When your child is about **2 months** of age, start to modify your responses and encourage your baby to establish good sleeping patterns by letting her fall asleep on her own. By keeping a reasonably steady schedule, you can guide her toward eating, sleeping, and playing at times that are appropriate for your family. This lays the groundwork for acceptable behavior later on. Once your baby starts to crawl (**between 6 and 9 months of age**) and as she learns to walk (between 9 and 16 months of age), safety is the most critical discipline issue. The best thing you can do for your child at this age is to give her the freedom to explore certain things and make other things off-limits. E.g. put child proof locks on some cabinets, such as those that contain heavy dishes or pots, but leave other cabinets open. Fill the open cabinets with plastic containers or soft materials that your child can play with. This feeds your baby's need to explore and practice, but in safe ways that are acceptable to you. You will need to provide extra supervision during this period. If your child moves toward a dangerous object, such as a hot stove, simply pick her up, firmly say, "no, hot" and offer her a toy to play with instead. She may laugh at first as she tries to understand you but, after a few weeks, she will learn. Discipline issues become more complex at about **18 months of age**. At this time, a child wants to know how much power she has and will test the limit of that power over and over again. It is important for parents to decide— together—what those limits will be and stick to them. Parents need to be very clear about what is acceptable behavior. This will reduce the child's confusion and her need to test. Setting consistent guidelines for children when they are young also will help establish important rules for the future.

Discipline is Teaching

The word discipline comes from a Latin word that means "to teach."
As a parent, you are a teacher. The way you discipline your child will help them learn.

Let us Introduce Ourselves!

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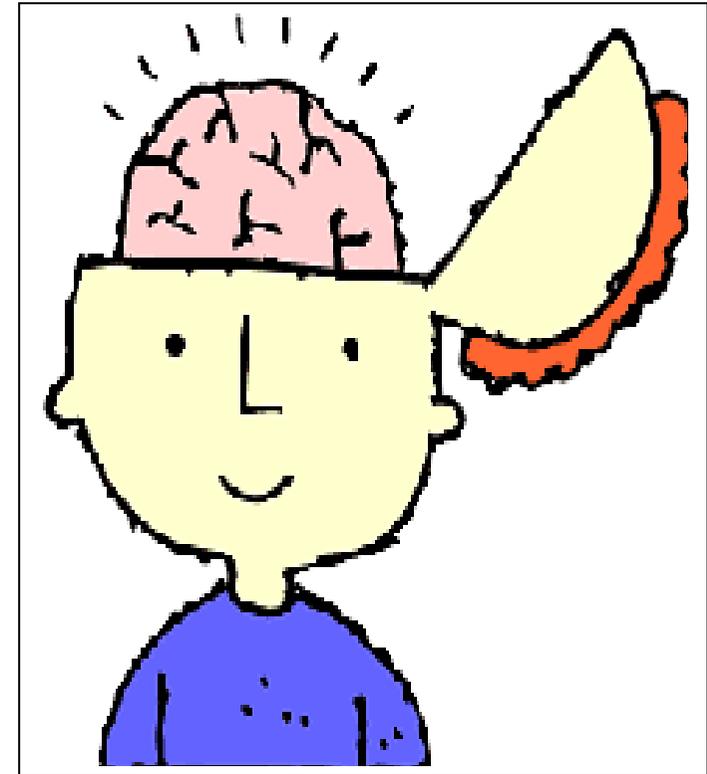
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Guiding from infancy to adulthood

New approach towards disciplining your Child



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Tips to avoid trouble

- **Offer choices whenever possible.** Set limits and still allow your child some independence. E.g. try saying, “Would you like to pick up your toys yourself, or should I help you?”
- **Make a game out of good behavior.** Make it fun. E.g. say, “Let’s have a race and see who can put his coat on first.”
- **Plan ahead.** Discuss with your child ahead of time what behavior is acceptable and what the consequences will be if he does not obey (E.g. before going on a shopping trip). Try to plan the trip when your child is well rested and well fed, and take along a book or small toy to amuse him if he gets bored.
- **Praise good behavior.** You do not need any elaborate system of rewards. E.g. “Thank you for coming right away,” and hug your child.

When your child makes you angry?

- Remember, it is your child’s *behavior* that makes you angry, not your child.
- Hitting and other punishments will not teach your child what he should do instead.
- Be sure your child can do what you expect her to do.

3 Easy steps to control your anger:

1. Stop!

Take a moment to cool off. Wait until you are calm before you discipline your child.

2. Look and Listen.

What is the problem? What has caused your child to misbehave? Do you know for sure that your child did misbehave? Is your child’s behavior normal for his age?

3. Think.

What do you think should happen? Consider your choices. What do you want your child to learn?



Proven Strategies

You cannot avoid trouble all of the time. Sooner or later your child will test you. It is your child’s way of finding out whether you can be trusted and really will do what you say you will do if she does not listen to you. When your child does not listen, try the following techniques.

Natural Consequences Withholding Privileges

Do not lecture or rescue but let the child learn the consequences of her own actions. E.g. If she throws and breaks her toy, she will not be able to play with it. She will soon learn to play with the toys carefully.

Logical Consequences

Natural consequences are not always appropriate. E.g. if your child does not pick up her toys, they may be in the way. In this situation step in; creating a consequence that is closely connected to her actions.

You might tell her that if she does not pick up her toys, then you will put them away—but she will not play with them again for a whole day.

(Note: here it is important that you mean what you say and that you are prepared to follow through *immediately*. Let your child know that you are serious. You do not have to yell and scream to do this. You can say it in a calm, matter-of-fact way.)

In the heat of the moment, when you will not always be able to think of a logical consequence, tell your child that, if she does not cooperate, she will have to give up something she likes. Keep in mind:

- Never take away something your child truly needs, such as a meal.
- Choose something that your child really likes.
- Be sure you can follow through on your promise.

Time out

This last resort method works well when the behavior you are trying to punish is clearly defined and you know when it occurred. E.g. if your child is hitting a sibling or friend). You can use a time-out with a child as young as 1 year old.

1. Choose a time-out spot. This should be a boring place with no distractions, such as a chair. Decide what two or three behaviors will be punished with time-out and explain this to your child.

2. When your child does something she knows will result in a time-out, you may warn her once (unless it is aggression). If it happens again, send her to her time-out spot immediately. A rule of thumb is 1 minute of time out for every year of your child’s age. (E.g. a 4-year-old would get a 4-minute timeout.) But even 15 seconds will work. If your child will not go to the spot on her own, pick her up and carry her there. If she will not stay, stand behind her and hold her gently but firmly on your lap. Do not discuss it any further. She will cooperate soon.

3. Once your child is capable of sitting quietly, set a timer so that she will know when the time-out is over. If fussing starts again, restart the timer.

4. When the time is up, help your child return to a positive activity. Your child has “served her time.” Hug her and welcome her back. If you need to discuss her behavior, wait several minutes before doing so.

Why hitting is not what you want-

- It may seem to work at the moment, but it is no more effective in changing behavior than a time-out.
- It increases aggression and anger instead of teaching responsibility.
- Parents may intend to stay calm but often do not, and regret their actions later.
- It makes other methods less effective, such as those used at school. Gradually, even hitting loses its impact.
- It can lead to physical struggles and even escalate to the point of harming the child.
- Children who are hit are more likely to be depressed, use alcohol, have more anger, hit their own children, approve of and hit their spouses, and engage in crime and violence as adults.

These results make sense since hitting teaches the child that causing others pain is justified to control them—even with those they love.