

AAA Parent Coaching Services Newsletter

An In-Depth Look At Discipline

October 2007

In This Issue

What Is Effective Discipline Anyway?

Discipline Do's And Don'ts
Changing Your Child's Behavior



What Is Effective Discipline Anyway?

The word "discipline" often conjures up images of harsh words and punishment. Yet, discipline actually means "to teach," which is exactly what effective discipline does.

Saying "No" teaches nothing more than not to do something. Shaming children teaches self-hatred. Corporal punishment teaches aggression and violence, while it damages trust between parent and child in the process.

Effective discipline teaches our children how to behave in the world according to our core values and beliefs.

Clear instructions spoken politely and directly, modeling the behavior that we seek, and praising our children for a job well done are effective teaching techniques that enable children to succeed.

Tel: 914-725-5545

Fax: 914-722-4650



Dear Friends,

I hope that you and your families are off to a wonderful new school year.

In preparing for a recent television interview on discipline, I realized that this very important topic warrants its own newsletter. In this set of articles, I have tried to explain what effective discipline is, and have tried to provide helpful "Do's and Don'ts" that can be applied to almost any family situation.

If you are in the New York Tri-State Area, you can catch this piece on WABC on Wednesday, October 10th.

I hope that you will find this information helpful, and I thank you for your continued support and appreciation.

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth Pflaum

The hardest part of raising a child is teaching them to ride bicycles. A shaky child on a bicycle for the first time needs both support and freedom. The realization that this is what the child will always need can hit hard. ~Sloan Wilson

liz@aaaparentcoach.com

Quick Links...

[Our Website](#)

[Request More Info](#)

[In The News](#)

[Children & Blackberries](#)

[Parents & Routines](#)

Join Our Mailing List!

Discipline Do's And Don'ts

- **Don't** let your anger get in the way of effective discipline.
- **Do** behave as you want your child to behave. Remember that you are your child's most powerful role model, and that your child will do as you do, not as you say.
- **Do** think carefully about how you want your child to behave. Consider your core values and the rules that you would like to follow in your home. If you are co-parenting, discuss your decisions with your parenting partner. If possible, parenting is always easier when all caregivers in a child's life are in agreement.
- **Do** decide what appropriate rewards and consequences will be, and share this information with your child.
- **Don't** allow bullying, tantrums or bad behavior to *work* for your child. For example, imagine that your child has a tantrum in a store because she wants a particular toy, and that, feeling mortified by her screaming, you buy the toy to quiet her down. In this scenario, you have just taught your child that tantrums are an excellent tool for achieving a desired response.
- **Do** try to play or interact with your child every day for at least fifteen minutes. During this time, focus all of your attention on your child. Turn off your cell phone, and show your child through your words and actions how much he or she means to you.
- **Do** consider using behavior modification charts and / or posting family rules with visual reminders, and family contracts.
- **Do** praise your children for good behavior, and let them know specifically what they have done to please you.
- **Do** consider ignoring irritating behavior whenever possible
- **Do** try to teach your children how to manage their emotions. Show them how to manage anger and stress successfully by doing so yourself, and discuss strategies that might be helpful to them.

Please contact us directly for individualized strategies designed specifically to meet the needs of your family.

Changing Your Child's Behavior

Step 1: THINK

Decide specifically which behaviors you would like to change. Decide what the rewards and consequences will be. If you have several behaviors that you would like to change, make a list, and prioritize.

Step 2: BEGIN

Start with only one behavior at a time. As you achieve success, move on to the next item on your list.

Step 3: COMMUNICATE

Sit down with your child and tell him what behavior you will help him to change, how you will help him, and what rewards and consequences he can expect. Make eye contact. Use encouraging words. Actively listen to your child's questions and concerns. If possible, offer alternatives to the behavior that is being changed. For example, if your child is hitting because she is angry, teach her healthy ways to express her anger, provide her with a space to express her anger privately, and helpful tools, such as a notebook and markers, an area to exercise, or a stress ball to squeeze.

Step 4: ENCOURAGE AND ENFORCE

Reward your child as promised, and enforce consequences consistently. Do exactly as you have promised to do. Praise your child for her hard work, and encourage her when she fails. Let her know that you believe in her ability to make the targeted changes.

Step 5: CELEBRATE

Enjoy your child's success, and move on to the next item on your list.

Children With Learning Or Behavior Differences And Discipline

Based on my experience as a parent and as a professional, it is my belief that the discipline tools provided in this newsletter can be effective for children on the Autistic Spectrum, with ADHD, learning differences, and other social or emotional challenges. However, additional supports are often helpful. The following are a few tips:

- Visual cues, such as pictures and written lists can be helpful for children with challenges effecting working memory, executive functioning, receptive language
- Consider a multi-sensory approach when teaching self control or a new behavior. For example, you might have your child make a poster or collage of people controlling their anger or impulses, and pointing out how characters in movies and television or athletes control their anger. If your child is young or has a sense of humor, make up an angry song with reminders of what to do when he is angry, or make up an "I'm Mad but in Control" dance

- Consider using clear language with few words and encourage your child to make eye contact.
- Check to make sure that your child understands what you have said. Ask them to explain the instructions one last time back to you.
- Provide opportunities for plenty of physical activity, or other forms of stress release, and play.

For more tips on this most important topic, please call or e-mail us.

Whenever I held my newborn baby in my arms, I used to think that what I said and did to him could have an influence not only on him but on all whom he met, not only for a day or a month or a year, but for all eternity - a very challenging and exciting thought for a mother. ~Rose Kennedy

Elizabeth Pflaum
AAA Parent Coaching Services
Tel: 914-725-5545
Fax: 914-723-4659
email: liz@aaaparentcoach.com
www.aaaparentcoach.com