



## TIPS FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE - FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

### 1. REMEMBER YOUR LONG TERM GOALS.

By keeping your long-term goals in mind, such as teaching respect and non-violence by modelling it yourself, you can avoid short-term reactions, like hitting and yelling. By reminding yourself of what you actually hope to teach your child, you can evolve effective strategies to do so while maintaining a secure relationship. Both parents should discuss!

### 2. TAKE A WALK IN SMALLER SHOES.

How would your child describe the situation? Taking the time to understand what's really going on can help. For small children, it could just be that they are tired, overwhelmed – or hungry. For older children and adolescents, there could be emotional and physical changes as well as a growing sense of independence. For every stage, it is important for children to know that they can depend on their trusted adults, who will also have guidance for them.

### 3. COMMUNICATE LIMITS CLEARLY AND CONSISTENTLY.

It's important for children to know what behaviour is okay by you, and what is not. At best children would be included in establishing boundaries, and at least they would be informed of the norms and the consequences.

### 4. CATCH CHILDREN BEING "GOOD."

Praise is a powerful tool. Praising strengths will help children to flourish, and rewarding good behaviour can provide important encouragement and establish how you would like children to behave. For instance, noticing helpfulness and kindness, or reinforcing the desirability of specific actions will make a child more likely to repeat and do more e.g. I like it when you help me! Some ideas for rewards: hugs, kisses, stickers, small gifts, outings.

### 5. IGNORE SOME BAD BEHAVIOUR.

Make sure the majority of your interactions are positive ones, even if that means sometimes ignoring misdemeanors. One suggestion is to have a quota – considering priority misbehaviors to call out, and others to ignore.

#### QUICK TIPS FOR TODDLER TANTRUMS

- Distraction. Diverting attention to a toy/snack/ordinary object with humour and enthusiasm can help avoid a situation where both of you are upset.
- Breathing to calm down. If already at the tantrum stage, calmly telling a toddler to "Smell the flowers" (deep breath in), and "blow the candle" (deep breath out) can help stop the tears.

Of course, each child is different and will respond to circumstances differently. Who we are is determined by so many different things, including nature, nurture and external factors in the environment beyond our control. But positive and supportive caregiving can help provide the foundations for children to go forth into the world with confidence, happiness, and a store of resilience that helps them cope with difficult circumstances.

Results won't show overnight and will take consistent effort - but it's worth it!

## 6. CRITICISE BEHAVIOURS, NOT THE CHILD.

This distinction is important – no child is inherently “bad,” but sometimes they can behave in undesirable ways. So make sure you are clear about the specific action that is undesirable so that your child knows to avoid it in future.

## 7. HAVE APPROPRIATE "CONSEQUENCES."

Without humiliation or violence, think of ways to demonstrate that some kinds of behaviour will have consequences. This may include a short “time-out” to think (for small children), or the taking away of a privilege for a certain amount of time - and then reflecting together on why a behaviour was wrong. The consequence must be linked logically to the incident, should be given respectfully, be age appropriate and the child should know of it in advance e.g. if a child draws on the walls/table, the child erases it - or if for broken items, helps clean up.

## 8. REMEMBER TO SHOW AFFECTION AND ATTENTION.

Build your ability to recognise and respond to children’s “signals” and requests for attention, which can differ at different stages of childhood and adolescence.

## 9. HAVE FUN TOGETHER.

Take some time in the day to play, laugh and connect. This will help strengthen your bond while also promoting positive mental health for mothers, fathers and children alike.

## 10. REMEMBER THAT PARENTS NEED LOVE TOO.

Caring for caregivers is hugely important – their state of mind determines how they are able to respond to children and their needs. Some things to help you create a positive home environment are:

- Take a break. Give yourself the time you need to have that cup of tea in peace, or talk to a friend and restore your energy.
- Introduce structure in the day. Creating a routine helps set expectations for what will happen, with fewer battles.
- Create a community of care. Both men and women can be great at caregiving. Especially in stressful times such as the pandemic, sharing the responsibility for children can help create a happier, healthier environment for all.
- Congratulate yourself. Celebrate small achievements, stay positive!

### QUICK TIP FOR ADULT RESPONDING

Breathe. Before you react, take ten seconds to breathe deeply in and out five times, and calm yourself. Many parents say it can really be a gamechanger!