



From *Chaos* to **CONTROL**

The most effective way to deal with misbehavior is to prevent the misbehavior in the first place.

[PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLINE]

All behavior has a cause. Before responding to a behavior, ask yourself these questions:

Why did my child act this way?"

What lesson do I want to teach in this moment?

How can I teach this lesson?

- ➔ Discipline comes from the word to disciple that means, "to teach". Think of misbehavior as an opportunity to think about what your child can learn from the situation.
- ➔ Discipline and punishment are not the same. The goal of punishment is to inflict a penalty for the behavior, focus on past misdeeds with an attitude of frustration from the parent. Punishment most often produces fear and guilt in the child. The goal of discipline, however is to teach and build the skills a child will need for future behavior and is administered with love and concern. As a result the child feels secure in the parent-child relationship.
- ➔ Behavior is a consequence of feelings and needs. Address the feelings and needs or the behavior will not change. See some of the forces affecting behavior in the diagram below.
- ➔ A young child operates from the emotional parts of his brain and is unable to access the higher-level and sound decision-making part of his brain that is necessary for self-regulation. This part of the brain will not be fully formed until his mid-twenties.
- ➔ Be proactive, not reactive! Anticipate the problem or behavior. Being caught off guard can result in use of sarcasm, harsh punishment, and shouting. Shouting to discipline children is like blowing the horn to steer the car. Excessive horn blowing escalates into road rage just as excessive shouting escalates into power struggles.
- ➔ The first step in effective discipline is to connect with your child emotionally. All learning even discipline begins with nurturing care from which children learn trust, empathy and attachment. 90% of teaching children to internalize limits is based on a child's desire to please the significant people around them.
- ➔ Parents are the models for the child's behavior. A child learns how to respect by being respected.
- ➔ Do not be afraid to say "no" to the behavior, but "yes" to the child. A child needs parents who are in charge. Say to your child, "I love you, but I cannot let you..."

[GOALS OF DISCIPLINE]

- ➔ To get a child to cooperate and do the right thing, that is, become self-disciplined.
- ➔ To develop skills and the capacity to handle challenging situations and frustrations that might make him lose self-control.

[STEPS TO EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE]

- ➔ Be intentional in setting boundaries and limits appropriate for the age of your child. Keep the limits simple, short, and positive. For example, "Toys are to be put in the basket."
- ➔ Establish routines. Routines provide a sense of safety and security for children. Comfort is found in knowing what is happening next.
- ➔ Be consistent in your expectations. If you say one thing one day and another the next, the child becomes confused about his boundaries. Expect the best!
- ➔ Give the consequences for inappropriate behavior that are logical, brief, and immediate. For example: If the blocks are not put away, you will not be able to play with them for two days.
- ➔ Be firm and respectful. NEVER THREATEN!
- ➔ Give only one direction at a time.
- ➔ Calm down an upset child by going for a walk or getting him moving in some way. Physical activity changes the chemical and emotional states of the body and often changes the child's mind-set.

[RESOURCES]

No-Drama Discipline, Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina P. Bryson, Ph.D.

Hero: Being the Strong Father Your Children Need, Meg Meeker, M.D.

Strong Mothers, Strong Sons; Meg Meeker, M.D.

Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters, Meg Meeker, M.D.

