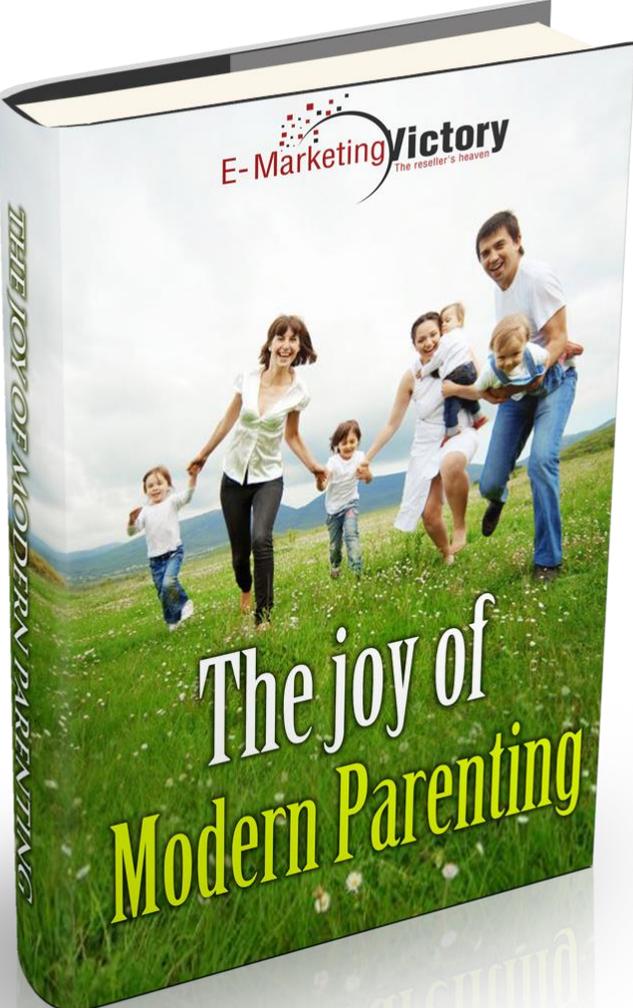


E-Marketing **Victory**  
The reseller's heaven

THE JOY OF MODERN PARENTING



# The joy of Modern Parenting



## **Contents**

[The Keys to Effective Discipline](#)

[Handling Conflict about Rule Enforcement at Home](#)

[Clear Expectations Make Discipline Easier](#)

["Because" Just Isn't the Answer](#)

[Consistency is Key to Successful Discipline](#)

[Another Key to Successful Discipline: Follow-Through](#)

[The Process of Negotiating the Rules with Your Child](#)

[Harsh Discipline: Does it do more Harm than Good?](#)

[Physical Punishment Is Ineffective and Harmful](#)

[Present a Unified Parental Front When Disciplining Your Child](#)

[Time Outs Help Reinforce Positive Behavior and Discourage Misbehaving](#)

[Positive Discipline without Hurting Your Child](#)

[The Importance of Crystal-Clear Rules for Your Child](#)

## The Keys to Effective Discipline

Disciplining a child is one of the most important, yet difficult, roles of being a parent. Effective discipline teaches a child to be self-disciplined later in life. It helps your child grow up to be happy and well-adjusted. Effective and positive discipline teaches and guides children, and helps them to feel safe, secure, and valued.

Discipline should be based on a child's age, development and temperament. A parent's goals by disciplining their child is to protect them from danger, to help them learn self-control and self-discipline and to develop a sense of responsibility.

Children should be respectful of their parents' authority. If they're disciplined harshly or unfairly, especially if punishment includes shouting or humiliating, it will make it difficult, if not impossible, for a child to respect and trust their parent.

Parents must be consistent in their discipline. Discipline that's not consistent is confusing to children, no matter how old they are. If parents are inconsistent in the way they discipline their children, children may find it hard to respect them. It can also indirectly encourage misbehaving and result in confusion and frustration for the child.

Discipline must also be fair. Parents must make sure that the punishment fits the crime, and is neither too severe or too lax. The consequences of their actions should be related to their behavior.

In order to discourage bad behavior, give your child choices about what to do. He or she will appreciate the chance to make decisions. Make sure rules that protect the safety, health and well-being of your child are given top priority. If your child is irritable, tired or upset, be understanding and try to help calm them down. It's important to keep in mind that bad behavior can sometimes be circumstantial.

Encourage positive behavior in your child by spending quality time alone with them each day. Give your child hugs, cuddles or a gentle pat on the back, and give praise when praise is due. If your child is angry or sad, try to understand why. Teach your child good behavior by setting a good example and behaving properly and appropriately yourself.

## Handling Conflict about Rule Enforcement at Home

Some parents may worry that setting strict rules may distance them from their children. But this simply isn't the case. Though they may gripe and complain and get upset when you become the enforcer, they realize deep down that this shows you care. These parameters you set forth and enforce make your child feel loved, safe, and secure.

It's never easy developing and introducing rules. Parents may tend to avoid setting rules because they fear confrontation and unpleasantness. But the uncomfortable stuff isn't necessarily a reflection on your relationship with your child, it's just the nature of adolescence - breaking rules and pushing limits is a part of growing up. We tend to want to be our child's friend sometimes, and when we're laying down the law, that just isn't possible. Our primary role is to protect, nurture and provide for our children.

When kids break rules, parents often overreact with harsh, disproportionate, and unenforceable punishments, which undermines the effectiveness of setting rules. Instead, when you first tell your child about a new rule, discuss the consequences of breaking that rule - what the punishment will be and how it will be carried out. Consequences must go hand in hand with limits so that your child knows what the cost of breaking the rules will be. The punishments you set should be reasonable and related to the violation. For example, if you catch your son and his friends smoking, you might "ground" him by restricting his social activities for two weeks.

Punishments should only involve the penalties you discussed before the rule was broken. Also, never issue empty threats. It's understandable that you'll be angry when house rules are broken, and sharing your feelings of anger, disappointment, or sadness can have a powerfully motivating effect on your child. Since we're all more inclined to say things we don't mean when we're upset, it's sometimes best to give ourselves a time-out period to cool off before we say something we don't mean.

Make the ground rules crystal clear to your child. It's imperative that you are consistent and follow through with a defined disciplinary action after each infraction, and that your child understands the reasons why.

## Clear Expectations Make Discipline Easier

Sometimes it can be very challenging to communicate anything with your child. Setting clear expectations regarding what is acceptable behavior and what is not is imperative to successfully teaching your child right from wrong. If the parameters are muddled or the child learns that in one situation the rules hold true, yet in another situation the same rule does not, it makes for confusion and frustration on both sides.

Sit down with your child well in advance and line out the expectations and consequences of misbehaving or a misdeed. Make it clear that in no uncertain terms is there any room for negotiation at the time of the infraction, and that should such a behavior occur, you intend to be firm in your discipline. Rules regarding your child's safety, health or well-being should have no room for negotiation when being set or enforced. Other rules can be openly and honestly discussed with your child and an agreed-upon action should be forged that both parents and child can agree upon. If necessary, make a contract between parent and child. Lay it all out in black and white, in language your child can clearly understand. For younger children, you might want to develop a good behavior chart within the contract, and for each week that goes by without any infractions being noted, a favorite or special activity might be earned. The connection between good deeds and special time with mom and/or dad might be just the currency they understand.

But all children need to understand that disciplining them is your way of teaching them what's acceptable behavior and what isn't. It may seem as though children fight rules and regulations, but they truly know that such parameters are meant for their well-being, health, and safety, and enable them to grow into a mature person capable of making wise decisions.

## **"Because" Just Isn't the Answer**

Children are inquisitive by nature. When they are younger, it's usually because they want to better understand something. When they are older, it's because they want to better understand why you think something is important and why they should feel the same way. Regardless of their age, it's imperative that your child understands that there is no room for questioning the rules and expectations you set forth and the consequences of breaking the rules.

Younger children usually do not understand a lengthy explanation of why it's important that they be home from their friend's home at a certain time or why they aren't allowed to play ball in the house. But the one thing they do strive to do most of the time is to make their parents proud and happy. So when a young child asks "Why?" or "Why not?" when they are told they can't play with something or someone or why they have to obey a rule you've set forth, simply explain to them, "because it makes me happy when you follow the house rules and do what I have asked of you." You should avoid using the term, "Because I said so," as that only adds to the child's frustration and confusion.

Older children, adolescents and teenagers alike will probably require more from your explanation. When they question "Why?" or "Why not?" it's best to directly, honestly and clearly state your reasoning. "I asked you to be home by 10 p.m. because we have to be at the dentist's office first thing in the morning for your check-up and we can't be late." It is also a great opportunity for you to reiterate the consequences of breaking the rule. "If you are not home by 10 p.m., you'll be grounded from going to your friend's house for a week." Be consistent, be firm, and be clear.

Though your child may challenge you by asking your reasoning for a rule that has been put in place, they are also showing their growth as an individual thinker. So try not to get angry or frustrated when they do so; realize it's their way of understanding the world around them.

## Consistency is Key to Successful Discipline

Consistency is key to successfully teaching your child right from wrong when disciplining them. It keeps small misdeeds and bad behaviors from later becoming bigger misdeeds and worse behaviors. You have to stand firm and mean it when you say, "Turn off the television now" or "No dessert after dinner because you didn't touch your food." Consistency teaches your child that there are defined consequences for misdeeds and inappropriate or unacceptable actions or behaviors. Inconsistency when disciplining makes you directly responsible for your children's misbehavior and doesn't teach them how to be responsible for their actions.

It's also important that each partner be consistent with the discipline. If one parent is too strict and the other is too lenient, the child will key into that and try to manipulate the situation to his or her advantage. Parents must agree on disciplinary action in advance and make a commitment to one another to be consistent in implementing and following through with the consequences. This can be especially difficult if the child's parents are separated or divorced. Though you may not be together anymore, it's imperative that you parent on common ground. Openly and honestly discuss these parameters with your former spouse and your child in advance, so that if discipline is needed, the consequences of such misbehavior are well understood in advance. Any disagreements between parents should be discussed out of the child's earshot.

Consistency is about being strong and standing firm, even when doing so is extremely difficult or exhausting. It can sometimes be hard to come home after a hard day at work only to find a hard night of parenting in front of you. Your child will consistently test the boundaries and 'push the envelope' with you to see if there's any play in those consequences. By standing firm, you are showing there is not, and that you expect them to do nothing less than take responsibility for their actions.

## **Another Key to Successful Discipline: Follow-Through**

Let's face it. There are just some days when it would just be easier to let your child have his or her way than feeling like you're fighting a losing battle when trying to discipline them. They beg, plead, cry, barter and scream - anything to get out of doing the time for their crime. However, don't lose your strength and your will during this time. It's times like these when consistent disciplinary action is imperative to teaching your child positive and acceptable behaviors. There is no room for negotiation when it comes to bad behaviors and there should be no room for exceptions when it comes time for punishing misdeeds or bad behavior.

Hopefully before any misdeeds occur, you've sat down with your child and discussed the consequences of misdeeds and inappropriate behavior or decisions. Be concise and consistent when discussing these consequences, so that when the time to implement them comes, you can follow through with ease. Children are consistently testing the boundaries and limits set on them on a continual basis, and the temptation to 'bend the rules' just once or twice can be overwhelming when they're really trying your patience. But be firm, yet fair. Emphasize that this was the understood consequence for this particular misdeed or inappropriate action, and that now is not the time to negotiate. Afterwards, take time out to discuss the situation with your child, and if it seems that perhaps a consequence that worked at first isn't working anymore, rethink that punishment and negotiate with your child. Of course, parameters that are set for their well-being or safety should never be negotiated. But in other instances, it may be time to develop a new consequence based on your child's age, temperament or maturity level.

It's also imperative that your spouse and any other adult caregivers are all on the same page and following through on punishments with the same level of consistency and clarity. Should you determine that what was once working isn't working anymore and develop a new parameter, be sure all adult caregivers are brought into the loop so that follow-through remains consistent and clear.

## The Process of Negotiating the Rules with Your Child

We all know as parents that discussing and negotiating the rules with our children is never easy. Children are all very different, and what might need to be a rule for one, may not even be an issue for another. That being said, there are many parameters that we set as parents that are the hard and fast rules - those with no 'wiggle room.' Those are the rules set forth to protect our child's health, safety and well-being. These rules and their consequences should be very clearly defined and it should be understood by all involved that they are there for a very important reason and that they are 'all or nothing.'

Rules that keep our children safe are of the utmost importance. These could include everything from teaching youngsters not to touch the hot stove, to teaching your school aged child the importance of obeying the laws while riding their bicycle. Children need to understand that these rules are to be followed to the letter and there is no room for negotiation here.

For adolescents and teenagers, such rules should include expectations about drinking, the use of illegal drugs, or safe defensive driving. These rules are also imperative to a child's health, well-being and safety. There should be no room for experimentation or relaxing the rules in specific social situations.

There are rules that can be fairly and equitably negotiated with your children as well. Rules regarding how many hours per week can be spent playing video games, what time a child is expected home for dinner, what time each night homework is to be completed, or how late a teenager is allowed to stay out on weekend nights are all rules that can be discussed openly and honestly between you and your child. These should also be consistent, however. Don't allow 11 p.m. one weekend night and then tell your teenager 9:30 p.m the following night when going out with the same group of friends. If your teenager broke the 11 p.m. curfew the weekend before, the consequence of losing the privilege of going out that weekend should be strictly enforced. Don't bend the rule just because your teenager seems genuinely sorry and promises never to do it again. Consequences should be consistent, fair, and always followed through.

## Harsh Discipline: Does it do more Harm than Good?

Recent studies suggest that low-income parents tend to endorse much harsher discipline, partially because they hold stronger beliefs about the value of spanking and experience higher levels of stress.

However, parents who work in high-stress jobs or are stay-at-home parents who are feeling frustrated or isolated are also at risk. It's imperative that parents recognize their tendency to punish a child too severely and take the needed steps to make sure the punishment is appropriate for their child's age, temperament and maturity level.

The study's finding showed that parents from lower income levels or work high pressure jobs are more stressed, and they react more emotionally to their child's behavior, and thus use harsher discipline. A parent in this situation may benefit from outside assistance and learning about alternative disciplinary strategies that are more appropriate and less harsh.

It's also important for a parent to realize that children thrive on praise. Parents in such a situation may always jump to discipline but fail to praise their child for their good deeds, behaviors and traits. Children instinctively want to please their parents and make them proud. By encouraging positive behavior, the parent will most likely discourage the behavior that has driven them in the past to punish too harshly.

In order to encourage positive behavior deserving of praise, parents might want to consider giving their child a task they know they're able to accomplish, and praise their efforts along the way. Parents need to also consistently praise their children for the positive traits they possess. Their child might be good at math in school, helpful to their little brother or sister, or is good at drawing pictures. Praise these good traits and the child is likely to respond by acting appropriately and behaving positively in order to gain more praise.

In the end, it's important to remember that a child is just that - a child. A parent should make a concerted effort to make sure the discipline is appropriate and take care of themselves physically, mentally and emotionally so they can optimally provide for their child's physical and emotional well-being.

## **Physical Punishment Is Ineffective and Harmful**

Effective discipline does not involve physical punishment of children. Recent studies have shown a direct link between physical punishment and several negative developmental outcomes for children including physical injury, increased aggression, antisocial behavior, difficulty adjusting as an adult and a higher tolerance towards violence. Research has also shown that physical punishment poses a risk to the safety and development of children. It is crucial for parents to gain an awareness of other approaches to discipline, because it is all too simple for physical punishment to turn into child abuse and result in severe physical injury, detrimental emotional damage, and even death. Each year thousands, of children continue to die as a result of physical abuse. Children have a right to be protected from physical abuse, and laws in every state demand severe punishment for those found guilty of physically harming a child.

Most parents do not want to use physical punishment as a form of discipline. A child that lives in an abusive environment is likely to grow up and either be abusive themselves or have severe social, emotional, physical and cognitive delays in development. Parents' disciplinary methods serve as strong models to children that teach them how to deal with life's day-to-day challenges. It is important for parents to model appropriate behavior and to establish expectations as well as limits. Children have a right to live in a safe, secure and nurturing environment, and their dignity must be respected. Parents must consistently use fair and logical consequences whenever children fail to follow rules. They must keep in mind that a child is not a miniature adult, and that discipline must be age-appropriate and fit the child's temperament and maturity.

Adults who recognize they have a problem with physically abusing their children should immediately seek professional help and ensure their children are taken to a safe environment to avoid harming them further.

## **Present a Unified Parental Front When Disciplining Your Child**

Disciplining your child is never easy. You probably know from experience, and mistakes, how important it is to be consistent and firm, and to always follow through with designated disciplinary consequences. But when there are two parents involved, it's crucial they are both on the same page and apply discipline consistently, regardless of marital status.

Parents should agree on how to discipline their children. To become reliable to children, both parents must be consistent in dealing with similar situations. In a situation where the parents are separated or divorced, disagreeing with each other over upbringing can create a confusing situation for children. They should make a concerted effort to keep their child's best interests at heart, and sit down with their child and line out the rules, expectations and the consequences for violating those rules. Both should agree that the intended discipline is fair, and apply it consistently in a firm yet fair manner in each home.

In addition, if there are disagreements regarding discipline or other parenting issues, they are best resolved when the child is not present. If the child senses discord, they may attempt to manipulate the situation to their advantage.

When teaching good behavior, parents should "practice what they preach." Children learn values and beliefs more by examples adults set than by verbal instructions. Screaming at a child to be quiet or paddling a child for hitting is hypocritical and ineffective. Decide what is important and what parental response to use to teach your child. It would be more effective to calmly tell your child to be quiet or use "time-out" when a child is physically aggressive.

And remember, what works now may not work later down the road. Situations may dictate a different approach, and time and maturity may demand a child's rule be modified or abolished altogether. Sometimes your common sense will help you decide when bedtime rules should be modified or table manners relaxed. Some rules will be the same, others will be modified or abolished, and new ones will be introduced. But regardless of the situation, parents should always present a unified front and work together, and not against each other, in providing effective discipline for their child.

## **Time Outs Help Reinforce Positive Behavior and Discourage Misbehaving**

Disciplining a young child using the time out method can be very effective, and will work with children as young as 18-24 months old. By using this method of discipline, parents are giving the child time to sit quietly and alone after misbehaving, without becoming angry or agitated with the child.

Designate an appropriate area in the house where the child is isolated from interacting with others. It can be a corner in their bedroom, a space on the kitchen floor or a special chair that's labeled specifically for time outs. The length should be age-appropriate. A good rule of thumb is generally one minute per year of age. A kitchen timer is helpful in counting down your child's punishment time.

Time out for toddlers is used to give them a chance to regroup and calm down. It's doubtful they will sit completely still, and they should not be forced to try.

All children should be asked in a firm, but pleasant, tone to complete a designated task or stop an undesired behavior. If their behavior persists, they should be verbally directed to behave once again, with eye contact being made and the time out spot pointed out. If after this warning the behavior still persists, they should be escorted to the time out location and told exactly why they are being sent there. Maintain a calm but firm tone with them. Once they've quietly served their time in the time out location, it's important to discuss with the child why they were sent there and that if the behavior occurs again, they will again be sent to time out. Older children should then agree to do what you told them to do or cease misbehaving. Children who leave their time out location before their time is up must be made aware that privileges will be lost as a result.

It's likely that your time out method will have to be modified to fit the temperament of your child and your own parenting style. And remember to reinforce positive behavior with praises, hugs, and smiles. Time out can successfully be used outside the home at places such as grocery stores, restaurants, or shopping centers. It's important to emphasize to the child that time out will be enforced should they misbehave while there. Be consistent and place the child in time out should they misbehave in the store. If you don't, they'll get the message early on that you're inconsistent and will be more likely to test your boundaries.

## Positive Discipline without Hurting Your Child

Children always seem to find a way to 'push our buttons' at times and really try our patience. It's easy to feel irritated, sad, angry, annoyed, confused and hurt. It's at these times that our parenting skills are really tested, and it's imperative we maintain a kind, but firm, stance when it comes to doling out the discipline. And let's face it - none of us ever want to hurt our child with physical or verbal abuse. We want to teach our child that such things are wrong, and punishing a misdeed or inappropriate action by yelling or hitting is hypocritical at best.

Our goal when disciplining our children is to teach them to be responsible, cooperative, kind and respectful. The best way to teach this is to always remain consistent, follow through with the same punishment for the same misdeed, and to discuss the discipline with your child openly and honestly afterwards.

Always keep in mind that the age, maturity level, and temperament of your child should always be considered when enforcing a set disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions should be discussed and understood in advance, so that children know what they have coming when they've misbehaved and can give pause and hopefully choose an appropriate route to avoid it. And most importantly, remember that it's not the child you dislike; it's his or her chosen behavior, action or misdeed.

If you need to, give yourself a brief 'time out' before responding with appropriate discipline. Sometimes we need a short cooling off period before dealing with our children's misdeeds in order to avoid a misdeed of our own. Yelling and hitting should never be an option.

Keep an open mind as a parent, and be willing to learn with and from your child. We all make mistakes, and it's important to realize that not every form of discipline works with every child. Children are just as unique as adults are, and forms of discipline should be tailored to fit the individual needs of both parent and child. But with a little forethought, patience, firmness, love and understanding, the discipline can have a positive outcome for all involved.

## The Importance of Crystal-Clear Rules for Your Child

The world is a far more scary and complicated place than it was when you were a child. As a result, it's imperative that you set adequate, yet fair boundaries with your child. It's a very important role in your parenting responsibilities. Children must make difficult decisions each day, and if they don't have clear, firm boundaries set, they may not always make the wisest choices. Limits teach children proper restraint in social and individual activities and provide children with necessary structure and security to assist in healthy development. Setting limits also provides children with guidance before they have an opportunity to get into trouble, thus making them more successful with everyday life.

A child's age and developmental level needs to be considered when setting limits. All children have a need for independence and individualization; however, they also need structure, security and parental involvement. It goes without saying that the needs of a 2-year-old vary greatly from those of a teenager. A toddler has a strong desire to explore and investigate, but parameters need to be set to ensure their safety while doing so. Teenagers need to be able to be individual and independent, but with strong parental guidance and influence, they are more likely to make smart choices in difficult situations.

Limits should be discussed and set prior to the situation. Though situations arise that weren't planned on, daily situations should have set limits and expectations. A teenager who breaks curfew may have the privilege of going out with friends revoked until they learn respect for the rules. A child who misbehaves while playing with a friend may need to be separated from the fun until they can learn to properly behave.

Children respond in a positive manner in an environment in which they know what to expect and what is expected of them. A child will be more respectful towards rules and more willing to abide by them if the rules are clear and consistent. Additionally, it's crucial that once a limit is set that the caregiver stick to it. A child is less likely to try to manipulate a caregiver into changing the limits when their experience has been that there's no bending on the limits. And remember, you are the one who sets the limits and lays down the law. There's no need to argue with your child. Be firm and consistent, and they will be less likely to challenge the rules and will accept the consequences.