

PARENTING TIPS

Look for Ways to Make Discipline Positive

You may be saying, “Yes, I know discipline is supposed to be positive but how can I be positive when my kids are doing the wrong thing.” Here are two practical ways you can make your discipline times a positive experience.

One way is to state rules and requests in positive terms. Instead of saying, “Don’t shout,” you might say, “We talk quietly in the store.” Instead of “Stop being rough with the dog,” you might say, “Be gentle.” Instead of complaining about the clothes all over your four-year-old daughter’s room, you could say, “Remember, we put our clothes in the hamper when we take them off.”

It may take some work, but clearly stating or restating the rule in positive terms gives your child a clear picture of what you expect and keeps your interaction on a positive note. Give gentle, positive reminders to point your kids in the right direction.

A second way to be positive is to give children choices. Instead of saying, “Stop banging that drum,” you could say, “You may play that drum outside or in your room.” Or, “I’ve already said no to getting out the train set. You can either choose another activity or go outside to play for awhile.” By keeping discipline positive you are training and teaching. Choices help children move in a more constructive direction.

Ephesians 6:4 says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

The first part of the verse describes a negative way of relating to children. Exasperate gives the impression of being harsh and causing discouragement. In place of that negative response, fathers are instructed to do something positive, bring their children up in the training and instruction of the Lord. As parents, we don’t want to discipline our kids to merely get rid of negative behaviors. The purpose of discipline is to train children and show them the positive direction they are to go.

For more practical ideas for working with your kids, consider the book, Home Improvement, The Parenting Book You Can Read to Your Kids by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN