

# What Is Positive Discipline? And Why Every Parent Should Know About It

by MICHELLE GUERRERE



PHOTO: @scoutfashion

Go ahead, and take a minute to think about how you were disciplined when you were a kid: Whether at home or at school, it was likely that when you misbehaved, you were given a time-out or a punishment (no recess, no snack after dinner, etc.). But something called positive discipline turns this form of parenting on its head. You see, this method encourages parents to stop punishing their children and to work with them to correct their negative behaviors instead.

"Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better we have to make them feel worse," asks Jane Nelsen, Ed.D., the founder of the Positive Discipline program and the author of books by the same name. "Think of the last time you felt humiliated or treated unfairly. Did you feel like cooperating or doing better?" Instead of just telling your child what not to do, positive discipline is all about teaching them how they should act. And yes, it may sound like this could be a little complicated for your little one, but in all reality, you're confusing them less. To see how to put positive discipline into practice with your kid, see our top five tips below.

### **Discover the "why"**

For the most part, kids are doing things for a reason, and your job is to figure out the root of the problem. Your little one is going to continue this behavior until you find some way to rectify the cause. "Once we know the valid root of the behavior, we can easily remove the cause or heal the emotions, and the child won't be driven to behave in that way anymore," says Naomi Aldort, the author of *Raising Our Children, Raising Ourselves*.

### **Ban bribing**

It can be so easy to bribe your little one with candy or an extra TV show when you want them to behave, but did you know that you're teaching them that they need to be rewarded to not act up? What your child is hearing when this happens is "you don't want to be good, and you have to be paid off," says Jim Fay, the founder of the positive parenting philosophy Love and Logic.

### **Give choices when possible**

Instead of telling your child what not to do, offer choices so they feel like they have some control in their decisions. If you want to go all-out, you can set a time each week for your kids to explain what they think is unjust in the household. "It's healthy for kids to have time each week for them to say what they think is unfair about how the house runs," says Fay. He suggests this for kids ages 4 and up.

### **Be consistent with boundaries**

It's time to be firm so your child knows what's to be expected of them. If you make a rule and let their actions slide, they won't believe you ever set a boundary in the first place. The next time your little one says something is unfair, you can acknowledge it with "I know." Fay says they will learn that "when my parents say something, you can take it to the bank."

### **Set aside quality time**

"A child's behavior is mostly a reflection of their self-esteem and of knowing that they are loved, worthy, and autonomous," says Aldort. "A confident, loved, and happy child has nothing that drives them to act out." Set aside one-on-one time every day so you can focus on your little one. You can do anything: Read a book, bake cookies, or just sit and talk.

Source: <http://www.mydomaine.com/positive-discipline>