



PARENTING POSTS

A newsletter for parents of fourth-grade students

Discipline and Guidance for Your Child

Some level of misbehavior among children is perfectly normal. Mistaken behaviors are a part of learning. Treat each situation as an opportunity for teaching appropriate behavior rather than for punishing misbehavior. After all, the word discipline means “to teach.”

An Alternative to Reward and Punishment

One way to discipline children is to reward them when they obey and punish them when they disobey. Many parents experienced this method of discipline. The big disadvantage to this method is that it limits the opportunity for children to make their own decisions and develop greater responsibility for their behavior.

As an alternative approach, use natural and logical consequences to discipline and guide children.

Natural consequences happen naturally. For example, when a child stands in the rain, he or she gets wet. Natural consequences teach lessons when parents don't interfere. If using natural consequences, parents always should ensure the child remains safe.

Logical consequences follow the three R's, so a given consequence should be:

- Related to the behavior
- Respectful to the child
- Reasonable to parent and child

(Source: Positive Discipline A-Z, 2007. By Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott and H. Stephen Glenn)



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Stress Less Activity



Stress is part of everyone's life. Even young children! Try this activity with your child to help reduce stress and enjoy time together.

Read short stories to each other. Close the book before the end of the story. Guess the ending. Finish reading the story to see if you were correct. Whose ending did you like best?

Logical consequences are obvious. When a child doesn't put his or her clothes in the hamper, the clothes don't get washed. If a parent lectures or nags about putting clothes in the hamper, then launders them anyway,, the child doesn't learn from their experience.

Consequences usually are more effective than punishment because the child is able to learn to look ahead and then figure out what to do the next time to avoid the problem instead of continuing the troublesome behavior.

Plan consequences in advance with the child. With opportunities come rules; with privilege comes responsibility. Your child needs to understand what happens if the rules aren't followed before undertaking the opportunity. For example, if a child wants to take part in the after-school club, homework still must get done. If homework slips, the child loses the privilege. But when homework is caught up again, the privilege can be resumed.

Involve the child in determining logical consequences. "What would help you remember to put your bike away?" Punishment may not help the child learn to always return the bike to the garage. In addition, punishment simply may place parents in a power struggle with children rather than guiding them to learn and practice improved behaviors.



Go here for more information on this and other topics.


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Positive Discipline by Jane Nelsen

"Conversational Curiosity" encourages parents to ask their children questions such as:

- What were you trying to accomplish?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- And other helpful questions can be found at www.positivediscipline.com or by snapping the  QR code and taking a Positive Discipline class with NDSU Extension.

Learning to use consequences, problem-solving and positive discipline in place of punishment takes time and practice. To use positive discipline, provide two positive choices and accept the child's decision. Use a friendly tone of voice that communicates your goodwill. "Olivia, I am reading in this room. You can read quietly in here or you can play in another room. You decide which you'd rather do." Follow through with respect and repetition when needed.



Praise Appropriate Behavior

Learning that positive consequences can be associated with their decisions to act appropriately is important for children. Be sure to comment on the positive behavior you see. However, be specific in your praise. For example, rather than saying, "You're really being good today," say, "Wow, you're getting your homework done right away."

Let children know how their behavior has a positive effect on you. For example, you could say, "I really appreciate you getting the table cleared off for supper. When we work together, we can start eating sooner." You have just described the behavior and the positive consequences. This type of praise can boost your fourth-grader's sense of motivation to be helpful.