

## Discipline:

**To lead, guide and teach your children.**

*All parents want to do their best to raise healthy, happy, well-adjusted children. This pamphlet gives you a place to start, with some positive ideas on discipline that may work for you and your family.*

### Special Thanks to:

The Children's Trust Fund of Wisconsin  
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**P**arenting is the toughest job,  
but it's the job that matters most.

There are no easy answers to the question, "How do I discipline my kids?"

We all have times when we lose our patience and need some extra help. Getting support and information is the key to positive parenting.

**Consider taking a parenting class or reading a book on child development.**

The more you learn, the easier it gets!

**Ask for help.**

A child's misbehavior may be caused by a medical or other problem.

**Talk to other parents.**

It can be a relief to know you're not the only parent who feels frustrated. Other parents may be able to offer you some new ideas.

**Take care of yourself.**

When you are tired, small problems can seem huge. Being good to yourself will help better your relationship with your child.

*The Children's Trust Fund of Massachusetts helps to make the toughest job a little easier by funding parenting education programs. To learn about programs in your area, call toll-free:*

**1-888-775-4KIDS**

# Positive Parenting



## Tips on DISCIPLINE

**Children's Trust Fund**



Strengthening Families \* Preventing Child Abuse

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## Positive Discipline Suggestions

### **Give praise, hugs and privileges for good behavior.**

Rewarding positive behavior works better than punishing misbehavior.

### **Adopt a non-hitting attitude.**

Studies show that spanking, contrary to popular belief, is not an effective way to discipline.

### **Set a good example.**

Your children learn by imitating you. To teach manners, use words like “please” and “thank you” in front of your children.

### **Learn what to expect from children at every age.**

Toddlers have tantrums, preschoolers are active. Discipline that works for one stage may not work for another.

### **Listen to your children.**

Respect their ideas and try to understand their point of view.

## Family Rules: *Children Need Clear Limits and Boundaries*

### Guidelines for setting rules:

#### **Limit the number of rules to a very few.**

Keep it simple. Make rules realistic and age-appropriate.

#### **Be Clear.**

Say, “Be home at 9 p.m.” instead of “Don’t be home too late.”

#### **Establish ahead of time what happens when rules are broken.**

Consequences should fit the misbehavior. If a toy is thrown, taking the toy away is appropriate.

#### **Give older kids a voice.**

When they help make the rules, they are more likely to obey them.

### Guidelines for enforcing rules:

#### **Be calm, clear and consistent.**

#### **Express disapproval for the behavior, not the child.**

#### **Direct Children.**

Tell them what to do. For example, “No standing in the tub. Sit please.”

#### **Say, “Subject closed.”**

When you’ve heard the request and stated your answer, there is no need to continue it further. Do not respond to tantrums or continuous complaints.

## How to Avoid Power Struggles and Encourage Good Behavior

**For toddlers, move breakable and dangerous objects out of their reach.**

### **Use physical redirection for young children.**

If a child reaches for something he shouldn’t touch, hand him a better plaything, saying, “Look at THIS toy.”

### **Establish routines.**

Routines, like reading a bedtime story, help children feel more secure and let them know what to expect.

### **Give realistic, not open-ended, choices.**

Instead of saying, “What would you like to wear today?”, say “Would you like to wear your red dress or your blue dress?”

### **Plan transition time.**

It’s difficult for kids to change activities quickly. Prepare them in advance. For example, “As soon as you finish your juice, it’s bathtime.”

### **Use humor and games.**

Instead of, “Help me clean up your room,” say, “Let’s see who can put away the most toys!”