

PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

Discipline is teaching designed to train to proper conduct or action. Children cannot properly raise themselves. Boundaries must be set and expected behavior should be within the physical and psychological capacity of each child. Children differ in their capacities at different stages of development.

Infants (0-12 months) cannot understand rules. The discipline of infants involves establishing a comforting set of routines that generate warmth and build security. Studies show that babies who begin to follow their mother's wishes are actually those whose signals for attention: body movements, facial expressions, and crying have been answered promptly and sensitively.

Toddlers (13 months-2 years) Time for parents to teach the relationship between dangerous acts- running into the street, touching a hot stove- and their consequences. Parents must also help children control inappropriate conduct- hitting, biting, and temper- before it becomes second nature. Stepping in quickly to abort dangerous and unacceptable behavior may need frequent repeating.

Preschoolers (3-5 years) have a better understanding and use of language. Begin giving clear reasons for expecting certain behavior. At this age, children are capable of learning to want to do what is right so parents can encourage proper behavior and begin the development of a value system.

Latency (6-7 years) social influences begin to expand. Teachers and peers begin influencing your child. They can learn how their behavior affects other people and to accept responsibility for their actions.

Children should receive love and acceptance from parents. A child should never be treated as if the love he/she receives is based on performance.

Discipline does not mean punishment, rather teaching.

Here are some examples of teaching:

1. Respond positively to appropriate behavior to encourage such appropriate behavior in the future.

Example: A child is quiet while the adult is on the telephone. Hug the child and say, "Thank you for being quiet while I was on the telephone."

2. When praising or correcting behavior, refer to the action or results of the action, not the child.
Example: Clean clothes are on the floor instead of hung up or toys are left out.
Say, "You left your room sloppy", not "You are turning into a slob."
3. Let the discipline fit the action.
Example: Homework was not completed on time because the child watched television or stayed outside too long. Remove a day or specific hours of television or outside play, whichever reason caused the problem.
4. Corrective discipline should be timely.
Example: A child misbehaves in the presence of one parent. Do not wait until the other parent arrives home to correct.
5. Correction time should be reasonable.
Example: A child throws a two minute tantrum. Time out alone for an hour would be excessive.
6. Children should learn the responsibility of families working together and each sharing responsibility that is suitable for their age.
Example: A three year old is capable of helping make a bed while a ten year old will not need help. A three year old can understand to pick up toys while a twelve year old understands to clean his/her bedroom.
7. Do not make a statement that will negatively affect the entire family.
Example: Do not say, "If you do not clean up your room, you can not go on the trip."
If the child needs encouragement, to clean his room, say, "Please clean your room ('make your bed', 'pick up your clothes') while I am loading the car."
8. Define your expectations to the child ahead of time.
Example: Before entering the grocery store, say, "You may pick out one piece of candy," or "You must stay with me and you can help push the basket if you would like."

Example: Rules of a foster home are explained ahead of time.

Example: Before attending a wedding, "We can whisper before the wedding starts, but after it starts, we have to be quiet."

The stages of development were taken from an article "The Gentle Art of Discipline" by Julius Segal.

DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES

Infants (0-12 months)

- * Respond promptly to the babies cry.
- * Make sure baby is clean and dry at all times.
- * Give frequent naps.
- * Give frequent baths.
- * Hold child close to your body when feeding.
- * Sing or coo to the baby.
- * Maintain a safe environment for baby by never leaving child unattended even for a minute.
- * Supervise older children that are around the baby and make sure safety precautions are followed to minimize the risks of falls or accidents.
- * Remove dangerous items out of reach of crawling babies.
- * Place child-proof gates at top of stairs and bottom of stairs to prevent the baby from falling.
- * Never leave a baby on high surfaces unattended (on bed, changing table, high chair)
- * Be observant to choking hazards on floors, tables and other places within the babies reach.
- * Cover all electrical outlets.

Toddlers (13 months-2 years)/Preschoolers (3-5 years)

- * Discipline techniques not allowed with any child in foster/adoptive care are any type of physical punishment that includes, but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, punching, pinching, pulling hair, kicking, shoving, shaking or any other punishment that could leave a bruise or mark of any kind.
- * **NO PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OF ANY KIND IS ALLOWED.**

Approved discipline techniques are as follows:

- * **Time out** - one minute for each year of age. Time will not begin until caregiver has explained to the child what behavior is necessary to come out of time out. The maximum amount of time a child can stay in time out without being reevaluated would be ten minutes. If the child still has not complied with appropriate behavior after ten minutes, talk to the child and re-explain what they did to go to time out and what they will have to do in order to come out.
- * **Go to bed early** - fifteen minutes early for each infraction.
- * **Toy time-out** - taking away offending toys for up to fifteen minutes at a time until child's behavior improves.
- * **Token economy** - earning tokens for good behavior and taking away tokens for infractions. At the end of an agreed upon time period, cash in tokens for special privileges or rewards such as an extra snack, watching a favorite movie or television show, extra play time, later bedtime, etc. Rules need to be simple and clear. Time period needs to be short three-five days. In some cases daily, depending on severity of the problem.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION POLICIES

Inheritance Adoptions is subject to Minimum Standards for Child Placing Agencies by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Discipline shall be individualized to fit the needs of the child. The following rules must be observed when disciplining children in foster care and adoption who are still in conservator ship with Inheritance Adoptions:

1. Only foster parents or other adult care givers shall discipline children.
2. Children shall not be subjected to cruel, harsh, or unnecessary discipline.
3. The imposition of restrictions on children to the agency home that exceeds twenty-four hours shall be recorded in the child's record.
4. Children shall not be subjected to verbal remarks that belittle or ridicule them or their families.
5. Children shall not be denied food, mail, or visits with family as punishment.
6. Children shall not be threatened with the loss of foster home or adoptive placement as punishment.
7. Physical holding as a form of restraint shall not be used. A short personal restraint that lasts no longer than one minute may be used to intervene in a situation of imminent risks.
For example: preventing a toddler from running in the street or touching a hot stove.
8. Children in care shall not be placed in seclusion such as, but not limited to, a locked room or closet.
9. The use of emergency medication used to modify the behavior of children shall not be used.
10. The use of mechanical restraints are not permitted.
11. The uses of protective or supportive devices are not permitted.

Approved and adopted by the Board of Directors, July 28, 2003