

## DISCIPLINE WITH LOVE

Being too permissive does not help children learn to be independent. It will not give them the ability to learn self control and manage their behavior in an appropriate way. As parents and caregivers, we must learn to set appropriate limits while still maintaining the self-esteem of young children. Many parents are at a loss when it comes to guiding the behavior and disciplining their children. Maybe you can hear other parents say they are unsure when to be strict and when to be lenient, which things to make an issue out of, and which to let slide. Guiding the behavior of young children is more than common sense. For many of us, it is a skill that needs to be learned.



### WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

Guiding behavior and discipline is a process of setting limits on our children's behavior and enforcing those limits in a loving and consistent way. The first rule is to remember the child must always know that it is the behavior that is unacceptable **not** the child. It is a way of letting children know there are rules that need to be followed and ways of correct behavior that need to be learned.

## **TAKE CONTROL**

In order to be effective, parents have to be able to take control.

As a parent, you have to approach the job with confidence. Children need to feel that you know what you are doing. They don't like parents that are not confident. Contrary to what they may say, they don't like to be the ones setting the rules. Children know they lack the experience for setting the rules alone. Rules are best followed when the parent engages the child in making the rules and gives them reasons for such rules.

## **GUIDANCE WITH LOVE**

True, children will usually behave if you get angry enough -- but it is a very destructive method. They may end up behaving today, but the negative emotions this stirs does not portend well for the future. Rebellion, disrespect, and other forms of acting out are often the outcome in the medium or long term. Also, angry parents often make their children feel guilty for causing them to be angry. Then the child has to deal with both the parent's anger and the guilt feelings for having caused the parent's anger.

## **A FEW RULES TO FOLLOW**

Here are a few practical tips on how to demonstrate love while disciplining a child:

1. Say to a child, "I love you too much to allow you to (you name it)... swim in the pool when I am not there, hit your brother, etc."
2. Speak pleasantly and softly. If we yell at our kids a lot they will learn to tune us out. The softer we speak, the louder they hear. Further, explain to your child that you have their benefit/safety in mind.
3. If you are angry, calm down before dealing with the situation. While this is not always possible, try.
4. Don't embarrass your child when managing their behavior. This means not rebuking a child in public, you will embarrass the child and make him feel unloved.
5. Tell your child that his behavior is not befitting a person of his stature. In other words, "You're a smart 10-year-old and you're too big to forget to do your homework." If we think highly of our children, and communicate that, then they will make more of an effort to live up to that image. They will also feel valued and loved.