



The Counselor's Corner

Glengarry Elementary School
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Positive Discipline Strategies

Why Corporal Punishment (Hitting) Is NOT Recommended...

As you all know, being a parent is HARD and, unfortunately, children do not come with a "how to" manual. All of us, as parents, want the best for our children and want to raise them to become successful and well-adjusted adults. But, when our children misbehave, it can be challenging to know the best way to react and to resolve the situation at hand. Sometimes when parents are angry at their child, their first reaction is to use "corporal punishment" - to hit the child. Instead, we must pause and allow ourselves to calm down *before* disciplining the child. Rather than reacting out of anger or frustration, give yourself a few minutes to breathe and calmly come up with an effective consequence for the child's bad behavior. Rather than thinking of your child's bad behavior as a problem, view it as an opportunity to teach, guide, and direct your child towards better behavior.

3 Reasons Why Hitting is NOT Recommended

1) Hitting creates fear in the child. When children are hit by their parent, a message is sent to them that their parent or loved one is willing to hurt them in order to force them to behave better. Although parents have good intentions, hitting can lead children to feel scared, ashamed, angry, and hostile towards a parent. This can lead to feelings of betrayal and a lack of comfort and trust between the parent and child.

2) Hitting trains a child to use violence to solve their problems. Hitting can teach children that violence is an effective way to solve problems. By hitting children, we teach them that "might makes right" - that it is okay for the strong to use force against the weak. Research suggests that children that are hit by their parents

are more likely to be aggressive towards their siblings and peers as children and their spouses and children as adults.

3) It doesn't work. Although hitting may stop bad behavior in the short-term, research suggests that it is *not* a long-term solution to changing children's bad behavior. In reality, or hitting makes children *more* likely to act out in the future. Hitting shows children that they misbehaved, but does not show children *how* to behave better. In other words, hitting sends the message that children have acted badly—but does not show them *how* to act in a more positive way in the future. The opportunity to teach the child a more appropriate behavior is lost.

How Can I Discipline my Child Without Spanking or Hitting?

The Top 10 Ways to POSITIVELY DISCIPLINE Your Child

(Adapted from Katharine C. Kersey, Ed.D)

- 1) **Demonstrate Respect Principle:** Treat the child the same way you do other important people in your life—the way you want him/her to treat you and others. Before disciplining your child, think—if my child were struggling with something, how would I want him/her to approach it with me?
- 2) **Make a Big Deal Principle:** Make a big deal over responsible, considerate, appropriate behavior. When the child is “being good,” give them your attention, thanks, praise, thumbs-up, recognition, hugs, special privileges, and rewards.
- 3) **Incompatible Alternative Principle:** Give the child something to do that is incompatible with the inappropriate behavior. For example, if the child is running around the grocery store, tell him/her, “Help me pick out 6 oranges.” In other words, make it impossible for the child to continue the bad behavior.
- 4) **Choice Principle:** Give the child two choices, both of which are positive and acceptable to you. For example, rather than saying, “Go to bed!” say...“Would you rather tiptoe or hop upstairs to bed?” Tell the child that either he/she can choose or you will choose for them.
- 5) **When/Then or Abuse it/Lose it Principle:** Give children a task to do and, once it is done, offer them a reward. For example, tell him/her, “When you finish your homework, then you may watch TV.” If the child does NOT complete the task, then they do NOT get the reward. So, for example, if they do not complete their homework, then they cannot watch TV for the rest of the night. Be sure to stick to your original plan or else this strategy will lose its effectiveness!
- 6) **Connect Before your Correct Principle:** Be sure to “connect” with the child—share positive thoughts with him/her and show him/her that you care—before you try to correct his/her behavior. Make it clear to the child that you are disciplining him/her *because* you care about him/her and want the best for him/her.
- 7) **Validation Principle:** Acknowledge (validate) your child's wants and feelings. Show the child that you understand how/she feels. For example, tell the child, “I know that you feel angry with your sister for playing with your toy. But, it is important that you learn to share with her.”
- 8) **Good Head on your Shoulders Principle:** Tell your child, especially as he/she gets older, “You have a good head on your shoulders. You decide. I trust your judgment.” This brings out the best in the child and shows him/her that eventually he/she will be responsible for his/her own life and decisions.
- 9) **Belonging and Significance Principle:** Remember that everyone needs to feel that he/she belongs and is important. Help your child to feel important by giving him/her important jobs to do and reminding him/her that if he/she doesn't do them, they won't get done! Help him/her feel more important by being responsible.
- 10) **Timer Says it's Time Principle:** Set a timer to help children make transitions. For example, tell the child, “When the timer goes off, you will need to put away your books.” It is also a good idea to give the child the chance to decide how long he/she needs to complete the task. You can also offer the child a choice, for example, tell the child, “Do you want to take a bath in one minute or two?”