

# DISCIPLINE

**Discipline is the name given to the ways parents teach their children right from wrong. Discipline protects children from getting hurt.**

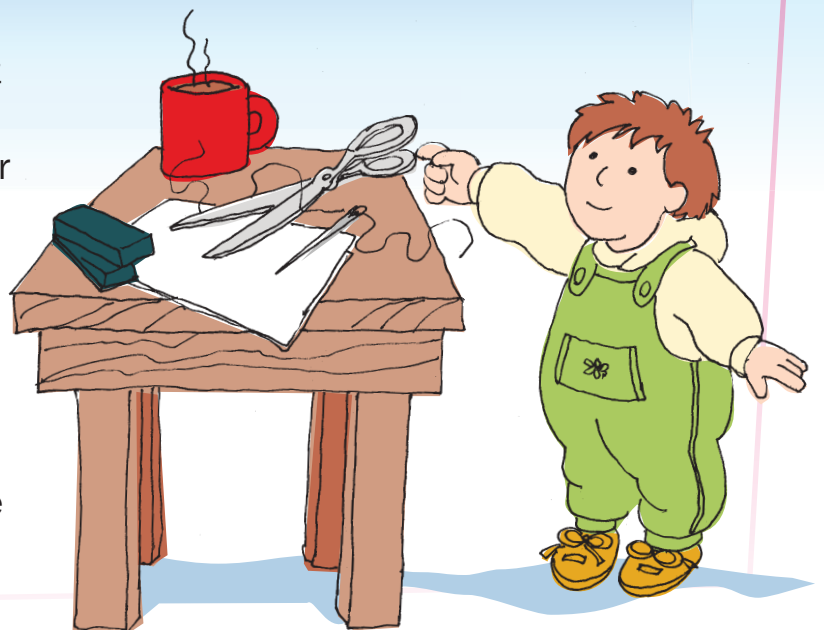
**For children over three years old, discipline protects the child *and* teaches her positive behaviours.**

## Discipline is...

- making necessary and realistic rules and limits for your child that keep her safe
- helping your child learn self-control and respect for others

## Discipline is important because it...

- keeps your child safe
- teaches your child right from wrong
- helps him feel cared for and loved
- makes your child feel good about herself so she will try new things
- helps your child get along with other people



## Acting up happens when your child...

- is hungry, tired or bored
- doesn't understand the rules. If the instructions are not clear or are expressed as questions, your child may not know what to do.
- is confused. This may happen when your body language says something different to your instruction (for example, laughing when you are telling him not to do what he is doing).
- doesn't want to stop doing an activity

## How do I prevent the need to discipline?

### Around the house:

- Set things up so there are few "don't touch" areas in your home.
- Put child-proof catches on your cupboards.
- Close doors to areas at home where it is not safe for your child to be alone.
- Use gates or barriers to block your child's entry to areas that might be dangerous, such as stairs.
- Have plenty of things for your child to play with. Toys and activities do not have to be expensive – cardboard boxes and pots and pans can be just as much fun!
- Take a small bag of toys with you when you go out.

### Setting rules:

- Make sure the rules you have set are right for your child's age.
- Do not have too many rules.
- Have all people taking care of your child use the same rules.
- Do not be too strict if your child is having a bad day.
- Be consistent. It will confuse your child if you allow something one day and not the next.
- Tell your child exactly what you want her to do.

### To encourage good behaviour:

- Be patient. Your child will make mistakes – this is how a child learns.
- Praise your child when he is behaving well.
- Be a good role model. Live what you teach.



## How do I discipline?

Never hit or spank your child.

**Give your child time to respond** – Children don't like to stop doing things they enjoy. Give your child a chance to prepare for change. For example, you can say, "In five minutes, it will be time to turn off the television and start to get ready for bed."

**Get close and gain your child's attention** – Stop what you are doing and go to your child. Bend down to eye level and use your child's name to get his attention.

**Use a calm, firm voice** – Hold your child's hand and firmly say, "No."

**Tell your child what to do** – Tell your child what you want her to stop doing and what to do instead.

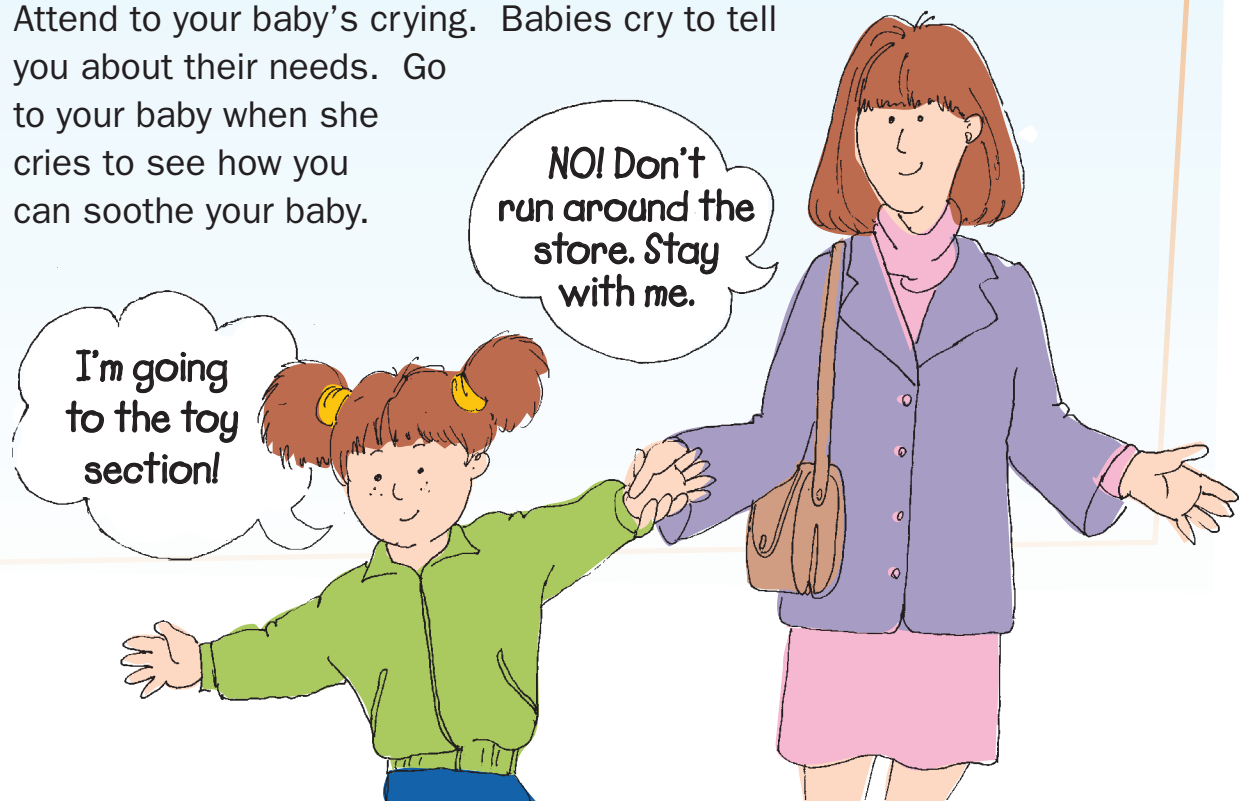
**Give your child time to co-operate** –

Wait about five seconds to give your child time to do what you have asked.

***Praise your child for co-operating.***

## Babies do not need to be disciplined.

- Never shake, toss or hit a baby.
- Attend to your baby's crying. Babies cry to tell you about their needs. Go to your baby when she cries to see how you can soothe your baby.



## If your child still does not listen...

### Follow up your instruction with a reasonable result.

- Remove the toy or activity that is the problem for about five to 10 minutes.
- Explain why you are doing it. Do not debate or argue the point.
- Return the toy or activity once the time is up to give your child a chance to practise good behaviour.

### Use quiet time or a time-out if there is no reasonable result or the problem behaviour happens again.

- Tell your child what she has done wrong and move her into a time-out.
- Take your child away from the situation and to an uninteresting but safe space.
- Tell your child he must be quiet for one minute.
- Take your child out of time-out once she has been quiet for one minute and set her up in an activity.

