

DISCIPLINE

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

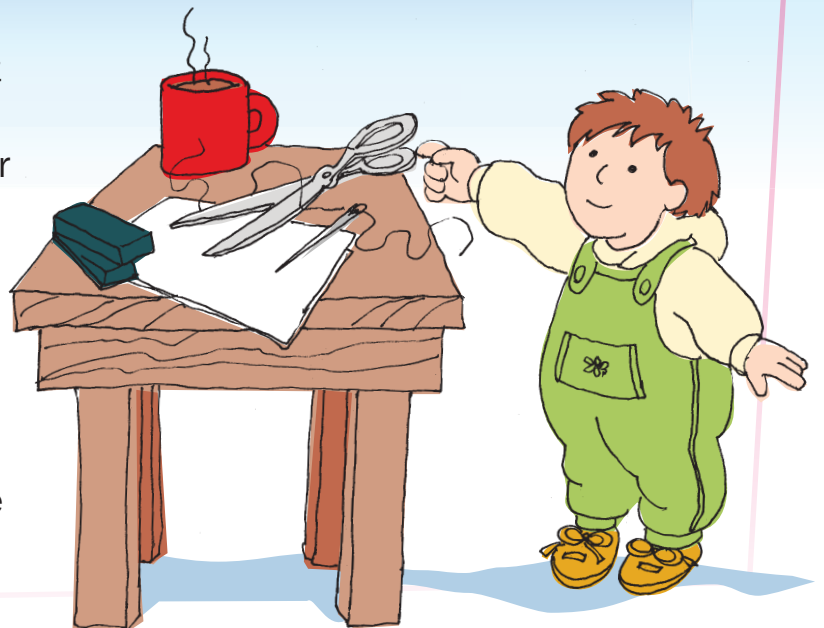
For children over three years old, discipline protects the child *and* teaches her positive behaviours.

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.

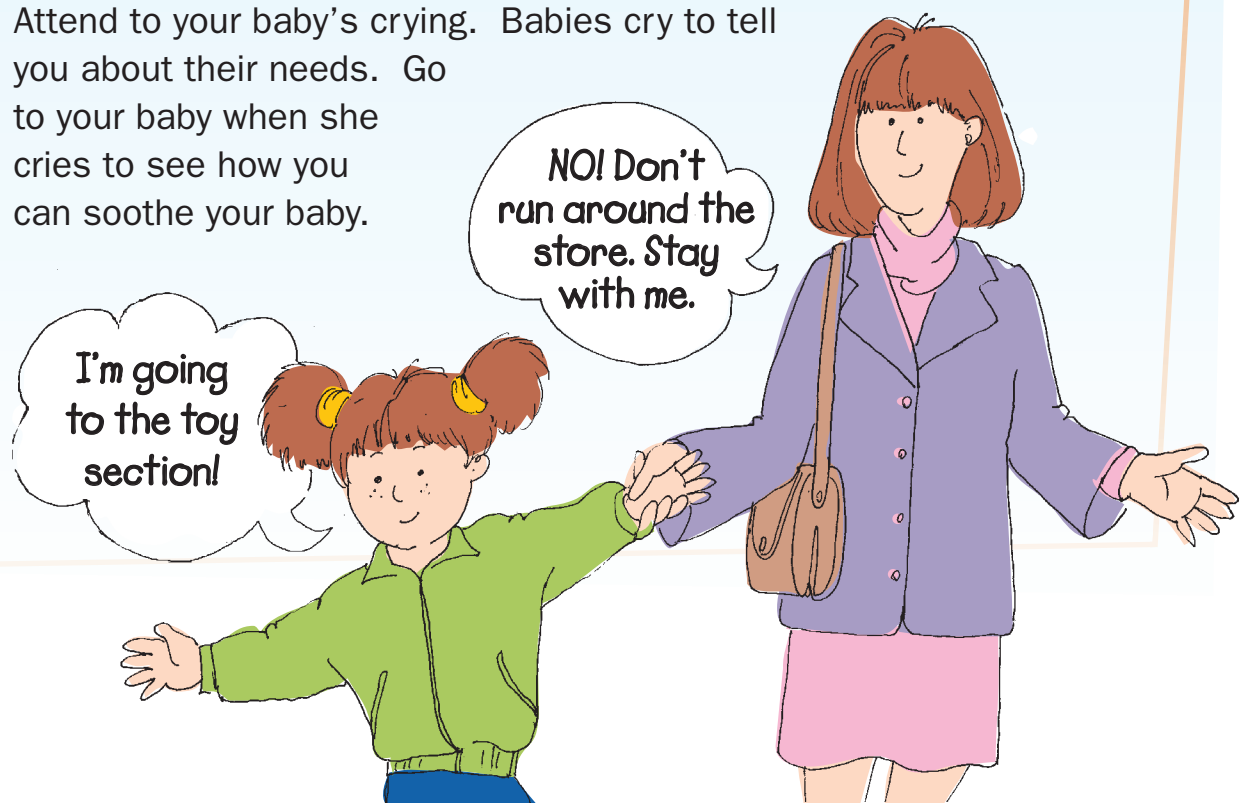
Give your child time to co-operate –

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.

