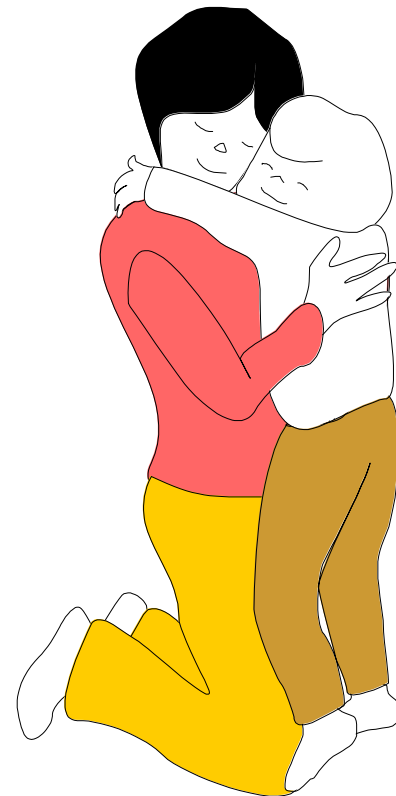


Positive Parenting



Your guide to non-violent discipline

Produced by:



EU CHILD PROTECTION PROJECT

Helping Agencies

Help & Shelter

Homestretch Avenue, Georgetown

Tel: 225—4731 or 227—8353

Hotline: 227—3454

Email: hands@networksgy.com

Website: <http://www.hands.org.gy>

Ministry of Human Services

Probation and Welfare Department

Cornhill Street, Stabroek.

Georgetown

Tel: 227-0129/225-6212/231-6556/225-6202

Childcare & Protection Agency

Broad Street, Charlestown

Georgetown

Tel: 227-0138/227-4082/225-1257

Hotline: 227-0979

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Positive Parenting

Everyone accepts that children must learn right from wrong and develop the ability to get on with others.

However, it is important to remember that it is not good to physically punish your children and you should, therefore, consider other methods such as positive parenting.

We want our children to behave well and to: have respect for themselves and others; be polite to others; know how to behave in different situations; be able to concentrate and pay attention; share and to take turns; know how to win and how to lose.

But children often behave quite differently, and we may feel annoyed, frustrated and embarrassed.

Children will always push against boundaries. They want to find out at what point their parents will draw the line; what they can and can't do.

This helps them understand what is acceptable and what isn't.

Dealing with misbehavior

Parents need to agree on the rules. It will help the children if both parents take the same approach.

For dealing with serious misbehavior, try withdrawing privileges, for example, favorite programs, playing with games, loss of pocket money, grounding, isolation, etc.

Things to note when dealing with misbehavior:

Be prompt - Act as soon as possible, your children will associate the misbehavior with the consequences.

State the reason - sure your children understand why punishment is being given.

Set a limit - Tell your children how long the consequences will last.

Avoid empty threats - Children won't pay attention or respect you unless you follow through.

Scold in private - Never scold children in front of friends. If you are in a public place go outside and speak to your children.

Think before you act - The consequences should fit the misbehavior.

Choices

Give children choices. Choices are used when parents are willing to let their children make decisions with reasonable limits.

Give them the freedom to make mistakes.

Encourage your children to think for themselves and take responsibility for their actions.

Respecting Feelings

This is useful when you recognize that your children have strong emotions.

Help them find the words to tell you how they are feeling, even if it takes time.

Let your children know you understand that they are angry or frustrated and that it's okay to feel that way.

Let your children know your feelings too.

Eventually, your children will learn to talk about feelings instead of misbehaving.

Small children may...

- Have tantrums
- Shout and scream
- Hit siblings, parents and friends
- Not do as they are told
- Break, spill and squash things
- Not listen or concentrate

Teenagers may...

- Become rebellious
- Show disregard for rules, responsibilities and family
- Use drugs and alcohol
- Exercise destructive, threatening or violent behavior
- Demonstrate self-harming or suicidal behavior
- Behave disrespectfully
- Lie, curse and steal
- Not want to go to school

Parents work out their own ways of looking after their children. There is no simple recipe; it takes time for children to learn how to behave and for parents to work out the best way of getting the best out of their children.

Challenging Behaviors

Children do not usually misbehave just to upset or annoy their parents. There is often a reason behind a child's behavior.

It may be:

- they are upset or anxious about school
- they feel jealous of their brother or sister
- they want their parents to listen to them
- they want their parents to spend time with them

Behavior patterns can get stuck.

At some point most children will misbehave to get attention.

If a parent doesn't pay much attention when children are behaving well, some children will try 'acting up' to get attention, even if it results in a telling off.

Limits, responsibility and independence

Setting limits: This involves sharing with children the reasons for proposed limits, developing agreement on the necessity for the limits and ensuring that the limits are understood; a practice that should be repeated until self-discipline develops. Realistic limits are necessary for safety and for the family's happiness. Enforce limits firmly and fairly.

Promote responsibility: Give children jobs to do at home. In doing so, discuss what needs to be done, set time limits for the completion of jobs, check to make sure jobs are completed and don't forget to praise children for completing tasks.

Promote independence: Involve your children in decision-making. As they grow older give increased responsibility for setting limits, provide encouragement and comfort whenever your children experience failure.

When children understand and agree to limits, they are learning to set their own.

Communicating with your children

Adults like attention when they speak and so do children. Listen carefully to your children. Your children, flattered by your interest and attention, may try harder to please you.

Busy parents should set aside a special time to communicate with their children each day. For example, talk together while you walk, while doing the dishes or before bedtime. Sharing children's play and work is also important.

If you have to say 'no', give your children a good reason and offer an alternative.

Try to use positive words. Tell your children what you want them to do, not what you don't want them to do.

When speaking to them try using different tones that are different from what they expect.

Your children are trying out their new language and needs to be heard. Encourage your children to talk to you - sit beside him/her - they'll find it easier to talk and listen to you if you're not standing over them.

What parents need to know

Children's needs and understanding change as they grow, and what might be expected of a four-year-old can't be expected of a two-year-old.

Make your home 'toddler proof' by storing valuables and breakables away from your children so they can explore safely.

Play is important and enjoyable, and children can learn a lot from it. They need time to play.

Avoid comparisons: All children are unique. Don't compare your children to other children and share that with them; they will grow up to compare themselves unfavorably with others.

Understand your child: Needs and wants change as children grow older. Young children need to know parents are near. Teenagers need privacy as well as regular outings with friends. Listening and observing carefully help prepare you to deal with these changes.

Be a role model: It is your responsibility to set an example for your children, by your own behavior and attitude.

Children learn from watching others:

- If you want them to be punctual, you should be too.
- If you want them to pick up their clothes, you should pick up your own.
- If you want them to speak softly, so should you.
- If you want them to be polite, you should use "please", "thank you" etc. when talking to your children and others.

Looking after yourself: If you take time to relax, this may help you to better cope. Therefore:

- take time for yourself
- keep interests outside the home
- take up the offer of help from family and friends
- get rest when you can
- look after your health
- know your limits
- get together with other parents and their children - children also need company.

Parents ought to exercise self control: it is important to recognize body messages that tell you that you are about to lose it.

Ask for help and advice - nobody gets it right all the time.

Encouraging your child

A parent's encouraging words help children feel good inside about something they have done or said. By paying attention in this positive way, parents teach children to feel encouraged.

Real praise and encouragement is the best reward as they can boost children, build self-esteem and confidence. Building your children's self-confidence will help them to try out new things, make friends and cope with the upsets and problems they meet as they grow up.

To help establish the desired behavior, give praise promptly every time your children respond appropriately. Younger children love smiles, hugs, kisses and thank-you. Older children respond to praise, special privileges etc.