

# Positive Discipline

## Including the Proper Use of Time Out

Discipline is a slow, bit-by-bit, time-consuming task of helping children to see the sense in acting a certain way.

- J. Hynes



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
**Department of Human Services**

Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing  
[www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare)

What does it mean to discipline a child? Discipline means to teach and train. It is a learning process which takes place over time. Just like teaching children reading and writing, caregivers need to teach children how to behave. It is important to do that in a positive way.

Positive discipline helps children learn what to do and what not to do in situations. It will take practice just like reading and writing. Punishing them for something they have not learned yet only teaches them to feel bad about themselves.

Punishment is very different from discipline. It involves negative actions that may cause physical, mental or emotional pain to a child. This is unnecessary and does not work long-term. Punishment may stop a behavior, but it does not teach a child what is acceptable.

Caregivers have a lot of control when it comes to influencing children's behavior. The daily program and caregiver interactions with the children can make a big difference.

## **Daily Program**

A good child care program works best when the atmosphere is pleasant and the staff are prepared. As children arrive for the day, they need to know they will find affectionate care, reasonable order, security, and an interesting day. Consider the following:

### **Lesson plans**

When caregivers create lesson plans, they need to be well-thought-through before being implemented. The activities should reflect the developmental needs, interests and abilities of the children enrolled in the program. The plans must include experiences that provide for physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. The experiences must also include a flexible balance of quiet and active, individual and group, large and small muscle, child-initiated and staff-initiated, and indoor and outdoor activities.

During free play, a variety of activities should be offered simultaneously to allow children to have a choice in what activities they want to participate. They should also be set up prior to the children arriving for the day, so full attention can be given to the children. The children will have fewer reasons to engage in unacceptable behaviors.

### **Schedules**

When caregivers create a daily schedule, the children will learn the order of activities that will be occurring throughout the day (for example: circle time, free play, outdoor play, small group, lunch, naptime, etc.). This will provide them with a sense of control. It will also allow for smooth transitions from one activity to another without children having to wait. Children who are not expected to sit for long periods or to sit idly waiting for another activity to begin are more engaged in the program.

If an activity does not hold the children's attention, caregivers should move on to another activity. If children are engrossed in an activity, caregivers can lengthen the time of involvement. Happy children are less likely to have behavior problems.

### **Equipment**

Caregivers should choose a variety and appropriate number of age and developmentally appropriate equipment. It is important to have the equipment in places that will make it easy for children to use it. Puzzles on shelves low enough so pieces won't be dumped, easels with floor coverings underneath to catch paint spills and books in good condition in the quiet/reading area all help children be more successful.

Young children are not able to share very well; therefore, an appropriate amount of equipment with duplicates will reduce fighting over the equipment. Providing enough supplies will help children stay interested in what they are doing.

## Room Arrangement

When caregivers arrange the room and activity areas, there are several things to think about. The location of each activity area - the more quiet activities should be grouped closer together and the more active, noisy activities grouped together. Each area should be inviting and contain enough space so that one activity does not interfere with another, which could cause behavior problems.

Each area should also be well-defined, which includes boundaries that protect children's activities from traffic and other distractions. This encourages sustained play.

Sometimes a child needs space to be alone - a protected, secure space where children can go for a bit of privacy. This is usually in the corner directly opposite the entry in a center or in an area in the home that is away from the other children, but where the child can still be supervised.

## Caregiver Interactions

An adult who combines caring with fair and steady rules sets an example. Children who are treated this way tend to be more cooperative. Always think about the following when interacting with children:



### **Foster Independence to Build Self-Esteem and Help Children Learn Respect**

Children are more willing to listen to caregivers who encourage their independence. When children know that adults trust that they can do something on their own, they learn what respect feels like, which builds their self-esteem.

Often adults believe they are helping when they do things for children. However, this can cause children to become dependent, which interferes with their development of skills and confidence necessary for effective decision-making. Dependency can also delay social development. Children may have problems in their relationships with adults and other children.

Children learn to be respectful when adults are respectful to them. Respect is not the same as obedience. Children might obey because they are afraid. If they respect you, they will obey because they know you want what is best for them.

Children learn from everything adults say and do:

- Believe in the children in your care. Your opinion means a lot to them. If you believe the children can succeed, they will believe it as well.
- Build their independence. Give them responsibilities as soon as they can handle them.
- Help them set and achieve goals. Their self-respect will skyrocket when they see themselves achieving those goals.
- Encourage honesty. Let children know that they may be able to fool some people, but they cannot fool themselves. There is no pride in stealing, cheating or lying.
- Tell children it is okay to make mistakes.

Children and adults deserve respect at every age. The following is a guideline:

- Babies - They are too young to show respect, but when you meet their needs, they learn to trust you. This helps as they get older because respect for authority is based on trust.
- Toddlers - They are old enough to learn to say please and thank you.
- Preschoolers - This is a good time to teach rules and consequences.
- Elementary Age - They show the most respect for adults who make fair rules. It helps to let them have a say in the rules that they are expected to follow.
- Middle and High School Age - Allow them to have some independence, such as activity choices, but make sure you have guidelines. They will appreciate the respect you are showing them.

## Model Appropriate Behavior

Modeling appropriate behavior is an important part of discipline. Children develop behaviors through observations, and they learn by listening, seeing and doing. Every time you say please or thank you, you are teaching children how you like them to act. Children will imitate the people in their lives. Role modeling can be both negative and positive; therefore, it is important to be a good role model.

The best way to help children learn what to do is by doing those things yourself. Some things you can do are:

- Be honest - If you do something wrong, admit it and apologize.
- Be positive - Do not embarrass, insult or make fun of a child. Compliment him.
- Be trusting - Let children make choices and take responsibility.
- Be fair - Listen to each child's side of the story before reaching a conclusion.
- Be polite - Use please and thank you.
- Be reliable - Keep promises.
- Be a good listener - Give children your full attention.
- Obey laws - Follow rules.
- Be caring - Show concern for people, animals and the environment.
- Avoid poor role models - When you see examples of disrespect, discuss them.
- Show respect - Show by your words and actions that you respect yourself and others. Use respectful tones and words.
- Model safety behaviors - If you make children use seat belts, helmets and sunscreen, you model these safety behaviors when you use them yourself.
- Do what you expect children to do - If you want children to try new foods, you should try them too and say, "I'm going to take at least one bite of each food on my plate." If you do not want children to raise their voices, you should speak quietly and gently yourself.



## Make Rules that are Reasonable and Enforceable

All children need rules and expectations to help them learn appropriate behavior. When you are creating rules, keep in mind that they should be clear, firm and specific. Rules should tell children what to do, instead of what they cannot do. Answer the following questions when creating and establishing rules:

- How many rules do we want?
- Will the children help create the rules?
- What is the reason for each rule?
- Are the rules age-appropriate?
- Are the rules enforceable?

Having too many rules makes it difficult for young children to understand the behavior you expect. They may become confused or uncertain, which may lead them to break the rules. You and the children should sit down and create a handful of rules that are easy to understand. By involving the children, it allows them to have a sense of fairness and control, which will make them more likely to follow the rules.

The main reason for rules is to keep children safe and healthy. When you set rules, explain why the rule is important. For instance, if the rule is "use walking feet in the classroom," it is because if you run, you may fall and get hurt or you may run into and hurt someone else.

Perhaps the most important thing to understand when creating rules is child development. Ask yourself if the rules and expectations are age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate. Never forget that rules that work for one child may not always work for another. Learn as much as you can about child development so you will have reasonable expectations. For example, expecting a toddler to sit still through an hour-long story time at the library is not a reasonable expectation.

It is important to remember that children grow and learn rapidly. Make changes to the rules when they are no longer appropriate or effective.

## **Enforce Appropriate Consequences**

All behaviors have an effect on someone or something, which is a consequence. Consequences can be positive or negative. Positive consequences happen when children act in a way that is expected. Negative consequences happen when children act in ways other than what is expected. It should be clear to the children what behaviors you expect. You should explain the rules and the consequences if the rules are broken. The consequences should be realistic, consistent and related to the behavior.



There are natural consequences and logical consequences. A natural consequence occurs without any adult interference. A logical consequence occurs when an adult gets involved. Both types teach children the connection between their actions and the results of their actions.

Example: Natural consequence - The child who plays rough with toys will experience a natural consequence when the toy breaks and it can no longer be used.

Example: Logical consequence - If a child does not pick up a game when she is done using it, the adult will tell the child that she cannot move on to the next activity.

## **Think Before You Act**

Keep calm and in control. Having self-control will help you meet your goals. If you react in the heat of the moment, you will not be thinking clearly and chances are you will not be effective. Guide the child with positive comments, keeping the focus on the child's behavior and an appropriate consequence for the behavior.

Examples: When you see a child break a rule, do not ask the child if she did it, instead say, "I saw you take the toy from your friend; you need to give the toy back. When she is finished with it, you can have a turn. Let's find another toy you can play with now."

When something occurs out of your sight and you cannot determine what happened, have all of the children involved tell you what happened and determine how to resolve the issue. For example, John hits Sally. After listening to the story, you determine that John hit Sally because he wanted a turn at the computer. You can then help them figure out a way to share the computer.

Guide the child with positive comments without criticizing the child. Say something like "You are a good friend to John, but when you hit him, it hurts John and he doesn't want to play with you."

## **Be Consistent**

If young children are going to follow rules, they need to understand what is expected. Explain all rules clearly to the children and clearly define the consequences of breaking the rules. Children will learn to follow the rules when they are consistent and enforceable.

Be consistent with the rules when dealing with children of all ages. Make sure that all of a child's caregivers are consistent as well. Consistency helps children develop a sense of trust because they know their caregivers will respond the same way in a given situation. This also helps children learn respect for their caregivers because they see that the caregivers treat everyone in the same manner.

## **Give the Child Choices**

It is important to give children choices whenever possible. The choices can be as simple as, "Would you like to play with toy A or toy B?" Giving choices instead of commands teaches children to make decisions, develops problem-solving skills, builds self-esteem, and avoids power struggles. Power struggles often occur when adults direct most aspects of a child's behavior. Examples of power struggles are when the caregiver:

- Makes the child say, "I'm sorry," and the child refuses to do so.
- Makes the child eat all of his food or a certain food item and the child refuses to eat.
- Demands that a child lie down and close his eyes at nap time, and the child does not want to take a nap.
- Insists on finishing a story at small group time and the children are restless and not paying attention.

Giving children choices helps them feel like they have some power and control over what they can do. The choices given should be realistic, age-appropriate and acceptable. Do not offer a choice if one of the choices is unacceptable. Also, do not offer a positive and a negative choice such as, "Pick up the toys or go to time out." It is important not to give children too many choices at a time. Too many choices can be overwhelming. Two choices is usually an adequate amount.

**Example:** When a child refuses to clean up, offer such choices as cleaning up the blocks or the dolls. Or offer the choice of cleaning up on her own or with help from the caregiver.

After a child hits another child, ask what he can do to make the child he hit feel better. Offer the child choices such as giving a hug or getting the child a special toy.

At meals, offer children a variety of healthy food. The child has the choice of what to eat.

When a child does not want to nap, offer a quiet activity to do on the cot or in a separate area such as looking at a book or doing a puzzle.

When children are not listening or sitting during small group time, the caregiver should have other activities available that children can do if they do not want to participate.

### **Ignore Negative or Attention-Seeking Behavior, If Possible**

Children will act out for attention. When a caregiver talks to a child who has acted out, the caregiver rewards the child with attention, even though it is negative attention. This encourages the child to continue the attention-seeking behavior. In order to reduce this type of behavior, you must ignore it. Initially the behavior may get worse, but the child will eventually stop the behavior when she does not receive the usual attention. Ignore negative behavior that is annoying but not if it is dangerous or destructive. Be sure to give plenty of positive attention to children when they are not displaying the negative attention-seeking behavior.

**Example:** A child may constantly make an annoying noise. Instead of frequently telling the child to stop, just ignore it.

A child may tattle on another child for an insignificant behavior. Just thank the child for the information.

### **Reinforce Positive Behaviors**

The best way to promote positive behavior is to give children confidence in their ability to do the right thing. Confidence comes from knowing that success is possible. When a baby is first learning to walk, we clap with glee at each attempt to move forward on two feet - imagine how that baby would feel, and how slow the process would be if we ignored those first attempts and criticized each fall.



Reinforcing positive behaviors can occur in two ways. The first is to praise or even just comment when you catch a child doing something right. The second is to look beyond misbehavior to find and comment on the child's strengths and remind the child of past success.

A word about praise: it needs to be specific (you spent a lot of time making sure the blocks in your tower were balanced today) and it should not go overboard. If every small accomplishment receives an Academy Award, a child will not be able to recognize when he has accomplished something big.

Examples: Mary and Jane are in the dramatic play area. They have had trouble working together in the past, and you have been working with them on problem-solving skills. Today you overhear them using one of the skills you taught them. You go over and quietly say, "I just heard you decide who was going to be the doctor and who was going to be the nurse - good negotiating skills!"

David spent all morning working on an elaborate block structure. John came up and knocked over a tower causing major damage. David got up and hit John. "David, hitting hurts. You may not use hitting to solve your problems. I was watching you build this morning. You took a lot of time to make sure the pieces would balance and fit together. That took a lot of patience and concentration [these are the strengths to encourage]. Last week I remember you used the blocks closer to the corner when you did not want John to knock down the towers. [Remind David of past success.]"

L'Toy is learning to use the toilet. He woke up dry after his afternoon nap for five days in a row, but today he was wet. The caregiver says, "That's OK, sometimes that happens. You were dry all week and I bet tomorrow you will be dry, too."

### **Connect to Children's Feelings**

Children struggle with strong feelings and emotions. They do not always know how to express their emotions in appropriate ways. It is important for adults not to judge children's emotions as good or bad. We cannot control what type of emotions we have - just how we react to them.



When children experience emotions, most often they are unable to correctly label and communicate those emotions with the adults in their lives. We must acknowledge and label feelings to help increase children's understanding and appropriate reactions. Let children know that other children or adults have the same feelings under similar circumstances. Introduce new vocabulary words to describe feelings. Another way to help children identify feelings is to play games, sing songs and read stories with feelings words. Incorporate discussions about feelings into daily events. The more children understand their emotions, the more they are able to express them in acceptable ways.

Understanding and controlling one's emotions is a long learning process and mistakes will be made along the way. Children need your guidance. Keep up the sometimes tedious task of labeling emotions and offering specific acceptable ways for children to react to them.

Examples: Have emotion faces such as happy, sad, frightened, angry, etc. on a large chart in the classroom. When children arrive, they can put their name on a face indicating how they are feeling. Encourage them to move their name if their emotion changes. If a child moves his name to an emotion such as sad or frustrated, take time to talk to him about why he is feeling that way.

If a child hits another child, talk about how the child who was hit might feel. "It hurts when you hit Johnny. Look at his face. He looks sad right now."

At clean up time you notice a child sitting with his hands crossed over his chest, not helping with clean up. You might say, "Timmy, it looks like you may be frustrated about clean up time. What are you thinking about right now?"

## Help Children Problem Solve

No matter what age children you have or work with, you will need to be involved in problem solving. Teaching problem-solving skills takes time and understanding. There are five steps you can use while problem solving:

1. Calm everyone down. Usually emotions are strong when there is a problem among young children. Encourage the children to take a couple deep breaths. It is very hard for a child to focus on a discussion when his or her emotions are high.
2. Talk with all the children involved to understand the problem. Make sure everyone agrees. It will be hard to negotiate a solution if someone is unsure of the problem.
3. Brainstorm possible solutions. Let the children do this as much as possible. Ask each child what he or she feels the solution should be.
4. Everyone should agree on the solution. You never know when starting the process what type of solution there will be; however, if the children all agree, let it be. Do not impose your own solution or use your own value of fairness. Let the children be in control.
5. Help facilitate the solution. Make sure there is follow through from all sides and everyone completes the agreed upon task.

## Time-Out

There are many ways to discipline children positively. The techniques you chose will depend on the child's age and temperament and the situation. One method will not work in every situation or with every child. It is essential to know a variety of techniques.

Time-out is one of the many discipline methods used today, but it is often overused. When used appropriately, time-out can help children to think about their feelings and actions, to calm down and to develop self-control. However, if time-out is used inappropriately, it can be ineffective and a humiliating experience for the child.

Time-out should only be used to stop aggressive behavior, for serious violations of the rules and to allow angry or upset children to calm down. Use time-outs only as a last resort to help the child to calm down and to gain self-control. Before using time-out, try these alternatives:

- Give gentle reminders of the rules.
- Redirect the child to another activity.
- Give the child hugs and reassuring words when he is upset.
- Help the child to use his words to express and cope with his feelings.
- Ask the child to discuss his feelings and problems with you.
- Identify with the feelings that the child is expressing, but let him know that his behavior is unacceptable.
- Model the way you would like the child to behave.
- Ask the child to think about a better way to cope with a situation.
- Suggest different ways the child can cope with a situation.
- Listen to the child's point of view and try to help him to come up with a solution to his problem.
- Help the children to work out their differences.

**Remember** - use time-out only as a last resort!



## What a Time-Out Should Be

When used correctly, time-out can be a positive learning experience in which the child has a chance to calm down, think about his feelings and actions and learn how to better handle a similar situation in the future.

- An opportunity for the child and caregiver to calm down.  
*You can model time-out by taking a time-out yourself when you feel frustrated or angry. Tell the children, "I feel frustrated, I need to sit and calm down." Then go to your quiet spot and sit for a minute. When you have calmed down, tell the children, "I feel better; now I can talk to you calmly."*
- A place where children and caregivers go to feel better again.  
*Time-out is a technique that gives children an opportunity to get away from an upsetting or discouraging situation, to calm down and to feel better.*
- A time for the child to learn how to change disruptive or aggressive behaviors into constructive behaviors.  
*Time-out gives children an opportunity to calm down, to think about their actions and to come up with a better way to handle a similar situation in the future.*
- Available to a child for as little or as much time as he or she decides.  
*Children should have control over when they are ready to leave the time-out area, because only the child knows when he feels better and is ready to talk about his actions.*

## Avoid Using Time-Out For Children Under 3 Years Of Age

Picture this scenario: A 3-year-old girl is working on putting together a popular puzzle. A 2½-year-old boy wants to play with the same puzzle. Instead of asking if he can help her put the puzzle together, he shouts at the girl for playing with his favorite puzzle and pushes the puzzle off the table.

Sharing is beyond the understanding of most children under 3 years of age. They only understand that they want to play with a toy. For this reason, it is important to have more than one of a popular toy at your child care to prevent conflicts.

It is inappropriate to discipline children under 3 years of age for behavior that is beyond their control and understanding. Young children need constant supervision. They should be kindly and firmly removed from what they cannot do and be redirected to an activity they can do. When you are preparing your child care home or center's environment, keep in mind that children below the age of 3 do not understand the value of an object, such as a stereo system. Young children only know that they want to play with the object. If you do not want a young child to play with an object, keep it out of reach.

If children under 3 years of age are upset and need time to calm down, an adult should go with the child to a quiet place and help him calm down. The adult can help the child calm down by doing a relaxing activity with him, such as hugging him, reading a book, listening to peaceful music, or sitting with him as he cuddles with a stuffed animal until he feels better.

## Review Your Discipline Policy

Are you using time-out inappropriately? Consider revising your discipline policy if you answer yes to any of these questions below:

- Am I using time-out as a punishment?  
*Time-out should be used to help children learn how to gain control of their own behavior. It should not be used as a punishment.*
- Am I overusing time-out?  
*Use time-out sparingly. Always try positive alternative methods of discipline before you implement a time-out.*

- Am I using time-out for every infraction of the rules?  
*If time-out is your only discipline tool, it is time to reevaluate your discipline policy to include positive methods of discipline.*
- Am I using time-out as a threat?  
*Time-out should never be used as a threat or punishment. Time-out should only be used to help a child to calm down and think about their feelings and actions.*
- Am I forgetting to discuss the reason for the time-out with the children?  
*Adults should always discuss with a child why he has been disciplined and help the child learn how he can better handle a similar situation in the future.*
- Am I using time-out before trying other alternatives?  
*Use time-out only as a last resort! Always try alternatives to time-out first, such as redirection.*

### **How To Implement A Time-Out**

Follow these steps to properly implement a time-out:

- Let the child know why he is being directed to time-out.
- Ask or direct the child to go to an area that is away from the other children.
- Explain to the child that this time is to be used to calm down and think.
- Tell the child that after he has calmed down to call you over when he is ready to talk.
- Ask the child to tell you what a better way of handling the situation would be.
- If the child has trouble coming up with a solution, help by asking questions or by offering suggestions
- When the child comes up with an appropriate solution, either by himself or with your help, let him rejoin play.

# Positive Methods of Discipline Tips

Remember, guidance does not mean punishment. Guidance means helping children to learn positive ways to interact.

## Guidelines for Preventing Behavior Problems

- To determine if you need to make changes that will reduce the need for discipline, evaluate the following within the program:
  - Program plan.
  - Program schedule, including transitions.
  - Program components.
  - Room arrangement.
- Base expectations and experiences on child development.
- Give children a sense of power.
- Avoid power struggles.
- Let children make real choices.
- Ignore negative behavior and overlook small annoyances.
- Focus on desirable behavior.
- Model and say what you want to happen.
- Avoid time-out – provide time-in.
- Talk with the child to determine what is wrong.
- Help the child to identify feelings.
- Focus on empowering the victim.
- Help children problem solve.
- Help children learn different ways of handling certain situations.
- Use encouragement. Use statements, such as: *I know you can do this, I know this is hard, What can you do to ..., What will it take to ..., What kind of help can I give to ...* .
- Distract, divert, re-direct.
- Avoid turning normal behavior into an issue.
- Use simple meaningful words.
- Give gentle reminders of the rules. Clarify rules and expectations on the proper use of equipment.
- Use natural or logical consequences.
- Provide a timer or clock to promote taking turns.
- Say and show what you want the children to do.
- Have duplicate toys (young children are unable to wait patiently).
- Be warm, loving, caring.
- Inject humor into the situation.
- Never yell.

# TIPS FOR HANDLING COMMON SITUATIONS WITH CHILDREN

*These situations, frustrating though they may seem, may take on a new light when considered from a child's point of view.*

The child:	It may mean the child:	So do not:	You might try:
<b>Bites.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is still trying to put everything in the mouth (toddler).</li> <li>• Is teething and needs objects or harder foods to chew on (toddler).</li> <li>• Is using biting instead of words to communicate (toddler).</li> <li>• Does not understand that biting hurts (toddler).</li> <li>• Feels frustrated and has not developed other, more positive coping skills (pre-schooler).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bite the child back.</li> <li>• Encourage another child to bite the child.</li> <li>• Make the child bite soap.</li> <li>• Force the child to say "I'm sorry."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing close supervision of the biter and being ready to step in to protect other children.</li> <li>• Comforting the victim first.</li> <li>• Tell the biter that biting hurts.</li> <li>• Involve the biter in comforting the victim by bringing a cool, wet towel to put on bite.</li> <li>• Providing an object to bite, such as a pillow or chewy toy.</li> <li>• Observing when the child bites, who the victim is, and the child's reaction after biting.</li> <li>• Helping children use words to cope with frustration.</li> <li>• Thinking about your time schedule, equipment, activities, and guidance techniques.</li> <li>• Are they creating or reducing stress for the children?</li> <li>• Informing parents of the problem, stressing how typical biting is, and describing your plan to handle the problem.</li> </ul>
<b>Uses foul language.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't know any better.</li> <li>• Is imitating someone.</li> <li>• Is trying something new, or making a joke.</li> <li>• Is letting off steam.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show embarrassment.</li> <li>• Get excited.</li> <li>• Scold or punish the child.</li> <li>• Over-emphasize the incidents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignoring the child.</li> <li>• Observing when foul language is used.</li> <li>• Offering a substitute for the word.</li> <li>• Teaching the child new, extra long words.</li> <li>• Suggesting another, healthy outlet.</li> </ul>
<b>Demands attention.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has been directed by adults or entertained by TV and is therefore inexperienced in independent creative play.</li> <li>• Has an interest in you.</li> <li>• Is tired, not feeling well, or hungry.</li> <li>• Feels left out, insecure, or unloved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore or isolate the child.</li> <li>• Shame the child.</li> <li>• Scold or punish the child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending to the child's physical needs.</li> <li>• Showing interest in the child as a person.</li> <li>• Observing when the child demands attention.</li> <li>• Providing interesting things for the child to do.</li> <li>• Praising the child for effort and success.</li> <li>• Sharing yourself with the child.</li> </ul>

The child:	It may mean the child:	So do not:	You might try:
<b>Runs away.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants to be independent or to explore. Feels bored.</li> <li>• Is afraid and wants to return to own family.</li> <li>• Needs privacy and time to be alone.</li> <li>• Is rebelling.</li> <li>• Feels unwanted and is trying to punish you for not showing love.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a scene.</li> <li>• Cry or make a fuss over the child.</li> <li>• Punish or tie the child up.</li> <li>• Remove the child's privileges.</li> <li>• Unduly restrict the child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting the child know you love him/her, and that the child was missed.</li> <li>• Determining that your program is interesting and satisfying so children won't want to run away.</li> <li>• Taking safety precautions with the environment so the child sees a controlled environment rather than you as a jailer or partner in a run-away game.</li> <li>• Reassuring the child.</li> <li>• Setting up safe ways and places for the child to get away and be alone.</li> </ul>
<b>Is jealous.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels replaced by a new person in the family - baby, step-parent, or live-in adult.</li> <li>• Has been unfairly compared to other children.</li> <li>• Has been given unfair treatment or favoritism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shame the child.</li> <li>• Ignore the child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving warmth, love, and understanding.</li> <li>• Discussing the child's feelings one-to-one.</li> <li>• Observing how the child copes with jealousy.</li> <li>• Promoting good feelings about who the child is and what he or she can do.</li> </ul>
<b>Becomes angry.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is not successful in doing something important to the child personally.</li> <li>• Has been told stop, no, and don't too many times.</li> <li>• Is being made to do something he/she doesn't want to do.</li> <li>• Feels frustrated from too many demands by adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become angry.</li> <li>• Allow a tantrum to become extreme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remembering anger is normal and may be expected.</li> <li>• Observing when the child gets angry and at whom the anger is targeted.</li> <li>• Observing if the child is able to express anger in acceptable ways.</li> <li>• Providing a safe outlet for the child's feelings such as vigorous play, punching bag, or finger painting.</li> </ul>
<b>Steals.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants something.</li> <li>• Is ignorant of property rights Is imitating someone.</li> <li>• Has unsatisfied needs.</li> <li>• Has hostile feelings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scold or shame the child.</li> <li>• Punish or reject the child.</li> <li>• Humiliate the child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being kind and understanding.</li> <li>• Observing the frequency of stealing the objects taken, from whom the child steals, and the reaction when caught.,</li> <li>• Showing respect for the child's possessions.</li> <li>• Helping fill the child's needs and discussing why a person cannot have or do some things.</li> <li>• Letting the child own things to get a sense of mine and yours.</li> <li>• Helping the child make friends.</li> </ul>

<b>The child:</b>	<b>It may mean the child:</b>	<b>So do not:</b>	<b>You might try:</b>
<b>Lies or fibs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a vivid imagination.</li> <li>• Is imitating someone.</li> <li>• Wants to please.</li> <li>• Fears punishment.</li> <li>• Likes to exaggerate.</li> <li>• Is seeking attention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show how upset you are.</li> <li>• Punish, shame, or reject the child.</li> <li>• Preach or predict the child will come to a bad end.</li> <li>• Make the child apologize.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaxing and trying to look for the reason.</li> <li>• Telling the child the truth yourself.</li> <li>• Giving attention to who the child is and what he or she does.</li> <li>• Providing the child with opportunities for enriching the imagination</li> <li>• Helping the child discover the difference between fact and fancy.</li> </ul>
<b>Can't fall asleep.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is learning a new routine.</li> <li>• Does not feel sleepy.</li> <li>• Feels afraid.</li> <li>• Does not feel comfortable.</li> <li>• Wants attention.</li> <li>• Is interested in other things.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completely darken the room.</li> <li>• Reward or bribe the child.</li> <li>• Threaten the child.</li> <li>• Scold or punish the child.</li> <li>• Put the child to bed as punishment.</li> <li>• Tie or restrain the child.</li> <li>• Disrupt the entire nap time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning a napping chart that carefully places children in the room.</li> <li>• Avoiding over-stimulation near nap time.</li> <li>• Reading, singing, or playing with the child before putting the child to bed.</li> <li>• Playing soft background music.</li> <li>• Seeing that the child's needs are met before going to bed.</li> <li>• Tucking the child in with true affection.</li> <li>• Allowing the child to look at books or play with quiet toys.</li> <li>• Offering assurance that you will wake the child up (before snack, when the others wake, first, or for whatever is important).</li> <li>• Putting the child back to bed kindly but firmly.</li> <li>• Planning quiet activities for children as they wake up so they don't just lie on the cot.</li> </ul>
<b>Refuses to eat.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is showing the normal decrease in appetite that occurs about age 2½ when growth slows down.</li> <li>• Is not hungry.</li> <li>• Does not feel well.</li> <li>• Dislikes a particular flavor or texture (Children's tastes are stronger than adults.</li> <li>• Is imitating someone.</li> <li>• Is trying to be independent.</li> <li>• Is trying to get attention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a scene.</li> <li>• Reward or bribe the child to eat.</li> <li>• Threaten the child.</li> <li>• Punish the child for not eating.</li> <li>• Force the child to eat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being casual and calm.</li> <li>• Making food interesting and attractive. Enjoying food with the child.</li> <li>• Introduce new foods a bit at a time and only along with favored foods.</li> <li>• Helping the child learn to feed and serve himself.</li> <li>• Serving small portions.</li> <li>• Serving rejected food in a new way.</li> <li>• Involving the child in preparation of food.</li> </ul>
<b>Won't share.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is too young (under 3 years of age).</li> <li>• Needs experience in owning and sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snatch from the child.</li> <li>• Scold the child.</li> <li>• Tell the child you do not like him/her.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loving the child and helping the child feel secure.</li> <li>• Being a fair umpire in children's squabbles.</li> <li>• Observing the situations in which the child has difficulty sharing.</li> <li>• Being sure the child has things that are just his or hers - allowing children to experience ownership.</li> <li>• Having enough materials for each child.</li> </ul>

The child:	It may mean the child:	So do not:	You might try:
<b>Has fears.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a feeling of strangeness, such as encountering something for the first time.</li> <li>• Needs the closeness of an important adult and wants to know where the person is.</li> <li>• Has had a previous painful experience.</li> <li>• Has some feelings of guilt or lack of love.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shame or threaten the child.</li> <li>• Make the child go toward the thing that is feared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassuring and comforting the child.</li> <li>• Telling or showing the child where the important adult is.</li> <li>• Observing the situations that frighten the child.</li> <li>• Preparing the child for new situations.</li> <li>• Spending extra time with the child.</li> <li>• Teaching the child caution for real danger.</li> </ul>
<b>Hurts other children or you.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is too young to understand.</li> <li>• Is inexperienced.</li> <li>• Is angry.</li> <li>• Has troubled feelings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get angry.</li> <li>• Punish or hurt the child.</li> <li>• Force the child to say “I’m sorry.”</li> <li>• Make the child feel badly by shaming or ignoring the child or withdrawing love.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending to the hurt child first and involving the child who did the hurt in comforting.</li> <li>• Observing when it happens, how often it happens, who is hurt, and what happened before the hurting.</li> <li>• Helping the child feel loved.</li> <li>• Quietly separating the children.</li> <li>• Taking the hurting objects away, calmly, and firmly.</li> <li>• Begin teaching the child that hurting is not something to do.</li> </ul>
<b>Destroys things.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is curious.</li> <li>• Does not understand what to do.</li> <li>• Has had an accident.</li> <li>• Finds the materials are not sturdy enough.</li> <li>• Finds the materials are too difficult and frustrating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scold, yell, or shout.</li> <li>• Tell the child that he or she is bad.</li> <li>• Punish the child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing guidance in the use and care of things.</li> <li>• Examining fragile items together to satisfy the child’s curiosity.</li> <li>• Removing destructible and broken things from the play area.</li> <li>• Providing a different place for play or reorganizing the environment to discourage destruction.</li> <li>• Teaching the child the difference between expendable items and valued items.</li> <li>• Giving the child an opportunity to pound, mess up, and tear the expendable items.</li> <li>• Involving the child in determining the need for repair or in repairing.</li> </ul>

*The origin of these tips is unknown, but over the years it has been used and expanded by Mabel Pitts, former director of programs, Day Care and Child Development Program Division in the Texas Department of Human Resources, and others.*

Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office in your area.