

Help! My child is out of control!

DISCIPLINE:

A positive approach involves understanding why your child is behaving the way she is.

It's normal for children to do things their parents don't like. Children misbehave because:

They are tired, hungry or sick.

They are bored or need attention.

They don't understand what you want.

They are exploring limits.

They are stressed.

Adults have unrealistic expectations for their behavior.

• **Good discipline means teaching, not punishment.** It's teaching that develops self-control. Positive discipline techniques...

- *enhance self-esteem.
- *respect children and foster responsibility.
- *teach values and skills.
- *strengthen the parent-child bond.
- *tell your child you love her.

• **When your child misbehaves...**

Stay calm. Anger and excitement increase misbehavior.

Don't take it personally. Your child is not misbehaving just to annoy you. Learning takes years.

Understand the feelings behind the actions. Look at what caused your child to misbehave to help you decide what approach to take.

Teach alternatives. Tell and show her what to do. Be patient. Children need a lot of repetition before new behaviors become routine.

Re-direct. Help him act out his feelings in an acceptable way. "It's not okay to throw blocks. Someone might get hurt or something might break. Let's throw this foam ball into the basket instead."

Use logical consequences. If he continues to throw blocks - "We have to put the blocks away for today. Would you like to do a puzzle?"

Limit the use of time-out. Time-out may help children calm down, but it doesn't teach correct behavior.

• **Discipline techniques change with your child's age.**

Infants can't be spoiled with love and attention. If your infant cries, it's for a good reason. Her needs should be met promptly and consistently. Babies don't cry to manipulate.

Toddlers test their boundaries and have limited language. Set up a few simple rules. Ignore some inappropriate behavior.

Redirect. Have routines and be consistent.

Preschool children are beginning to gain control of their behavior. Start to teach problem-solving. Help your child recognize her feelings and thoughts.

School age children understand right and wrong. They're developing self-discipline. Continue to teach problem-solving. Give her more responsibility. Let her experience natural and logical consequences for her behavior.