



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Learn about age appropriate discipline techniques
- Find out if your child qualifies for subsidized summer camp
- Help your younger kids create a chore wheel at home
- Get an adopted teen's perspective on discipline
- Find an adoptive family support group near you

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The Dos and Don'ts of Discipline

By: Rachael Vaughn

The word discipline comes from the Latin root, *disciplina*, which actually means, "to teach or train" and originally had nothing to do with enacting negative punishment. And while discipline can include punishment, it is not defined solely by it. It's no secret that children and adolescents can be a handful. Sometimes it is easy to forget that every disciplinary action is an opportunity to provide a teaching moment for the child.

I know what you're thinking... This sounds easier said than done, right? When you're at your wits' end, it's almost impossible to give your children the warmth, compassion and empathy that they deserve. This is why it is

good whenever possible to take some time to care for yourself. You spend so much time and energy caring for your kids, and often you can neglect to do the things that make you feel happy and calm.

Whether it's exercising, listening



"Every disciplinary action is an opportunity to provide a teaching moment..."

to music, or talking on the phone with old friends, it's okay and even *healthy* to focus on your own needs. Why? Well, you play an important role in both helping your child regulate and in teaching how to self-regulate. You are able to do this when you feel rested, rejuvenated and relaxed.

Many children are still learning to self-regulate, and many children who have been in the foster care system may be learning skills when they are older than a typical child might. This means that they may realize they are acting out or throwing a fit, but not know how to stop. In this case, it's important for the parents to put themselves in the child's shoes.

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Specialized Treatment Summer Camps

The adoption medical subsidy program may cover up to \$500 per calendar year for the cost of specialized treatment summer camp for children with a medical or mental health conditions certified by the Adoption Subsidy Office. Prior approval from the Adoption Subsidy Office is required. Examples of conditions include:

- Medical conditions which will require repeated or frequent hospitalization, treatment or follow-up.
- Physical handicap, by reason of physical defect or deformity, or substantial disfigurement.
- Diagnosed personality or behavioral problem.

- Psychiatric disorder.
- Serious intellectual incapacity or brain damage which affects the child's ability to relate to his peers and/or authority figures.

Overnight camps must be licensed in the state where they are located. Adoption medical subsidy will not cover the costs of transportation to or from the camp.

Here is a helpful link on determining if the camp is licensed. This link lets you search by county! http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/brs_cwl/sr_cac.asp.

Positive Praise and Incentivizing



**Somer Vickery,
PARC Worker**

By: Somer Vickery

As parents it is our responsibility to care for our children. We can influence our children every day and take advantage of the time we are able to spend with them. Children respond better to praise over criticism. If you acknowledge your children when they do positive/good things (listening, getting good grades, putting their clothes away, taking care of their dishes) they are more likely to repeat the behavior. Positive interactions with people close to us is one of our biggest motivators and theirs, which is why it is also important to spend quality time with our children.

We all know it is a very busy world we live in and it is easy to get caught up in the day to day chores that need to be handled. Take time to spend with your children every day, it could be simple things like reading to them before bed, letting them help cook dinner, playing board games/cards, watching movies, going for a walk outside, playing basketball or catch! One goal to aim for is 10-20-10. 10 minutes of quality one-on-one time in the morning, 20 in the afternoon/evening, and 10 at night. With several children in the home, this can be difficult, however the benefits may really surprise you!

As children grow and become older they learn to become responsible. One thing that can help them learn to become

responsible is by giving them chores. Chores can start at an early age! Make sure that you are not asking your children to complete chores or tasks that are too difficult for them. This means figuring out what is appropriate for them based on their developmental abilities, not necessary on their chronological age.

Make sure you show your children how to complete the chore so they know what is expected and that they are doing it correctly (you may have to do this more than once). Chores should be assigned and structured so that they are able to be completed by your child without taking too long— that way they do not get discouraged.

Having a way to visually help children remember what chores they are responsible for and when they are supposed to be done can be very helpful. Many families do this by utilizing chore charts. Increasing a child's ability to exercise choice in the process is important. Let your children be involved in making the chore chart. Colorful decorations and stickers are encouraged!

In a large family, there may be some chores that are seen as more work or “worse” than others. You may want to rotate, however, it's important to try and create as much routine and consistency to the chores as possible.

Also, while you may decide to use allowance or treats as motivators for doing chores, sometimes kids become fixated on the reward and have trouble associating the task completion with the reward. Consider using activities or special time to spend together as incentives as well. Regardless of your decision, it's so important to incorporate specific praise with the task. Highlight what a child did well, even if you also need to point out something they missed or wasn't done correctly.

Remember our children grow up so fast, so take the time to spend with them while we can because before we know it they will be all grown up.

“If you acknowledge your children when they do positive/good things, they are more likely to repeat the behavior.”

MY DAILY CHORES							
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Make My Bed							
Help With Laundry							
Vacuum or Mop The Floor							
Put Dishes Away							
Clean Up My Toys							
Brush My Teeth							

Chore chart photo from thediymommy.com

Discipline, cont.

Your child is not throwing a temper tantrum for no reason. All behavior is usually an attempt to get a need met. You might not understand what the underlying motivation may be, or if you do, it may seem silly to you, but to your child, it is all consuming. If you can find out what's driving the outburst, you can calmly let your child know that it's okay to be upset.

Heather Forbes says, "Staying present and reassuring a child that you really are listening to him, can be enough to help them begin to regulate."

When it comes to discipline, try teaching through talking, taking away privileges, praising positive

behavior (especially when it happens naturally) and prompting children to apologize. These methods are long term solutions and are not connected to increased anxiety or aggression later in life. A 2010 study (1) showed that spanking, yelling and expressing disappointment are actually associated with *increased* antisocial behaviors like aggression and anxiety in children. Therefore, these are usually only effective in producing a short term solution, like getting a child to stop what he or she is doing in the moment. However, it's not a viable answer for repeated behavioral problems.

It is also important to know and remember that none of us learn very well when we are stressed, and so the time to reinforce and teach positive behaviors is

when the child is calm, for instance after the tantrum or incident has subsided, not during it.

Children with mental health diagnoses may not respond well to "traditional" parenting or discipline because of past experience, disrupted development processes or other challenges. There are some good books to help parents understand different ways to approach discipline and parenting. Discipline is not a one-size-fits-all topic. What works for one child may not work for another. Get inside your child's head and try to understand what he or she is thinking and feeling. In this way, you and your child are a team. You can then begin to work toward healthy growth together.

(1) Gershoff, Grogan-Kaylor, et al. (2010). Parent Discipline Practices in an International Sample: Associations With Child Behaviors and Moderation by Perceived Normativeness. *Child Development*, 81(2), 487-502.

Youth Corner: The Importance of Balance

By: Hadassah Albert

Discipline is something that is not always pleasant, but necessary. A lot of people my age say that discipline or punishment is unnecessary, and their parents reply "You'll understand one day." But, I understand now.

Being constantly surrounded by kids ages 12-19, I've begun to realize what my parents said I'd understand one day. It's very easy to see which kids that I associate with were disciplined and which ones were not. Discipline is very necessary, because it enforces the sense

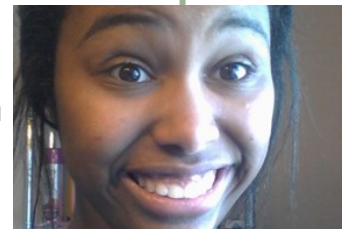
of right and wrong that our parents are working so hard to instill in us. I'm not saying that it's impossible to know right and wrong without being disciplined, but a "time-out" or a grounding can serve as a reminder of what we should and shouldn't do.

Along with discipline for what we shouldn't do, I also think it's important to award your kids when they do something well. You're busy disciplining your child for making an F in Algebra, and not applauding them for the A- in Chemistry. I think a big part of disciplining is making sure that it's balanced.

Making sure that you're not only focused on the negative, and that you're rewarding or at the very least acknowledging the positive things can go a long way.

My parents disciplined me when I was younger, and no, I didn't like it, but I understood that there had to be consequences for my actions, which is something every child should grow up learning. You're not going to like being disciplined, but in danger of sounding like your parents, "you'll understand when you're older."

"Make sure you're not only focused on the negative."



Hadassah Albert, 18

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VOLUME 12

PARC Region 6

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**Valuable Information
for Adoptive and
Guardian Families!**

To:

PARC — Helping One Family at a Time
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Support Groups, Trainings & Resources in Region 6

Macomb County Adoptive Family Connections Meeting

The Macomb group meets on the 4th Wednesday of every month from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. at Judson Center's Warren location. Join this supportive group of adoptive parents to share your joys and your challenges with people who truly get it. Often, we invite guest speakers in to talk about adoption-appropriate topics or we hold a short training session on parenting, trauma or another related subject. Dinner and childcare is provided. For more information or to RSVP please email Thomas_Green@judsoncenter.org. We gladly take suggestions for training and discussion topics.

Lapeer County Adoptive Family Connections Meeting

Join PARC and the NALO Therapy Center for this Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents Support Group. We all need a space to honestly share our trials and successes. Please join us... and help your family grow stronger! This group meets on the second Monday of each month from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. at Nalo's offices in Lapeer. Dinner and childcare is provided. For more information or to RSVP please email Jonathan_Albert@judsoncenter.org.

Recommended Resources

The Whole Brain Child and Drama Free Discipline by Daniel Siegel

The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children by Ross Greene

Feeling, Behaviors, and Relationships by Heather T. Forbes

For a complete list of upcoming events, please visit www.parc-judson.org/Calendar