

10 Ways to Discipline Your Child

1. The Do-Over

Everybody deserves a second chance right? If your child has shown a lack of respect in some way, give them the option of a “do-over.” Send them out of the room, and have them start all over again. In most cases, the second time around will be much more appropriate.

2. Zip it

Children have a knack for saying all types of off-the-wall things. Sometimes they go too far, and feelings might get hurt. Sometimes, it’s just a lot of noise. Speaking can cause a variety of troubles that requires discipline. Losing the privilege to talk for a specific time is a great tool to curb these situations. Have them zip those lips and learn how to be respectful towards others.

3. Let them win

Every single issue does not need to be a battle. If you are constantly at odds with your child, resentment can breed, and ears can eventually tune out. Sometimes, it’s best to let your child “win.” For example: Your child might not dress for school exactly how you would like. They are within a standard of decency, but not quite your taste. Yet, they are making excellent grades. If your suggestions on how they look are met with resistance, it may be OK to let it go. Your child will appreciate having some authority over their own life, and learn how to give and take. Pick your battles.

4. Take a breather

Every parent’s best friend is the “breather.” If your child screams at you, screaming back will only worsen the matter. Send him to his room and create a cooling off period. Just make sure he doesn’t take his iPod or cell phone! Then approach him when he has calmed down and talk through the matter.

5. Use the rod rarely

“Spare the rod, spoil the child.” We all know this ancient wisdom, but it must be used with extreme caution. Many studies have shown that using violence, even in a mild form, only creates fear and may do nothing to better a child. It can be tough at times, but always keep your composure. If need be, walk away. Using your mind, and not always your hands, might be the best way to discipline.

6. The “I told you so”

Your child has known a project was due for 2 weeks. It is the night before, and she is in a panic. You warned her a week ago not to wait until the last moment, but it happened anyway. She is now pleading for you to assist her. Do not help her and let her experience the result of her actions. It will be embarrassing for her the next day at school when her project pales in comparison to others. Maybe it will mean a bad grade. This will teach her far more than you having done the work for her. You can say to yourself, “I told you so.” Just don’t say it out loud.

7. Compromise

Every child has things he does not want to do. It could be brushing his teeth, going to bed on time, or taking a bath. Of course all these things have to be done and the daily battle can become a drag. Try a little compromise instead of always verbally forcing them. When “Son, it’s time to brush your teeth” is met with an escape down the hall, grab his favorite toy and say “Mr. Rex is coming with you, so he can brush his teeth too!” Suddenly it has become fun, and your son is happily brushing his teeth with Mr. Rex by his side. Compromise and improvise when appropriate.

8. The Take Away

Every child has something near and dear to them. It is not underhanded for that item to come into play if needed. Favorite stuffed animals, cell phones, gaming devices, etc. can all be used to your benefit. If your warnings have fallen on deaf ears, take an item away for a stated time and let your child once again learn that actions have consequences.

9. Grounding

The time honored classic. We've all been there, and so will your child sooner or later. It is not easy to tell your big, brown-eyed daughter she can't go to the movies with her friends or to the school dance. Be strong! Whatever it was that got things to this point was dire enough that a strong response was called for. It won't be pretty, but it's your job, and it is just one of many things she will thank you for later in life.

10. Prevention

"Head 'em off at the pass," the old cowboys used to say. As a parent, you most likely know your child better than they know themselves. Use that insight to stop potential problems before they ever occur. Talk openly with your child on a daily basis. Reward her for the many great things she does. Praise her with lots of love for her achievements. Building a high level of trust and understanding with your child will prevent a great deal of issues that would require a discipline tactic. As the saying goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".