



Discipline Dos and Don'ts - Practical Parenting Advice

Discipline Dos and Don'ts

- Not listening is a normal part of a child's typical development. There is always a reason why he is not listening; it's just not evident to you. When you understand the why of the behaviour, then the solution to the problem will come into focus.
- There is no one right way to discipline a child.
- You know your child best. Each child is different; each situation will, therefore, require a different response from you.
- Ask yourself: "Will my response (discipline) help this particular child to learn the limit and use it again in a similar situation? Am I teaching him what is expected, the right thing to do, and how to do it?"
- One yes sustains your child through a thousand nos.
- Your child has an amazing memory. He will not forget the one time he got you to change your mind. Giving in is a bad idea. Don't do it. Do not deliver a no if there is a chance that it might become a yes. If the possibility exists, rethink the limit. If you don't have the intestinal fortitude to hold to your limit, don't impose it in the first place.
- Don't argue with your child
- If you have gotten to the point of needing to discipline, the time for discussion has long since passed.
- Avoid "You're in big trouble!"
- What does this mean anyway? It's the expression that parents use when they have no idea what else to say. It means that something is going to happen, but Daddy is not sure what. Using this phrase eats away at your credibility. Know what you are going to do and do it!
- Discipline doesn't end with the word "okay?"
- A limit or directive to a child is a statement, not a question.

The Four Prong Plan for Discipline

Getting Your Child to do what you Ask

Step 1: Forewarning

- You say: "In five minutes it is going to be time to stop playing with your Lego and wash your hands for dinner. This is your five minute warning."

Step 2: It's Time

- You say: "Now it is time to wash for dinner. Please put your Lego down and go wash now. I will save your Lego for after dinner."

Step 3: Deliver the threat, just once

- You say: "If you stop, wash up and come to dinner now, then you will eat with the family. If you do not, then you will eat in the kitchen by yourself." Whatever consequence you choose, the point is that you state it clearly and calmly and are prepared to follow through if there is noncompliance.

Step 4: Lower the boom

- This is when you follow through with your threat. There is no going back now. It's over. Noah has wandered in five minutes later than everyone else, ready for dinner on his own schedule.

You say: "Your dinner is in the kitchen. Maybe tomorrow you will come when I ask you and you will be able to eat with the rest of the family. Tonight you are eating your dinner alone in the kitchen."

At this point you will likely have to tolerate a huge tantrum or meltdown. Yes, it's true. Noah is disrupting everyone else's dinner. But it will happen only once or maybe twice. Your child has now learned that you mean what you say.