

# Discipline without tears, fear or put-downs

*Discipline* is one of the most misunderstood words in the English language. It is frequently confused with punishment, which is the infliction of unpleasant experiences on children as a result of misbehaviour.

Effective discipline teaches children about appropriate behaviour and encourages them to take responsibility for their behaviour. It is about children learning to behave in socially acceptable ways – it helps children and young people to be liked and accepted. Effective discipline doesn't involve physical harm or verbal put-downs, however it does require firmness and a willingness to treat children and young people with respect.

The most effective discipline leads to children and young people making good decisions about their behaviour rather than parents controlling or coercing them to act in proper ways. Clear communication about

expected behaviours, consistency and the use of consequences to ensure accountability are appropriate disciplinary tools for the present era. Cooperation is also fostered when we respond positively to children's appropriate behaviour and we spend enjoyable, pleasant time with them.

Research shows that most children will push parental boundaries at some stage, which makes it tough for parents. And some children and young people will push harder than others. So effective discipline also requires persistence, patience, a backbone and a willingness to seek help from others when the going gets tough.



## Quick Parenting Quiz

- The percentage of discipline that mothers take responsibility for in families is :*
  - Over 80%
  - 60%
  - 40%
  - 20%
- The most common behaviour of children under twelve that concerns parents is:*
  - Telling lies
  - Not doing homework
  - Fighting or arguing with their siblings
  - Not finishing meals

Answers: 1a) 2c)

## Vitamins for parents

An effective consequence that promotes responsibility in children and young people is:

- Related to the behaviour.
- Respectful as both you and they maintain dignity.
- Reasonable and acceptable.
- Timely and doesn't drag on too long.

## Bright idea



### Focus on what you will do

If your child or young person likes to have their own way focus your language on yourself rather than continually telling them what they should do. "I am serving up the meal now" rather than "Come on, sit down, turn off the TV" causes less resistance and leads to greater cooperation from young power-seekers.

## Wise & Witty Words

"The key to understanding and correcting a child's behaviour is to identify the purpose and act in such a way that the behaviour doesn't reach its intended goal."

**Ed Dussault**

"Correction does much, but encouragement does more."

**Goethe**