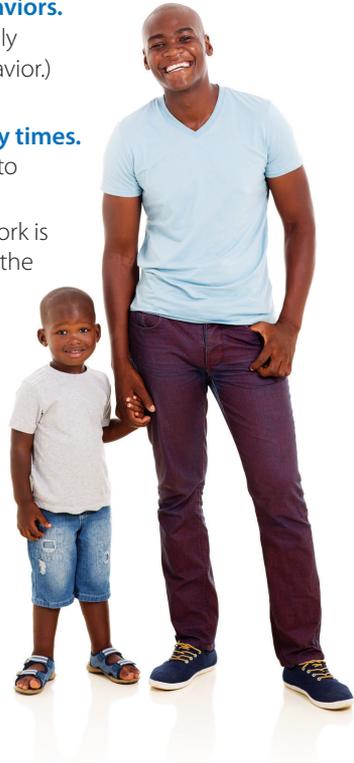


# Positive Discipline

**Discipline means to teach or guide. Here are some ways to eliminate the negative when disciplining your child.**

- **Focus on and acknowledge your child's positive behaviors.** "You were very helpful in the store today." (This is especially helpful when you are working to change a negative behavior.) "I noticed you shared your toy. That was kind."
- **Establish predictable routines for meals, nap and play times.** Let your child know ahead of time if the routine is going to change.
- **Keep rules simple and consistent.** "When your homework is finished, you may watch TV." "We walk when we're inside the house."
- **Set limits that are age-appropriate.** "Bedtime is at 8 o'clock." "You may only watch movies that are rated G."
- **Use positive language.** "Couches are for sitting. Please sit down." Tell them what you want them to DO instead of what you do NOT want them to do.
- **Offer limited choices.** "Do you want to wear your blue pants or the red ones?" Make sure your choices are realistic and only offer a choice if there is a choice. Be clear on what is non-negotiable like riding in a car seat.
- **Use the word "NO" for safety reasons like when a child is about to touch a hot stove or run into the street.** "No" loses its power when heard constantly. Look for ways to turn "no" into a "yes." "Yes, you may have a cookie after lunch." "Yes, you may read the book when you wake up from your nap."
- **Use a reminder first, give a choice and follow through.** "Blocks are for building. If you choose to build with the blocks, you can continue to play with them. If you choose to throw the blocks, you will have to put them away. It's your choice."



- **Use natural consequences to teach your child responsibility.** “If you don’t take care of your toy, it may break and you will no longer have the toy.”
- **Use logical consequences that are related to the behavior.** Your child will learn from his own mistakes. “If you don’t stay in the yard to play, you will have to play inside the house.”
- **Make sure your expectations for your child are reasonable.** For instance, a toddler is not likely to tolerate a three-hour shopping trip.
- **Be a positive role model.** Be careful not to be a “do as I say, not as I do” parent.
- **Be consistent, not rigid.** A child’s bedtime may be extended for a special occasion.
- **Safety-proof your home.** Put breakable or valuable items out of reach, and use latches to secure cabinets to allow your child to explore freely without danger.
- **Know your child’s triggers.** Learn to read their cues and intervene before a situation gets out of control. This will help them begin to develop self-control.
- **Before you lose your cool, stop and take a deep breath.** Consider what your child is about to hear.
- **Establish a regular family meeting time to create and review the rules and teach problem solving skills.** When children help make the rules, they are more likely to follow them.
- **Encourage and notice positive behavior more, and children will choose negative behavior less.** You don’t have to wait to tell your child that he is doing something right. Praise your child every day!

**There are many simple things to say that let your child know he or she is doing great.**

“I like the way you’re playing with your brother.  
 Every time I think of you, my heart dances.  
 Great job finishing your homework.  
 I just love being your dad.  
 Super job putting the toys on the shelf.  
 You always make me smile.  
 I’m proud of you.  
 You’re the best.  
 What a great idea!  
 Thanks for helping me with the dishes.  
 You worked hard to solve those math problems. Way to go.  
 I love your art work.  
 I know you can do it. I have faith in you.  
 You are very special.  
 I like how gentle you are with the baby.  
 You are working hard.  
 Keep up the great work.  
 You are so thoughtful.  
 You’re learning fast.  
 You should be proud of your work.  
 Your practice is really paying off.  
 I love you.”

For more information on health-related topics, visit our health library at [CHKD.org/healthlibrary](http://CHKD.org/healthlibrary).

**Your child’s pediatrician should be your primary source of advice about your child’s health.**

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