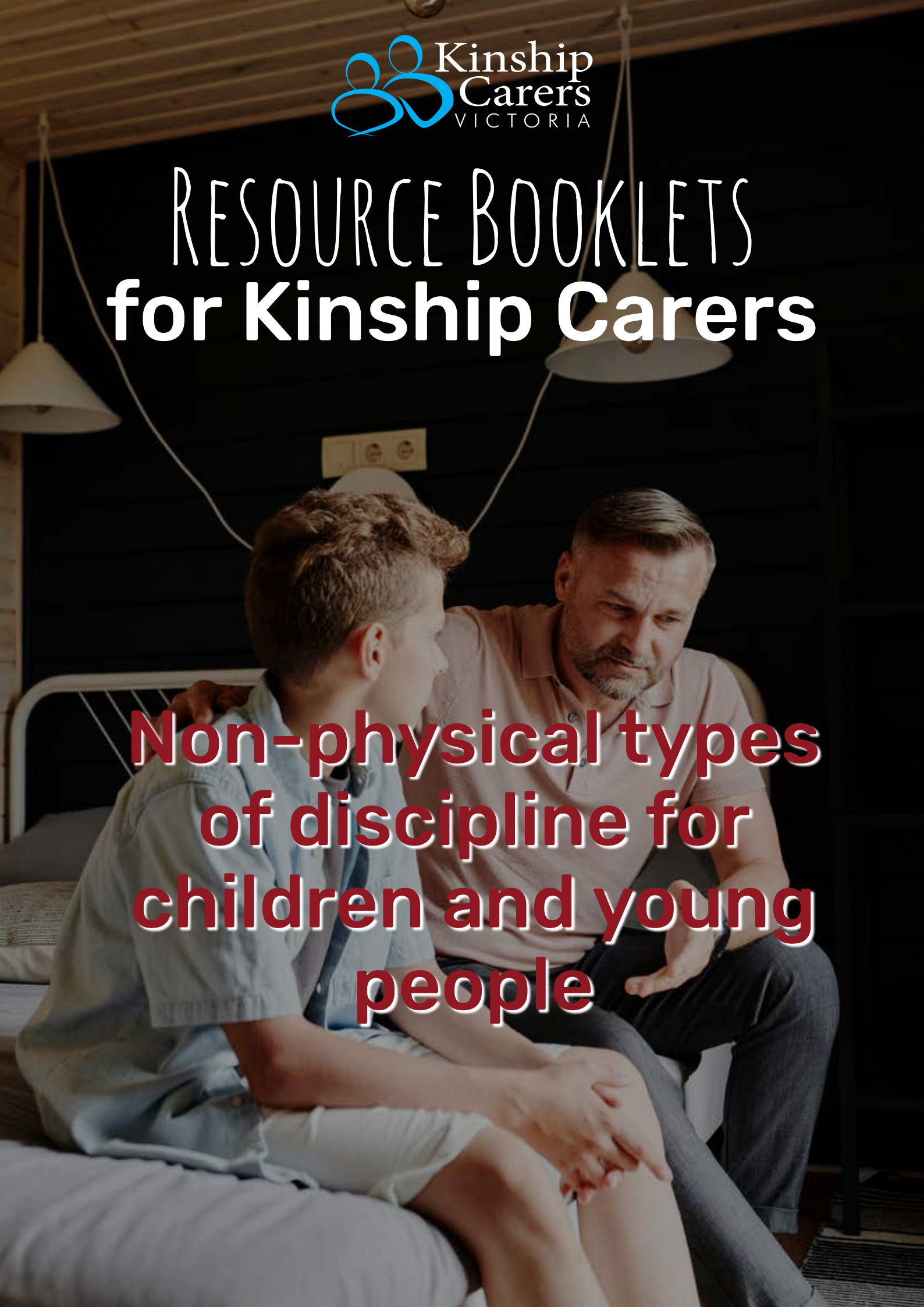


# RESOURCE BOOKLETS for Kinship Carers



**Non-physical types  
of discipline for  
children and young  
people**



GPV/KCV acknowledges the peoples of the Kulin nation as the traditional owners of our great land and offers respect to Elders, past and present.

GPV/KCV acknowledges that the Aboriginal culture existed in Australia before European settlement and consisted of many community groups. Further, we acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of this land as the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

GPV/KCV acknowledges that laws and policies of the past have inflicted grief and suffering on our fellow Australians and regrets the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

GPV/KCV believes that a society that is inclusive of all is crucial to individual and community wellbeing and will behave with respect towards all irrespective of their race, religion, sexuality, gender or socio-economic background.

GPV/KCV acknowledges 13th of February as National Apology Day, the anniversary of then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, delivering the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples in 2008. GPV/KCV will take steps that promote a happier and healthier future for Indigenous Australians, particularly the children and young people.

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Key words which influence GPV/KCV approaches are: Truthfulness, Confidentiality, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Constancy, Gratitude, Commitment, Compassion

The information contained in this campaign paper is based primarily on information from the online article 'Good Reasons Not to Hit Children', from *The Discipline Book: How to Have a Better-Behaved Child from Birth to Age Ten*, published here: <https://www.askdrsears.com/topics/parenting/discipline-behavior/spanking/10-reasons-not-hit-your-child/> and written by Martha and William Sears (1995).

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# All GPV/KCV campaigns



# GPV/KCV Campaign - Abolition of corporal punishment

**This campaign calls for the Australian Government to make corporal punishment of children and young people illegal across Australia.**

GPV/KCV believes that violence against children is never appropriate, even in the context of discipline. It can do long-term damage to their physical and emotional health, and may perpetuate a continuing cycle of corporal punishment in future generations.

GPV/KCV believes that positive discipline teaches children and guides their behaviour. This belief is based on research into children's healthy development and founded on principles of children's rights.

This campaign is designed to help protect children by encouraging parents and carers to find non-violent solutions to disciplining children in their care.





**Non-physical  
types of  
discipline for  
children and  
young people**

# Reasons for misbehaviour

Children misbehave for many reasons:

- They are too young to know that their actions are unacceptable.
- They are frustrated, angry or upset and have no other reasonable way to express their feelings.
- They are stressed by major changes such as family breakup, a new sibling or starting school.
- They are not getting your attention when they do behave appropriately.
- They feel you have been unfair and want to punish you.
- They need a greater degree of independence and feel constricted.

# Your child's ability to understand

Disciplining a child means teaching your child what is acceptable behaviour. A child's intellectual ability develops over time. It is important to match the discipline of your child with your child's capacity to understand. A very young child, such as a baby, has no comprehension of right and wrong.

Children under three do not misbehave – they have needs that they want met, such as hunger and thirst. They cannot yet respond to consequences by changing behaviour and so need to be told the same message over and over again, for example, 'put your hat on in the sun'. When they continue to go out in the sun without their hats, they are not disobedient – they just cannot remember.

Try to explain things to your child in a way that matches their development level and remember to also lower yourself to their physical level. Children act out their feelings through their behaviour, so it is important to understand the feelings behind the behaviour. If you know the reasons for your child's misbehaviour or feelings, you can help solve the underlying problems.



# Routines help a child to learn

Children learn how to behave by copying the adults around them. They thrive when they know what is expected of them and their day has a similar pattern to it. Children feel safe when they know the order of events and can predict what will happen next. This is the same with reactions to children's behaviour. The child needs to know what the adults' reaction will be and that it will be fair and consistent.

Suggestions include:

- Tell or show children the behaviour you do want, rather than punishing them for behaviour you don't want.
- Clearly explain the preferred behaviour and make sure your child understands what you expect of them.
- If you are amused by your child's naughty behaviour, try not to show it on your face or else your child might think you approve.
- Children thrive under consistent routines but they can handle the occasional change in routine; for example, eating meals at the table most of the time with the occasional 'treat' of eating in front of the TV.
- Make sure you're not expecting too much from a young child. For example, it is normal for young toddlers to make a mess while they are eating, because motor control and table manners take time to master. Young children are also unable to sit at the table for long periods of time and often need to eat much earlier than the family is used to having their evening meal.
- If you must make threats, make sure they are reasonable and carry them out. Generally threats show our frustration as parents or carers and are not a positive way to encourage the behaviour we want in children.
- Ask your child to be involved in making some of the rules for the family.

# Explaining consequences

Good discipline helps a child to learn that there are consequences for their actions. Ideally, the consequence should immediately follow the action and should be relevant to the behaviour. Teaching your child about consequences may include asking them to:

- Clean up a mess they have made.
- Tidy up their toys when they can't find the one they are looking for.
- Spend time alone (taking 'time out') when their behaviour indicates they can no longer play well with others. This is a time for the child to regain their composure and return to the group with their dignity intact.
- Play by themselves when they have been aggressive.

# Time out for children

For children, spending time alone (taking 'time out') before their behaviour embarrasses themselves or angers their parents can be a valuable opportunity for self-reflection. This is appropriate for older children, as long as the child isn't made to feel hurt, humiliated or embarrassed. As children get older, under the guidance of helpful discipline, the child will learn to take themselves to their room when they are losing control.

Time out should not be misused with very young children or children who may see it as punishment and feel humiliated or confused by being forced to sit on a 'naughty chair' and 'think about what they have done'.

# Time out for parents

If you find yourself getting angry and frustrated with your child's behaviour, you may need to take time out to deal with your own feelings. It may be best to temporarily remove yourself from a situation you are finding stressful. This may mean making sure your child is safe and leaving the room for a few minutes. Another option is calling a friend or relative to give you a break.

# Reinforcing good behaviour

A child naturally wants the love and approval of their parents, so one of the easiest ways to encourage good behaviour is for children to know what behaviour is expected of them and to know they will be recognised and encouraged for it.



# Promoting positive behaviour in children through guidance and discipline

Teaching children to behave appropriately in both social and educational environments can be a challenge for many families. Considering the guidance and discipline approaches can provide you with the tools and understanding to effectively develop positive behaviour in children. In this section, you can find insight into what these strategies are and how you can implement them.

# What are guidance and discipline in early childhood?

Guidance and discipline are essential aspects of any child's growth and learning, aiming to promote positive behaviour and healthy development in children. While guidance refers to the process of directing and supporting children in making appropriate choices, discipline involves teaching children self-control, responsibility, and the consequences of their actions. Together, these approaches help shape children's behaviour and cultivate essential social skills.

During their early years, children are learning and exploring the world around them, and it is crucial to provide them with consistent guidance and discipline to help promote positive behaviour. Positive guidance emphasises teaching and praising appropriate behaviour, rather than punishing or reprimanding children for their negative actions. It focuses on understanding the reasons behind a child's behaviour and helping them develop problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Discipline strategies in early childhood often include natural and logical consequences. Natural consequences occur as a result of a child's actions without adult intervention, while logical consequences are directly related to the behaviour and aim to teach a valuable lesson. If a child refuses to share a toy, then they may be asked to play alone for a while.

Positive reinforcement is another effective discipline strategy in early childhood. It involves acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviour through praising a child for their cooperation or effort. By focusing on positive reinforcement, children are motivated to repeat desirable behaviours.

To ensure effective guidance and discipline, educators, families, and caregivers can aim to maintain consistent rules and have reasonable expectations for their children's behaviour based on their age and developmental stage. Clear communication, setting limits, and providing a nurturing and supportive environment are all part of guiding and supporting children in their early years.



## **Similarities and Differences Between Guidance and Discipline**

While guidance and discipline share the common goal of promoting positive behaviour and healthy development in children, they differ in their approach and methods. Understanding the similarities and differences between guidance and discipline can help provide you with the tools and understanding to implement effective strategies that support children's growth and wellbeing.

Guidance is a proactive approach that focuses on teaching and modelling desired behaviour. It might involve setting clear expectations, providing positive reinforcement, and offering redirection when necessary. By nurturing children's understanding and internalisation of appropriate actions, guidance aims to prevent misbehaviour and create a supportive learning environment.

Discipline is a corrective approach that addresses misbehaviour through consequences. It involves enforcing rules and regulations, implementing time-outs, loss of privileges, or logical consequences that directly relate to the misbehaviour. Discipline aims to teach children the consequences of their actions while promoting self-discipline.

While guidance emphasises nurturing and teaching, discipline centres around corrective actions and consequences, and both are important components of helping a child grow, learn, and develop. Finding a balance between the two helps families and educators create a supportive environment that promotes children's wellbeing, and the development of positive behaviours. You can adopt a comprehensive approach that combines guidance and discipline techniques in a way that work for you to foster your child's social-emotional development.

## **Three similarities**

### **1. Focus on Positive Behaviour**

Both guidance and discipline place emphasis on the importance of promoting positive behaviour in children. They aim to teach children appropriate social skills, self-control, and responsibility. Through their focus on positive behaviour, both approaches seek to reinforce desirable actions and encourage children to make good choices.

In practice, this similarity is reflected in the use of positive reinforcement. Both guidance and discipline strategies involve acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviour, cultivating a positive and supportive environment that nurtures children's emotional wellbeing and fosters their social development. By highlighting and reinforcing positive behaviour, children feel encouraged and empowered to make choices that align with pro-social behaviours.

### **2. Setting Clear Expectations**

Another commonality between these two approaches is the establishment of clear expectations for children's behaviour. They recognise the importance of consistent rules and boundaries in providing children with a sense of structure and security.

Setting clear expectations involves communicating and explaining the rules and boundaries to children in an age-appropriate manner. Families and Educators can engage children in discussions, implement the use of visual aids, or create simple rules charts to help them understand and remember their expectations.

Through developing an understanding of their expectations, children are able to associate consequences and reinforcement more positively with their actions. They provide an understanding that allows children to develop self-regulation skills and make informed choices about their behaviour.

### **3. Teaching Consequences**

These approaches both work to demonstrate recognition for importance actions leading to consequences. They aim to help children understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and on others.

Teaching consequences involves providing children with the opportunity to experience natural or logical consequences related to their actions. If a child refuses to wear a coat on a chilly day, the natural consequence might be feeling cold. The logical consequence could be explaining that they will need to bring the coat along and decide when they feel ready to put it on.

Providing children with an understanding of consequences can help them develop an understanding of cause and effect while encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions. By experiencing the consequences of their behaviour, children learn to make informed decisions and consider the potential outcomes before choosing to act in a certain way.

# Benefits of the guidance approach

The guidance approach in early childhood emphasises positive behaviour reinforcement, teaching appropriate skills, and modelling desirable actions. This approach offers several benefits that contribute to children's healthy development and overall wellbeing. By prioritising guidance over strict discipline, caregivers and educators can create a nurturing environment that supports children's social-emotional growth.

## **1. It Promotes Positive Self-Image and Emotional Wellbeing**

The guidance approach focuses on building children's self-esteem and promoting positive self-image. Through the use of positive reinforcement and emphasising the strengths and abilities of children, this approach helps them develop a sense of confidence and self-worth.

You can provide specific praise and recognition for children's efforts and accomplishments, which boosts their self-confidence. By fostering positive self-image with positive behaviours, children are more likely to engage in appropriate actions and develop a positive outlook on themselves and their abilities.

Developing a strong positive self-image helps support children's emotional wellbeing and contributes to their overall happiness and mental health. When children have a positive self-image, they are more resilient, better equipped to handle challenges, and have healthier relationships with others.

## **2. It Cultivates Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills**

The guidance approach prioritises teaching children problem-solving and decision-making skills. Instead of imposing strict rules and punishments, you can encourage your child to think critically and make choices based on their understanding of consequences.

Try to engage children in discussions, ask open-ended questions, and provide opportunities for them to make decisions. These practices help children develop their cognitive skills, learn cause-and-effect relationships, and think independently.

Understanding the effect that the guidance approach has on developing critical thinking skills can help you equip children with essential life skills that they can carry into their future endeavours. By nurturing problem-solving and decision-making abilities, children become more confident in their abilities to navigate challenges and make informed choices.

## **3. It Helps Builds Positive Relationships and Social Skills**

The guidance approach emphasises fostering positive relationships between children, families, and educators. By promoting cooperation, empathy, and respect, this approach creates a supportive social environment where children can thrive.

You can try to encourage your child to communicate effectively, share resources, and resolve conflicts peacefully. Practice modelling positive social behaviours and provide opportunities for children to interact and collaborate with their peers.

Building positive social habits in your child through the guidance approach can help children develop strong social skills and build healthy relationships. By learning to communicate, cooperate, and empathise with others, children develop essential social competencies that contribute to their overall wellbeing and success in various social settings.

# Where does discipline fit in?

While the discipline approach is generally not as effective as guidance, it can be used when safety is at risk or when there is repeated inappropriate behaviour despite the use of guidance. It establishes boundaries, teaches responsibility, and supports healthy development.

Discipline teaches children about consequences and helps them make responsible choices. Combining discipline with the guidance approach provides a comprehensive strategy for promoting positive behaviour. Communication, consistency, and understanding individual needs are essential in effective discipline strategies.

## Positive Guidance and Discipline Strategies

Positive guidance and discipline strategies are crucial in early childhood education to promote positive behaviour and create a supportive learning environment. These strategies focus on reinforcing positive actions, redirecting inappropriate behaviours, setting clear expectations, and providing reflective time-ins.

- **Positive Reinforcement** – Positive reinforcement rewards and acknowledges positive behaviours, motivating children to continue displaying them. It works by boosting self-esteem and reinforcing the connection between behaviour and positive outcomes. Use positive reinforcement to encourage behaviours like sharing, following instructions, and kindness. Offer verbal praise or small rewards, like stickers. Be specific in praising the behaviour and gradually shift from tangible rewards to verbal praise.
- **Redirection** – Redirection guides children towards more appropriate behaviours by diverting their attention or offering alternative activities. Employ redirection for disruptive, unsafe, or developmentally inappropriate behaviours. Provide new activities or tasks to shift their focus. Anticipate triggers and offer choices within the redirection.
- **Clear Expectations and Rules** – Setting clear expectations and rules helps children understand boundaries and promotes self-control. Establish clear expectations and rules from the beginning and consistently reinforce them. Communicate expectations using simple language and visual cues. Explain the reasons behind the rules and involve children in their creation.

# Five positive discipline techniques to try

If you've never felt comfortable punishing your child, then positive discipline is worth a try. By using positive discipline techniques like redirection, praise, and selective ignoring, you can often nip bad behaviour in the bud without resorting to threats, bribes, yelling, or physical punishment.

Proponents claim that this discipline method can help strengthen bonds and increase trust between parents and children. When you respond to provocation with these five tried-and-true examples of positive discipline instead of anger, you also teach a child that it is possible to respond to frustrating moments without conflict.

## AN OVERVIEW OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

### 1. Redirection

Little ones have a short attention span, so it's not too difficult to redirect them to another activity when they're acting out. If your toddler is playing with an object that could be dangerous, introduce another toy that will grab their attention. If that doesn't work, take them to another room or go outside to divert their attention.

Tell an older child what they can do, rather than what they can't. So rather than tell your child that they can't watch YouTube anymore, tell them they can go outside to play or work on a new puzzle they have yet to tackle. Staying focused on the positive can reduce a lot of arguments and defiant behaviour.

### 2. Positive reinforcement

Take every opportunity to praise good behaviour. Research shows that when kids are praised for something they're doing right, whether it's following a rule or sharing a toy, they are more likely to behave in that desired way again.

When using positive reinforcement, it's more effective to praise the specific act of good behavior rather than the child's character or personality. If your child shows concern for someone who might be hurt or seem sad, for example, point out what they did right (like asking if their friend was okay). Be sure to emphasise how the recipient of their kindness appreciated their gesture.

Even more effective than praise are natural rewards for good behaviour. For instance, if a child asks nicely to jump on the trampoline for five more minutes rather than throwing a fit at the prospect of playtime ending, consider granting the extra time to motivate similar polite requests in the future.



## **USING POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOUR**

### **3. Time-in**

Time-out can be an effective consequence, but it can be hard to get right. Research shows that 85% of parents do things when attempting to use this disciplinary technique that are proven to backfire, like talking with kids or letting them play with toys during time-outs. (To be most effective, time-outs should be solitary and boring.)

If your instinct is to interact and not banish your child when they've done something wrong, you might try a time-in. After a bout of bad behaviour, sit down with your child to read a book together rather than sending them to time-out alone. When your child has calmed down, discuss better choices for next time, and encourage them to apologise for their behaviour. Time-ins are helpful in and of themselves at promoting good behaviour but are actually most effective when paired with occasional, well-executed time-outs.

### **4. Use single-word reminders**

Rather than making complex demands of your child, try saying one impactful word to get your message across in the moment. Instead of telling them to go upstairs and brush their teeth and clean up the sink afterwards, just say "teeth." Don't remind your child to use their manners when asking for something and explain at length why it's important; prompt them with a simple "please". Kids respond best to simple, direct instructions in the moment; you can always explain your reasoning later.

If your child doesn't comply right away, it will be tempting to repeat yourself. Take a beat before doing so. If you habitually remind kids of something you just said, they will learn to wait for the follow-up directive before acting.

You'll exhaust yourself (and your child) if you're constantly redirecting them or telling them to do something else.

### **5. Selective Ignoring**

When it's a minor problem, turning a blind eye to the behaviour can work well. With selective ignoring, you don't respond to attention-seeking behaviors, like when your child purposely spills milk on the floor or interrupts repeatedly when you're having a conversation with another grown-up. When a child fails to elicit a reaction from you, positive or negative, they're less likely to act out in that way again.

Of course, use selective ignoring judiciously. You should stop dangerous, destructive, or hurtful actions immediately, and consider a consequence like a time-out if the behaviour continues.

However, giving a pass to annoying, but not punishment-worthy antics reduces the number of times you're sending the message to a child that they're "bad." After all, the main tenet of positive discipline is that there are no bad children—just bad behaviour.

# Frequently asked questions

## **How can I discipline my child in a positive way?**

To discipline your child in a positive way, replace punishments that frighten, shame, or belittle them with strategies that encourage better behaviour, like redirecting them, praising them, and spending quality time together.

## **How can I use positive discipline to motivate a teen?**

Teens respond to positive disciplinary strategies that involve them in the solution to behavioural issues. This approach might include mutually respectful dialogue about a problem and soliciting their ideas for solving it; holding regular family meetings; and encouraging their efforts.

## **What is the difference between positive and negative discipline?**

Whereas negative discipline tends to involve punishments and admonishing language in an attempt to dissuade kids from behaving badly, positive discipline motivates children to make better choices by redirecting them toward more productive activities and praising them when they behave in appropriate ways.

## **What are some positive methods of discipline and guidance?**

The most effective positive discipline strategies are redirection, positive reinforcement, "time-in" (carving out quality moments with your child), single-word reminders, and selective ignoring of objectionable behaviour.





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