

We understand that disciplining your child is one of the more difficult and frustrating things you may experience.

We, at C. S. Mott Children's Hospital and Women's Hospital believe in positive discipline for children. We do not recommend physical punishment, such as hitting, slapping, or spanking, as a way to respond to a child's behavior.

Therefore, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and Women's Hospital is a "No Hitting Zone" where physical punishment of children is unacceptable.

Research* demonstrates that physical punishment creates negative long-term effects on children.

Physical punishment can lead to children who are at risk for:

- Increased misbehavior, including: increased defiance and increased aggression
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Physical injuries

**Gershoff, E. T. (2008). Report on Physical Punishment in the United States: What Research Tells Us About Its Effects on Children. Columbus, OH: Center for Effective Discipline.*

We are here to:

- Support you in managing your child's behavior
- Provide a safe environment for children
- Provide resources on positive discipline

It is very important to:

- Listen and talk with your child
- Let your child know what behaviors you expect
- Understand what behaviors to expect based on your child's age and developmental level

EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

- Guide and teach, not just punish
- Focus on the positives
- Praise and reward good behaviors
- "Catch your child being good"
- Be realistic—expect your child to act like a child
- Be prepared—anticipate and plan for situations and your child's behavior
- Provide your child with clear expectations
- Build structure and routine
- Be consistent and follow through

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

There are many ways to manage children's behavior without using physical punishment. Different methods work for children of different ages and developmental levels.

Redirect the child's attention—Distraction.

- Works best for infants and toddlers who are too young to reason. As you distract your child and direct his/her attention to something new, you may make a simple comment about it ("No touching that").

Give the child time to cool down—Time Out.

- Works best for children age 3 and over for tantrums, hitting, arguing, throwing things.
- Does not work if used too often, for a long period of time or in the wrong places.
- Child should know in advance that if bad behavior does not stop with one reminder, there will be a time out.
- Parents should stay calm and not yell.
- Time out should be one minute per year of child's age after child calms down.
- Praise child for calming down and briefly discuss unwanted behavior.

Create a chart to put stickers on to retain good habits or stop hard to break habits—Sticker Charts.

- Create a chart or calendar that the child can help decorate and explain to the child how the system works.
- Works best for preschool and young school-age children. This technique requires time and attention from parents.
- Whenever the child goes a certain period of time without doing the bad behavior or every time he/she performs the new or good behavior, place a check or sticker on the chart or calendar. Decide how many checks or stickers equals an award.
- Start small – make goals reasonable for the child to achieve.

Agree on rules and consequences for not following them as a family—House Rules.

- Works best for school-age and teenage children.
- Rules don't work if the children aren't involved in setting up the rules, or if the parents do not follow through.
- Avoid trying to set up rules for everything.
- Make sure consequences are reasonable.
- Always be willing to listen to the child's reason if he/she feels the rule was unfair.
- When the rule is broken, calmly remind the child of the rule and follow through with the consequence.

These methods of discipline support our goal of family centered care and we hope you find them helpful.

FAMILY-CENTERED CARE

- Family-centered care is our commitment to delivering safe, effective, high quality health care that focuses on and adapts to the needs of the patient and family. It's a cooperative effort between families and health care teams, and it's a philosophy that recognizes, respects and promotes the diversity, strength and culture of family relationships.
- This brochure is only a brief summary about positive discipline and alternatives to physical punishment. More detailed information about effective parenting and the specific ways to discipline your child are available in our hospital. If you have questions regarding any of the information, please do not hesitate to ask any staff or faculty member. We are here to answer your questions and help you. We hope your relationship with your child is as rewarding as possible.

RESOURCE LIST

- **Parenting**
www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/parent.htm
- **Child Development**
www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/devnews.htm
- **Family Resource Center**
www.med.umich.edu/mott/frc/index.htm
- **Parenting Books**
www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/parent.htm#books
- **Mott Health Care Team**
www.med.umich.edu/mott/pvguide/expect_team.html
- **Social Work**
www.med.umich.edu/mott/pvguide/support_social.html

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Mott Child Advocacy 734-936-9837
- child-advocacy@med.umich.edu

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE—GUIDING YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR



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Literature Credits: Liz Gershoff, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio; Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, Palo Alto, California for educational materials.

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