



Welcome



Baby



utah county health department
"creating healthy communities"



United Way of Utah County

March 2010 A Newsletter for "Welcome Baby" and "Parents as Teachers" Families

Disciplining Your Child



or bottom stair — for a minute or two to calm down (longer timeouts are not effective for toddlers).

It's important to not spank, hit, or slap a child of any age. Babies and toddlers are especially unlikely to be able to make any connection between their behavior and physical punishment. They will only feel the pain of the hit.

And don't forget that kids learn by watching adults, particularly their parents. Make sure your behavior is role-model material. You'll make a much stronger impression by putting your own belongings away rather than just issuing orders to your child to pick up toys while your stuff is left strewn around.

Ages 3 to 5

As your child grows and begins to understand the connection between actions and consequences, make sure you start communicating the rules of your family's home.

Explain to kids what you expect of them **before** you punish them for a certain behavior. For instance, the first time your 3-year-old uses crayons to decorate the living room wall, discuss why that's not allowed and what will happen if your child does it again (for instance, your child will have to help clean the wall and will not be able to use the crayons for the rest of the day). If the wall gets decorated again a few days later, issue a reminder that crayons are for paper only and then enforce the consequences.

The earlier that parents establish this kind of "I set the rules and you're expected to listen or accept the consequences" standard, the better for everyone. Although it's sometimes easier for parents to ignore occasional bad behavior or not follow through on some threatened punishment, this sets a bad precedent.

Consistency is the key to effective discipline, and it's important for parents to decide (together, if you are not a single parent) what the rules are and then uphold them.



How do you keep a 1-year-old from heading toward the DVD player? What should you do when your preschooler throws a fit? How can you get a teenager to respect your authority?

Whatever the age of your child, it's important to be consistent when it comes to discipline. If parents don't stick to the rules and consequences they set up, their kids aren't likely to either.

Here are some ideas about how to vary your approach to discipline to best fit your family:

Ages 0 to 2

Babies and toddlers are naturally curious. So it's wise to eliminate temptations and no-no's — items such as TVs and video equipment, stereos, jewelry, and especially cleaning supplies and medications should be kept well out of reach.

When your crawling baby or roving toddler heads toward an unacceptable or dangerous play object, calmly say "No" and either remove your child from the area or distract him or her with an appropriate activity. Timeouts can be effective discipline for toddlers.

A child who has been hitting, biting, or throwing food, for example, should be told why the behavior is unacceptable and taken to a designated timeout area — a kitchen chair

While you become clear on what behaviors will be punished, don't forget to reward good behaviors. Don't underestimate the positive effect that your praise can have — discipline is not just about punishment but also about recognizing good behavior. For example, saying "I'm proud of you for sharing your toys at playgroup" is usually more effective than punishing a child for the opposite behavior — not sharing. And be specific when doling out praise; don't just say, "Good job!"



If your child continues an unacceptable behavior no matter what you do, try making a chart with a box for each day of the week. Decide how many times your child can misbehave before a punishment kicks in or how long the proper behavior must be displayed before it is rewarded. Post the chart on the refrigerator and then track the good and unacceptable behaviors every day. This will give your child (and you) a concrete look at how it's going. Once this begins to work, praise your child for learning to control misbehavior and, especially, for overcoming any stubborn problem.

Timeouts also can work well for kids at this age. Establish a suitable timeout place that's free of distractions and will force your child to think about how he or she has behaved. Remember, getting sent to your room doesn't have an impact if a computer, TV, and video games are there. Don't forget to consider the length of time that will best suit your child. Experts say 1 minute for each year of age is a good rule of thumb; others recommend using the timeout until the child is calmed down (to teach self-regulation). It's important to tell kids what the right thing to do is, not just to say what the wrong thing is. For example, instead of saying "Don't jump on the couch," try "Please sit on the furniture and put your feet on the floor."

A Word About Spanking

Perhaps no form of discipline is more controversial than spanking. Here are some reasons why the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) discourages spanking:

- Spanking teaches kids that it's OK to hit when they're angry.
- Spanking can physically harm children.
- Rather than teaching kids how to change their behavior, spanking makes them fearful of their parents and merely teaches them to avoid getting caught.
- For kids seeking attention by acting out, spanking may inadvertently "reward" them — negative attention is better than no attention at all.

Taken in part from:

Pendley Jennifer Schroff, "Disciplining your child" October 2008. Kids Health. November 2009 <http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/discipline.html#>>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Ready to Learn—"Media Literacy"**—
March 17th at the Utah County Health Dept (UCHD), Rm. 1600 from 12-1 p.m. This is a basic workshop that helps parents and childcare providers with awareness concerning media and how to use quality television, literacy and activities to support learning. Receive a complimentary book.
- **Provo City Library—**
 - ☞ **"Book Babies"** every Friday from 10-10:30 a.m. for infants 0-12 mos.
 - ☞ **"Mother Goose Time"** every Friday from 11-12pm for 1 year olds. Age appropriate songs, stories, and activities for baby and their parents/ caregivers.
- **Orem City Library—**
 - ☞ **"Laptime"** every Tues, Wed, & Th at 10am in Hogwarts' Corner. A 20 min. program for babies, toddlers & their caregivers with songs, fingerplays & short stories to introduce our youngest patrons to the world of words.
 - ☞ **"Storytime"** every Tues, Wed, & Th at 10:30am in the Storytelling Wing. A 30 min. program for preschoolers & young school age children with stories, puppets & activities to engage youngsters & highlight the joys of books & storytelling.

