Positive Discipline and Child Directed Play

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Welcome

- Introductions
- Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative
- Important Info for the Day

Objectives

- To identify positive discipline tools that will help build social and emotional skills for children in a logical and loving way.
- To identify positive discipline techniques that can increase healthy social and emotional development.
- To understand basic concepts for using child directed play to build relationships.

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we…… ……teach?…….punish?”

“Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”

- Tom Herner (NASDE President, Counterpoint 1998, p.2)

Positive Parenting: Using Love and Logic Skills

Basic Deposits for Children:

- Start early with these strategies to help build self-esteem, personal responsibility, and the ability to make smart choices:

- Build the self-concept
- Share the control or decision-making
- Offer empathy, then consequences
- Share the thinking and problem-solving

- Building these skills early will also help build positive relationships between parents and children which they can draw on when they have to make decisions without you.

Build the Self-Concept

- The building of high and low self concept happens over time.
- Allow children the gift of personal success.
- Weigh learning experiences against immediate rescue. When we rescue we erode self-concept, when we allow them to solve a problem we strengthen it.

- How to build low self-concept:
  - Find fault and criticize
  - Insist on doing everything for the child
  - Don’t allow their children to experience the joy of independent success
- How to build high self-concept:
  - Offer empathy, understanding, unconditional love
  - Allow children to struggle to solve own problems
  - Encouraged children to learn to succeed through personal thinking and learning

Share the Control

- Battles over control benefit no one.
- Give control away when you don't need it so you can take some back when you do.
- Share control by giving the types of choices that do not cause a problem for you or anyone else on the planet.

- Often we set too few limits when children are toddlers and try to set more limits as children get older.
- A child's ability to make choices within the limits of safety is the foundation for responsibility and wisdom.

Provide Empathy Before Delivering consequences

- Sometimes the pain of poor choices help children to learn to avoid mistakes in the future.
- Price of mistakes when children are young are smaller than the price when they are teenagers.
- Empathy opens the mind to learning.
- Anger short circuits learning.

  - Every time we use empathy the reasoning brain of children turns on
  - Every time we deliver threats or anger, their reasoning brain turns off.

Always Remember

- Mistakes are Wonderful Opportunities to Learn
  - Recognize your mistakes
  - Reconcile - “I’m sorry” or “ I was wrong”
  - Resolve – Focus on solutions rather than blame

Share the Thinking

- When we share the thinking and invite children into identifying solutions for their own problems we give them the foundations to make good choices later in life when they are not with us.
- Use problem solving skills and techniques to help children grow their skills early.

Solution focused Problem solving:

- Do a drawing of the events that led to the incident and invite the child to figure out places where a different choice could be made.
- Help them visually see consequences and alternative choices.
- Use problem solving books, read a story and invite kids to give the characters solutions to the problems they encounter.
- Use “I wonder” questions to get kids answers
- Add regular problem solving into your family times. Good social problem solving is just as important as learning good academic skills. Even from and early age.

Some ways to Build Relationships:

- Show Genuine Interest in children
- Listen carefully and patiently to children
- Give plenty of time to respond to questions
- Be consistent but loving with discipline
- Converse in give and take style
- Play with and alongside children
- Share control with children when possible.

Positive Discipline Strategies

Positive Discipline requires that we use a different approach to help children increase taking responsibility for their own behavior and Actions.

The Four Criteria for Effective Positive Discipline

- Is it kind and firm at the same time? (Respectful and encouraging)
- Does it help children feel a sense of belonging and significance? (Connection)
- Is it effective long-term? (Punishment works in the short term, but has negative long-term results)
- Does it teach valuable social and life skills for good character? (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, accountability, contribution, cooperation).

Where did we ever get the idea that in order to make children do better we had to make them feel worse?

Children do better when they feel better.

Beware of what works

"Many people feel strongly that strictness and punishment work. I agree. I would never say that punishment does not work. Punishment does work in that it usually stops misbehavior immediately. But what are the long term results? We are often fooled by immediate results. Sometimes we must be aware of what works when the long term results are negative."
– Jane Nelsen, Ed.D, Positive Discipline

The Four R's of Punishment

- Resentment – "This is unfair. I can't trust adults."
- Revenge – "They may be winning now, but I'll get even eventually."
- Rebellion – "I'll do just the opposite to prove I don't have to do it their way."
- Retreat –

  a) Sneakiness – " I won't get caught next time."

  b) Reduced self-esteem – "I am a bad person."

What kids need:

- A Sense of belonging and significance
- Perceptions of capability
- Personal Power and autonomy
- Social and Life Skills

Research has shown that negative punishment can actually hamper optimal brain development.

Sense of belonging and significance

- "I need to know that I am loved unconditionally for who I am, not just for how I behave or the abilities I may have."
- Very young children need adults to show them that they belong when they are laughing and also when they are having a tantrum.
- They need the same calm treatment day in and day out to learn this. Misbehavior is often a clue for feelings of not belonging.

Perceptions of Capability

- "I need to understand that I am capable. Therefore I need to be able to try things even when I sometimes fail or get frustrated. I need you to praise my efforts, even when I'm not successful."
- Toddlers often struggle to do things and it is very easy to do things for them, but it's important to let them have experiences where they try and get praised for efforts so they will keep trying and learn that they can do it!

Personal Power and Autonomy

- "I need a chance to explore my own power and channel it in effective ways. This may mean I look strong willed or oppositional but that is how I learn."
- Power struggled are a part of a toddlers life. They need to learn what they can and can not do and they have to figure out where they can control and where they can not.
- If we are calm, firm, and have appropriate expectations without negative punishment they will learn these skills. Be careful not to take too much power away.

Social and Life Skills

- "I need to learn valuable skills. I need to learn to get along with other children, to fall asleep on my own, to feed and dress myself. These skills will help me know I am capable."
- Children need to learn social skills. They do not automatically know how to behave in situations. Punishment will not teach them what to do, but only what not to do to avoid punishment.
- For some children punishment will cause them not to learn skills or to rebel against anything that is being taught.

"Winning over children makes them losers, and losing generally causes children to be rebellious or blindly submissive. Neither characteristic is desirable. Winning children over means gaining their willing cooperation.":

- Positive Discipline, Jane Nelsen, Ed. D

Winning Cooperation

1. Express understanding for the child's feelings. Be sure to check with him or her to see if you are right.
2. Show empathy without conditioning. Empathy does not mean you agree or condone. It simply means that you understand the child's perspective.
3. Share your feelings and perceptions.
4. Invite the child to focus on a solution. Ask if he/she has any ideas on what to do in the future to avoid the problem. If he doesn't, offer some suggestions until you reach an agreement.

Natural and Logical Consequences

- NATURAL: Those that simply happen naturally

  "If I don't wear my coat today I will get cold."

- LOGICAL : Those that are decided upon and imposed by parents and teachers but fit the crime. "Because you chose not to pick up your toys today the toys are in time out for the rest of the day."

3 R's of Logical Consequences

1. Related – Is the consequence related to the situations or the incident?
2. Respectful – Does it respect the rights of the child and are we using a respectful tone when implementing it?
3. Reasonable – Does it make sense, is the length of time appropriate, does it fit the situation?

Methods that invite cooperation in young children:

1. Get Children Involved – Ask "What do you think?" questions, find ways to get them involved in the solution rather than just telling them the solution.
2. Create routines – Creating reliable and repetitive routines will help children learn best. They learn through repetition and consistency.
3. Offer choices – Having a choice gives a child a sense of power. There are many things in a day that we do not need to control. Let them have control when you can so that it's easier to get it when you need it.

4. Provide opportunities to help – A toddler may resist a command but they will usually willing “help” and adult. Saying “I need your help with….” will usually go over better than a command.
5. Teach respect by Being respectful – Children learn respect by seeing it in action. Use respectful words when asking them to do something. Give them warnings, don’t expect it to happen “right now.” A child who is treated with disrespect is likely to return the favor.
6. Use your sense of humor – Find ways to add laughter into your day even if it means racing your child to do something you know you can do faster and then losing.

7. Get into the child's world – If a child is throwing a tantrum because they don't want to leave somewhere we can offer empathy but not rescuing. Try to see the world from their perspective.
8. If you say it, Mean it, and If you mean it, Follow through with Kind and firm Action
9. Be patient – Kids will need to do things a million more times than we do to learn it, be patient with their life stage.
10. Provide lots of Supervision, Distraction, and Redirection – An unsupervised kid will always get into trouble (just like pets do!) and distraction is your best friend with small children. Instead of saying "Don't hit your friend" redirect by showing how to touch our friends gently.

Respect each child's unique personality! They all develop differently and have different temperaments. There are no bad children but there are children with poor behavior that need special training to learn a more positive way to do things.

Child Directed Play to Build Relationships

Rationale for Child Directed Play

- Helps child become calmer and more accepting of discipline
- Teaches play therapy skills used to build relationships and attachment
- Teaches how to communicate with young, active children
- Gives teaching methods that avoid frustration
- Improves child's self-esteem (feel/act better)
- Supports warm, secure relationship

PRIDE Skills

- **P**RAISE – appropriate behavior
- **R**EFLECT – appropriate talk
- **I**MITATE – appropriate play
- **D**ESCRIBE – appropriate behavior
- **E**NJOYMENT – in your play

Praise

- Benefits:
  - Increases good behavior
  - Lets the child know what behavior is desired
  - Increases self-esteem
  - Makes you and your child feel good
- Two types of Praise:
  - Unlabeled praise
  - Labeled praise

Labeled Praise

"Good job putting your toys away."

"I like it when you play gently with the toys."

"Great idea to make a fence for the cows."

"That's a great way to…"

"I'm so happy with you when…"

"Thank you for…"

Praise-worthy Behaviors

- Sitting still
- Playing carefully
- Listening carefully
- Trying hard
- Being patient, gentle, kind, helpful
- Putting toys away
- Sharing
- Playing quietly
- Taking turns
- Looking at parent when they talk
- Saying thank you
- Accepting help
- Using inside voice

Praising the Positive Opposite

- If you are trying to get your child to stop doing something you can identify the opposite behavior (or desired behavior) and begin praising this consistently and often.
- Make a list of these things and keep them within view so you remember to catch your child being good.

Reflect

- Benefits:
  - Lets the child lead the conversation
  - Shows the child they are being listened to and heard
  - Shows acceptance, respect, and understanding
  - Enhances speech development
  - Increases the amount of talking done between parent and child

Reflections

Child: “The doggy has a black nose.”
Care Giver: “The dog’s nose is black.”

Child: “Give me the car.”
Care Giver: “You want the car.”

Some reflections can have “teaching” in them too.

Child: “I drew a tree”
Care Giver: “Yes, you drew a green and brown tree.”

Imitate

- Benefits:
  - Lets the child take the lead
  - Shows the child that the activity is appropriate
  - Shows that the parent is involved
  - Teaches the child how to play with others and how to take turns
  - Increases the child's imitation of appropriate parental behavior

Imitations

Child: “I put a nose on Mr. Potato Head.”

Care Giver: “I’m putting a nose on Mr. Potato Head too.”

Child: (drawing circles on a piece of paper)

Care Giver: “I am going to draw circles on my paper just like you.”

Imitation can be verbal or non-verbal but stating what you are doing increases the likelihood the child knows it is acceptable behavior.

Describe (Behavior)

- Benefits:
  - Lets the child lead
  - Shows the child the parent is interested
  - Teaches the child concepts and ideas
  - Models speech
  - Holds the child's attention to the task
  - Organizes the child's thoughts about the activity

Descriptions

"You are making a tower."

"You drew a square."

"You are putting together Mr. Potato Head."

"You put the girl inside the fire truck."

"You put them together in a straight line."

Descriptions should be about what the child is doing rather than what the toys are doing.

Enjoyment

- Benefits:
  - Lets the child know that you are enjoying the time you are spending together
  - Increases the warmth in the play
  - Encourages involvement and engagement in appropriate activities
  - Adds emphasis to praise statements

Enjoyment

Child: (carefully places a blue Lego on a tower.)

Care Giver: (gently touches the child's back) "You are REALLY being gentle with the toys, I am having SO much fun playing with you."

Avoid Skills

- Commands
- Questions
- Criticism

NO

DON'T

STOP

QUIT

NOT

Commands

- Rationale:
  - Takes the lead away from the child
  - Can cause bad feelings

- Two types of Commands:
  - Indirect: “Lets play with the truck next.”
  - Direct: “Give me the pigs.” or “Please sit down next to me.”

Questions

- Rationale:
  - Leads the conversation
  - Many questions are commands that require an answer

    "What sound does the cow make?"
  - May seem like the parent is not listening to the child or disagrees with what the child wants to do

    "Did you want to play with the blocks now or would you rather play with the truck first?"

Criticism

- Rationale:
  - Use of critical statements can actually increase bad behavior
  - May lower child's self esteem
  - Creates tension in the relationship

"That wasn't nice."

"That animal doesn't go there."

"I don't like it when you make that face."

Ignoring vs Active Ignoring

- **Ignore minor behaviors in child directed play**
- **<u>Actively</u> ignore slightly worse behaviors**

Example of active ignoring: if the child sulks, whines, or plays aggressively with the toys for some time, the parent can ignore, keep face blank and turn away from the child. The care giver plays alone in an animated manner.

If the child shows interest in the parent and stops the behavior, the care giver joins the child in enthusiastic manner and gives a labeled praise for a desirable behavior.

When-Then Statements

- Care giver communicates the expected behavior and logical consequence
- The child is ignored until they comply
- Can be said in second or third person
  - "**When** you sit in your chair, **then** we can play."
  - "**When** Johnny puts the toy in the bucket, **then** we can get out the Play-Doh."

What Cannot Be Ignored

- Hitting the parent or caregiver
- Biting the parent or self
- Kicking
- Banging dangerously on the observation glass
- Breaking toys on purpose
- Throwing furniture
- Standing on furniture
- Doing anything dangerous

Special Play Time Instructions

"Now we are going to have special play time. You can play with whatever toys you like."

For the care giver to know: There are 2 rules – the child cannot break toys or hurt self or others. Actively ignore negative behaviors if possible, but stop special play time if there is a safety issue.

Special Play Time with the Child directed skills should be started in short time increments such as 5 minutes each day. This does not mean you can't play with your child more but just try to use these skills for 5 minutes only.

Toys for Child Directed Play

- Creative – constructional toys
  - Legos, Duplos, Farm, Potato Head, Play-Doh, etc.
- Avoid
  - Toys that encourage rough play
  - Toys that could cause harm to self or others
  - Toys that can get out of hand and require limit setting
  - Toys that have pre-set rules, noises or discourage conversation

Resources:

- “Positive Discipline The First Three Years” by Jane Nelsen, Ed.D, Cheryl Erwin, M.A., and Roslyn Ann Duffy.
- “Positive Discipline For Preschoolers” by Jane Nelsen, Ed. D, Cheryl Erwin, M.A., and Roslyn Ann Duffy.
- “Positive Discipline” by Jane Nelsen, Ed.D.
- “Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood: Practical Parenting from Birth to Six Years” by Jim Fay and Charles Fay, Ph.D
- “Parent-Child Interaction Therapy” by Toni Hembree-Kigin and Cheryl McNeil

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