

# COMPASS

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE MAGAZINE FOR FAMILIES  
FALL 2016

MAKE MORNINGS  
BETTER WITH ROUTINES

ENCOURAGEMENT  
MATTERS

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE AT  
HOME AND IN THE  
CLASSROOM

## BACK TO SCHOOL



3 WAYS TO  
CONNECT  
BEFORE YOU  
CORRECT

Put an End to Lunch Box Blues  
and After School Misbehaviors



“One of the best ways of becoming an effective parent—or, for that matter, an effective human being—is to understand the perceptions of other people, to be able to “get into their world.”

— Jane Nelsen, *Positive Discipline: The First Three Years: From Infant to Toddler--Laying the Foundation for Raising a Capable, Confident Child*

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Positive Discipline is a program developed by Dr. Jane Nelsen. It is based on the work of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs and designed to teach young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. All writers for COMPASS have been trained and certified through the Positive Discipline Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating respectful relationships in homes and schools.

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# A Little Bit of Back Talk

Image via © jul14ka  
Cover design Ariadne Brill



The spring compass was outstanding. -Joyce N.

I've been putting some tips on cooking with kids into practice and it makes my evenings so much smoother. Thanks for showing me that I can be connecting and cooking at the same time. -Anja G.

Send us your feedback and questions.  
We would love to hear from you.  
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# Mommy, What Did I Do That Was Good Today?

By Anna Partridge



I was putting my son to bed last night and talking to him about the day. We were reflecting about something he had done that wasn't great and thinking of ways he could do it better next time. Half way through the conversation he rolled over and said to me 'Mommy, what did I do that was good today?'

I realized I had slipped into criticizing; focusing on the negative and dwelling on the things my son hadn't done well. Sadly, I was so focused on correcting the bad things that I had missed the good. I was parenting him for the future and he just needed me to meet him in the present moment.

Kids live in the moment – unlike adults, they don't dwell on the past or focus on what is happening in two weeks time – they live for now. Our job is to meet them there. So we changed our conversation to talk about all the good things my son had done that day. It lightened the mood and we relived the many fun moments we had had together.

**Parenting is a tricky balance between seeing our kids for who they already are and at the same time parenting them for the future.**

We want to teach our kids to be kind, caring, model citizens, resilient, self confident, emotionally stable, and intelligent – but when we

are so focused on teaching these things it is easy to forget to see our kids for who they already are. If we spend time with our kids and meet them in the moment, we are able to see who they are, learn all their different quirks and characteristics and parent from there.

*“Take some time to tell your child you like them today, and list the reasons why. Then watch in wonder as they blossom before your eyes. Words of recognition and appreciation to a child are like sunshine and rain to a flower.” L.R.Knost*

The key here is to be present with our kids, rather than trying to 'fix' them all the time. They are not broken; we don't need to fix them. We need to 'be' with our kids to know what they can and can't do, to know how to guide and mentor them in the best way we can and to really love and appreciate them for who they are.

How do we find the balance? Here are 7 ways to be present, while still parenting for the future.

## **1. Slow down the pace**

We are living life at a tremendous speed. Society deems us to live at this hurried, crazy pace and we are reaching the maximum capacity of the 'hurry up' culture. We are ferrying our kids from one after school activity to another, we are filling in every moment of the day with something and we are constantly in a rush to get somewhere. We are telling our kids to 'hurry up and eat your breakfast', 'hurry up



“Parent for the future, and meet kids in the now.”

and get your shoes on’, ‘hurry up and grow up’. If we slow down the pace of our lives enough to take in the wonder and awe of our children, we can see who they really are and nurture it. It is in this down time that we are building the strong, connected family relationships and living for the moment. It is also in this time that we can have fun with our kids and build positive memories.

### **2. Perfection is an illusion**

A lot of the time we are parenting our kids to be the ‘model citizen’. We are pushing and polishing them to be perfect and forget that perfection is actually an illusion. We are all human and have our faults and differences – so do our kids. Disciplining can quickly change to criticism and we become critical of every little thing our child does ‘wrong’. It is actually OK for our kids to make mistakes and learn from them. It is OK if they only do what we want from them for 80 per cent of the time and aren’t perfect 100 per cent. We need to be clear on the traits and values we want to instill in our children from the very start and pour our focus only on them. If we try to guide and teach our children to do and be everything, it won’t work.

### **3. Parent for the future, but meet kids in the now**

Kids, by their very nature, live in the moment. Unlike adults, they don’t plan every integral time period of what will happen in two weeks time and they don’t dwell on what happened a week ago. They live for now and we need to meet them there. We need to connect with them and have fun with them now. A great way to do this is through micro moments of connection. A high five at the door on the way out in the morning, a wink across the table, a spontaneous dance off in the kitchen or a note

in their lunch box means much more to our kids than setting up an hour every second weekend to do ‘special time’. They want to live for now so join them in it.

### **4. Say YES more often**

Provide plenty of opportunities to have fun with your kids. How often does your child say ‘Can we go to the park and get an ice-cream?’. No. ‘Can we go on a bike ride?’. Not right now. ‘Can we go to the beach?’. Not today. Why not? Because we have filled our lives with so many other plans and arrangements, we run out of time to do the fun things with our kids. Being spontaneous and saying yes allows us to have fun with our kids and live the positives in life. Childhood is so short. My daughter turns 11 in a few weeks and she already wants to be with her friends more than she wants to be with us. She is creeping into teenager hood and thankfully we have snuck in many more fun, ‘yes’ times that we should have in our time together.

### **5. ‘Be’ with your kids, don’t ‘fix’**

Our kids don’t need fixing because they are not broken. They are born with their own personalities and traits. If you have more than one child, you know just how different each personality and character can be and while we have a set ideal in our mind of what our kids ‘should be like’ each one is not necessarily going to meet that standard. Rather than fixing or changing our kids, they need us to be with them and to be there for them as a guide or mentor. They need us to know who they are and build our relationship around that, rather than always trying to turn them into what we want them to be.



## 6. Disconnect and reconnect

We live our lives connected to technology – we have our iPhones, kids have their iPads, WiFi is everywhere and we are connected to what is going on in our online world. You just have to go to the local park or swimming pool to see this. At a park last week, every Mom was holding her iPhone 10 inches from her face looking at Facebook or Instagram while her child played on the swing, climbed the monkey bars or slid down the slide. There were even a couple of kids that had bought their iPads to the park and were playing side by side on them. We are so connected to technology, and in this case, at the expense of connecting with our kids. Put the phones down at the park and push your kids on the swing. At the end of the day when they are reliving the fun things you did together, do you think it will be watching you on your iPhone at the park? Probably not. This is where the connection with our kids happens – when we interact, when we get involved in their fun times. Not when we sit back and connect with our technology.

## 7. Don't discipline all the time

Parenting now is a very serious business. When we were growing up, often free-range parenting was how we were raised. We came home when the street lights went on and we learnt a lot of things the hard way. Along the



way we became resilient and independent. It seems parenting has taken a full turn in many circles and the term 'helicopter parenting' is rife. We hang too close to our kids and we are constantly disciplining them. 'Don't do that'. 'Don't say that'. 'Don't touch that'. I followed a mother around the supermarket with her toddler in tow the other day and she must have said 'no' and 'don't' 80 times or more. It is reminder to let our kids have some freedom and do some of the learning on their own. They don't need to be controlled by us at every turn. Guide and protect, but don't spend all your day disciplining because where is the fun in that!

I am glad my son called me out on focusing on the bad things last night, rather than looking at the good. Our kids are awesome and we don't need to constantly tell them how to do things the best way but learn to appreciate them for who they already are. My son's lesson to me: Parent for the future, but please live with me in the moment.



## ANNA PARTRIDGE

Anna Partridge is a certified Positive Discipline Parent Educator, school teacher and mother to 3 children. She helps parents raise confident and resilient kids through the positive parenting philosophy. Anna writes articles for her blog, [www.annapartridge.com](http://www.annapartridge.com) and is a regular contributor for The Huffington Post. Learn more about Anna and how she helps families find the balance [here](#).

# Say Good-Bye to the Lunch Box Blues

By Amy Knobler

Don't you love that daily moment when you open your child's lunch box and discover all the food that wasn't eaten during the school day?!?

Sometimes it can be downright exasperating. I've talked to many parents who agree: We feel unhappy about the wasted food, the wasted effort, and the fact that our kids aren't consuming the fuel they need to get through the day at their best. As someone who loves to cook, I sometimes browse Pinterest and blogs looking for the magical lunchtime recipes that my daughter will actually eat. I frequently find pictures like this:



While I love the creativity of this adorable idea... Do you know any parents who have the time to do this? I know I don't! It can feel pretty discouraging. With my luck, Pokémon would come home missing his carrot cheeks and half his rice face, and the rest would be untouched.

We're at the start of a new school year, and I'm committed to a fresh start.

I have two goals:

1. I want my nine-year-old daughter to be responsible for planning and packing her own lunch.
2. I want to maximize the possibility of her lunch box coming home empty!

This feels like a tall order, so I need some **Positive Discipline strategies**. I plan to use these ideas with my daughter. I hope they will make packing school lunches easier for you too!

## 1. Start with curiosity questions.

Be a detective. When your child brings home a lunch hardly consumed, ask detailed questions to find out why. You'll be amazed what you might find out. Keep an open mind! When I set aside my frustration over wasting food, I was able to be truly curious about why my daughter frequently didn't finish her lunch, even though I knew I was packing foods she liked. It turns out she didn't like the texture or temperature of certain foods once they had been out of the refrigerator for a few hours. We experimented with ice packs and hot food containers, and it really helped.



Packing lunch  
can be fun!

## 2. Devote some family time to planning lunches together.

Set aside a bit of time each week to plan lunches. If you have weekly family meetings, you might incorporate meal planning into the meeting. This can be especially fun for young children — it gives them a real sense of importance to contribute to this process. For older children, it can be an “action item” for each child to plan their weekly lunches independently. Planning ahead also makes grocery shopping more efficient. Empowering kids to contribute to their lunches is key. Many of us have childhood memories of our parents sending us to school with lunches we didn’t like. Children are MUCH more likely to eat lunches they create! It encourages kids to look forward to that meal with a sense of pride and excitement.

## 3. Make an agreement.

With your child, create an agreement outlining the lunch-packing plan.

Be sure to invite your child’s input. Thinking your child will say she wants to pack a sugary dessert in her lunch each day? She just might! That’s ok — the point is to work together on a plan that makes both of you happy. Perhaps you can agree to a special dessert one day of the week? Maybe dessert is fine as long as it’s home-made? Ask your child to help you brainstorm —

kids can be exceptionally clever when dessert is at stake!

Be sure to include the power of choice in your agreement. For instance, if you feel it’s important for your child to have a vegetable in her lunch, give her two or three acceptable choices and have them available in the fridge. Then empower her to decide her vegetable choice each day.

Your agreement can also detail the daily lunch-packing routine.

## 4. Incorporate lunch prep into your child’s routine.

If your child is young, invite her to help you pack her lunch. Give her small tasks she can complete on her own, such as putting carrot sticks or goldfish crackers into a zip lock baggie, finding a fork or spoon in the drawer, or selecting the water bottle she wants to bring that day.

If you have an older child, take the time to teach her the steps to packing lunch on her own. At first, you can do this together. Then gradually allow her to become autonomous. Incorporate lunch packing into her routine, perhaps in the evening before bed, or first thing in the morning. Kids as young as six or seven are fully capable of



packing their own lunches. Really! Of course, be available if they need help with heating a hot lunch choice and transferring it to a thermos.

**5. Remember that this takes practice.**

If your child is younger, it may take a few more minutes each day to involve her in packing lunch with you. Build a little buffer into your routine to allow your child to participate without stressing you out. The more your preschooler practices, the quicker it will go.

For older children, it may take a lot of practice to build the routine of packing their own lunches. Be ready to offer kind and firm support: “I understand how tired you feel this morning, and you wish I would pack lunch for you. I have faith in you to pack your own lunch and still get to school on time.” If they have trouble budgeting enough time to pack lunch, or remembering to take their lunch to school, invite them to brainstorm solutions with you.

If collaborating on lunch planning is new for your family, it may take some time to get it going smoothly. Be flexible and go easy on yourself! It may take practice and perseverance, but the payoff is so worthwhile. Keep the big picture in mind: It’s time spent together, teaching our children important life skills and helping them to build a healthy relationship with food.

And maybe one day soon, that lunch box will come home empty!

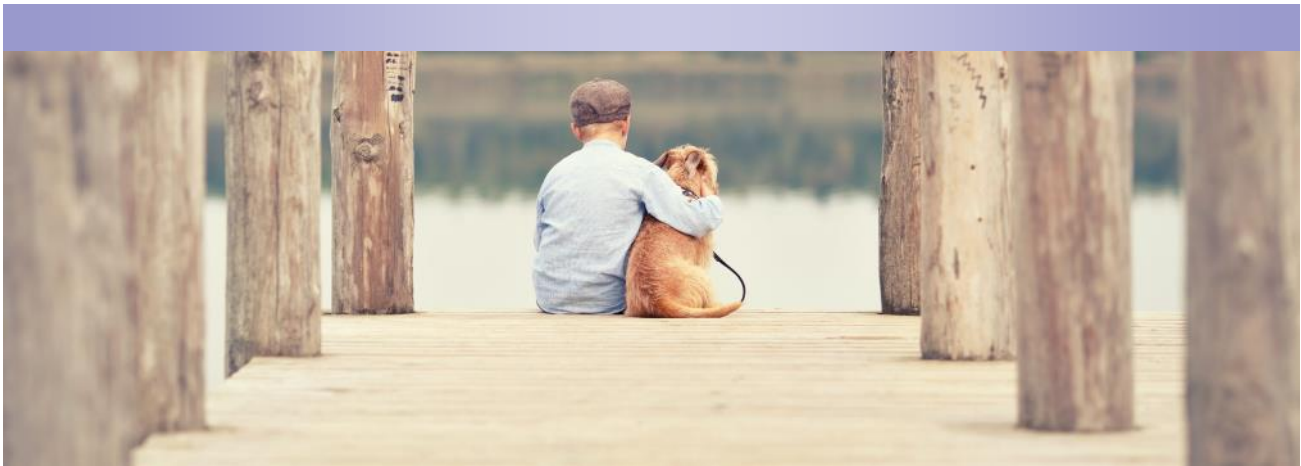


## AMY KNOBLER

Amy Knobler is a Certified Positive Discipline Parent Educator with a background as a personal chef. Amy created Cook to Connect to combine her love of positive parenting education with her passion for getting kids into the kitchen! Amy teaches parents how cooking with their kids can help transform everyday parenting challenges into opportunities for growth and connection in the family.

To learn about Amy’s offerings for families, schools, and organizations, visit [www.cooktoconnect.net](http://www.cooktoconnect.net).

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## The Imperfect Path That Leads To Responsibility By Carol Dores

As the school year begins, we get to choose how involved we are in our children's responsibilities. We get to choose whether to rescue them from failing. We get to choose how much we want to let go, and let them learn from their mistakes.

**Many parents feel they need their children to be perfect from an early age.**

Getting in to the right pre-school will set them up for admission to Harvard. Being on the right t-ball team could set them up to get a college scholarship for baseball, or better yet, a career as a major league player. For some, looking perfect as a toddler will help be more beautiful as an adult. What ever happened to kids being allowed to just be kids? To skinned knees, riding a bike to a friend's house, and just goofing around?

***"Have the Courage to Be Imperfect." -Alfred Adler***

There is so much pressure on children today to have a full resume to apply to col-

lege. They are expected to know what they want to be when they grow up at younger and younger ages, so they can complete that resume. When visiting high schools, it is easy to see the pressure these children are under.

So what would happen if we parents chose a different path?

One with acceptance, love and less pressure? One where mistakes were seen as opportunities to learn, rather than failures? One where we encourage children to simply do the best they can, rather than be the superstar athlete or all "A" student?

When we accept our children with unconditional love as they are, they can love themselves. They can be comfortable in their own skin, and develop self-esteem. They will feel they are good enough. Because they really are.

When we help them see how to learn from mistakes, they will begin to openly share them. They will learn to look for resolutions to problems. They will be less likely to hide things from us. They will feel less pressure, more relaxed, and open. They

will be less likely to make the same mistake twice. They will also be more willing to take responsibility for their actions – both good and bad – as there will be no blame, shame or pain.

**When we encourage our children to be the best that they can be, they are more likely to put in a strong effort.**

They will feel better about themselves. They will feel they are capable and loved.

One of the best ways we can help our children learn these things is through modeling them ourselves.

We can begin by looking within, and trying accept who we are. If we are always being critical of ourselves, we are communicating we are not good enough. For many, this may be tough, based on how we were raised.

Taking small steps to acknowledge the things that you appreciate about yourself is a first step.

- Are you kind to others?
- Are you helpful?
- Are you supportive?

What we pay attention to will grow, so the more we think positively about ourselves, the more positive we can be. We can also begin noticing those things in our children.

What might that sound like:

- “I appreciate how kind you were to Sally on the playground by playing with her when no one else would”
- “It was so helpful that you remembered to put the trash out, thank you.”



Next we can show our children that making mistakes is okay, and how to learn or recover from them. As you are making dinner, you can put too much of something in, and then talk out loud about the mistake, and what you can do to fix it. If you have an overdraft on a check or forget to pay a bill, let your kids know, and share what you will do differently to try to prevent it from happening again.

Once you’ve started to show them how you are learning from mistakes, ask them to share some of their mistakes.

**Questions like these can be helpful:**

- “What will you do differently next time?”
- “What did you learn from this?”
- “I think you recognize your mistake, so what would you like to do about it?”

It’s hard to not sound critical or judging, so watching tone of voice, body language and the words you chose. This is important for this approach to make a positive impact on your child.

Finally, many of us are perfectionists and/or competitive in nature. Working to minimize these traits in ourselves can help our children. Playing a round of golf and talking about the fun of the sport, the beauty of the day or how hard you tried can be said instead



of scores, holes in one, etc. Once you have started to shift your self-evaluation, you can work on the things you talk to your children about.

Instead of saying, “Great, you got an A”, you can say “Your hard work really paid off”.

Instead of talking about how your child is the best goal scorer on the team, you can talk about how they seem to be a great team player.

What do these changes do for our children? They potentially help them grow from within, and help them feel good about themselves. They encourage them to be the best they can be, rather than better than others. They will develop more self-respect and responsibility for their actions.

Ultimately, they will be more ready to be on their own when the time comes. And that really is what our jobs are as parents – to help our children become responsible and respectful, independent, contributing members of society, mistakes and all!



## Carol Schilling Dores

Carol is the mother of two adult sons, and lives in Connecticut. She is a Certified Positive Discipline Parenting and Classroom Trainer and the co-founder of Positive Discipline of Connecticut. Carol is available to teach parenting classes and to bring Positive Discipline in to schools and classrooms. She is also co-chair of the Positive Discipline Association Board of Directors.



## ENCOURAGEMENT

*“Treat a man (or child) as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man (or child) as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.”*

*– Steven R Covey*

### How to Use Encouragement and strengthen your parent-child bond.

One of my favorite parenting tools, and one of the pillars of parenting with Positive Discipline, is encouragement.

#### **Encouragement: Holding the Container**

To me, encouragement is holding space for others to discovery, explore and show up as their best versions of themselves.

“Holding space” is the way that we show up in the relationship, how we sit, how we listen, how we respond. We are always “holding space” – just some of the time we are more intentional about it than others... I love what one of my class participants said, “It’s like our job is to hold this big container that our kids are bouncing around in.”

Yes, “holding the container” in a way that allows our kids to bounce around, make mistakes, learn from them, and discover how capable they are in the process, that is encouragement.

Encouragement is Different from Praise

There are times when encouragement gets confused with praise, so I would love to make the distinction between the two.

**Praise is often about the giver.** It can be empty or vague. Praise is product oriented and creates a fixed mindset. While praise can give a child a short term sense of being noticed, it does little to grow their internal sense of self.

**Encouragement, on the other hand, is all about the receiver.** It is rich with detail and honesty. Encouragement is about process and effort and can facilitate the development of a growth mindset. Encouragement offers an opportunity for a child to recognize their strengths, and allows them to grow an internal gauge for how they are doing...

*“We know what we are but know not what we may be.” – Shakespeare*

As parents, we have continuous opportunities for influencing our children’s beliefs

and decision-making. We influence through our presence, our tone, our body and facial expressions, and our language. This is really what the “container” or the “space” comes down to.

### **Being present is encouraging.**

Taking time to just be with our kids – no agenda, no distractions – just being with them. With our young kids, this may take place on the floor, being spontaneous about play and letting them take the lead. With our older kids – adolescents and teens – it may just be showing up in their room and plopping down on their bed. Presence sends a message to our kids – you matter so much to me that I am here just to be here, just to be near you. Tone, body, and facial expression tells so much more of our truth than the words that come out of our mouth. Have you ever had your child ask, “Mom, are you mad?” They are watching, and they are feeling our energy. Soften your face, smile more, relax your shoulders and open up your chest – not only will you feel better, it will ripple into how those around you feel as well.

And finally – LANGUAGE!

*“Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace.”  
– Buddha*

Yes, our words matter. Anyone who has heard a child say, “but you said...” knows how important the words we speak are to the kids who hear them. So let's practice using words in a way that is forwarding and helpful.

I learned how to teach parents about encouraging language during my Positive Discipline Facilitator trainer.

Here are the types of effective encouraging language that we teach parents:

### **Descriptive encouragement**

This is simple noticing your child, noticing what they have done, or not done, noticing their effort, or lack of effort. The message behind these words is I see you.

Can sound like:

- You made your bed.
- You put your shoes on all by yourself.
- You stayed up late to get that homework done.

Or:

- You didn't make your bed.
- You needed help to get your shoes on.
- You don't have a set time for homework.

In both sets of examples, the parent sees the child, and there is no judgment! It is simply an opportunity to notice.

### **Appreciative encouragement**

This is showing appreciation or gratitude for what your child has done. The message here is your contribution is valued.

Can sound like:

- Thank you for putting your dishes in the dishwasher, it made cleaning up the kitchen so much easier.
- I appreciate you making your bed, it shows that you respect your space.
- Thank you for playing with your little brother, you are a great example of kindness.



Can you feel how heartfelt these comments are?

**Empowering encouragement  
This is the big daddy of encouraging language.**

This is our chance to broaden our children's perspective of themselves. This is where we have the opportunity to help them recognize the skills and qualities that we see them displaying.

Can sound like:

- It took a lot of dedication and work ethic to stay up so late to get your project done.
- You found your courage when you went for it at the skate park. I saw how nervous you were to push off. (true story)
- You were really upset by what your sister said, and you found a way to calm down, that takes a lot of self control.

This type of encouragement requires us to use evidence when we speak it to our kids. It leaves them recognizing parts of themselves that they may have not realized existed.



*“Never above you.  
Never below you. Always beside you.” –  
Walter Winchell*

Walk beside your kids. Support them, love them, encourage them to be their best, even when they are struggling. They need you there, holding space, and accepting all of them... Recognizing that this is all part of the process of growing into the adults.



## Casey O'Roarty, M.Ed.

Casey O'Roarty, M.Ed. is a wife, mother, Certified Positive Discipline Trainer, and Coach. She holds a BA in Sociology from the University of Arizona and earned her Masters in Education from the University of Washington. She teaches parents and teachers how to build stronger, more authentic relationships with themselves and the children in their lives.

Casey encourages grown ups to recognize and embrace the challenges of parenting as opportunities to model, teach, and practice the skills we want our children to learn to embody. Read more of her work and check out her online offers at [www.joyfuleourage.com](http://www.joyfuleourage.com).

# Routines

## The Key to Managing Morning & Evenings Without Nagging

by Debbie Zeichner, LCSW



With summer coming to a close and the new school year just around the corner, parents everywhere often struggle with making the big transition from long, relaxing summer days to hectic, rushed school days.

Many of the parents I work with in my practice say that either getting out the door in the morning or putting the kids to bed at night is their most stressful time. Can you relate? Whether it's due to dawdling or outward defiance, it's no wonder parents feel at a loss for what to do!

One of the best tools for managing those morning and evening struggles is establishing a ROUTINE. Although we may think that our kids "just know" what to do, it's important we refrain from assuming. Making agreements ahead of time, in the form of a visual routine chart, is key! Getting started is actually more simple than you may think.

### Here are 5 steps to help move your mornings or evenings from chaotic to calm:

**1.) Respectfully define the "problem"** – The key to a smooth morn-

ing or evening is having everyone involved in the new plan. So, as a first step, bring everyone together and define the "problem."

For example, "Hey guys, thank you for taking the time to chat. We have a problem that I/we could really use your help with. Mornings (or evenings) have been really hectic. I find that I'm getting frustrated and yelling a lot and I'm sure that's not fun for you. It's definitely not fun for me. I/we could really use your help in coming up with a solution to this problem."

(If you haven't been yelling, but just want to introduce the idea of a routine: "Hey guys, I have an idea of something that will help make our mornings/evenings super easy and could really use your help!")

**2.) Establish what tasks need to be completed and in what order** – After defining the problem (or introducing the idea), involve the kids in brainstorming a list of all the things that need to get done in order to get out the door in the morning or to bed in the evening.

For example, "Let's start by making a list of all the things that we need to do in or-

der to get out the door in the morning and on time. What are your ideas?” Write (or have your child write) down all ideas; even those that seem silly. Remember, it’s about brainstorming and allowing everyone to feel involved in the process. Every idea is welcomed. (Examples include: get dressed, make bed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, use restroom etc.)

For younger kids, try taking pictures of your child doing each of their steps and put them onto a poster board, hang them on a clothesline/ribbon etc. The visual is extremely helpful for them!

Consider coming up with specific, fun job titles. For example, if your kids are old enough to write, you may choose to invite one to be the “writing assistant” and the other(s) to decide where the list will be displayed (“list hanger”), how it will be decorated (“list decorator”) etc. Next, invite ideas for the order of the tasks. For example, “Ok, great, thank you for all of these helpful ideas! Now, what order would be most helpful? For example, do you want to get dressed first or eat breakfast first?” Or, for evening routines, “Would you like to brush your teeth first or put your PJ’s on first?”

With younger kids, invite them to help you put the pictures in a useful order.

Asking kids for their ideas helps them feel a sense of belonging (connection), significance (that they matter/have something meaningful to contribute) as well as control - all of which increases the likelihood of cooperation and follow through.

3.) **Establish time frames** – Kids are natural pleasers and do best when they know what’s expected of them. Along with outlining all that needs to be done, it can also be helpful to let the kids know by what time each “activity” should be completed.

For example, “We will need to leave the house by 7:30am in order to get to school by 7:50am. That gives you a few minutes to play on the playground before school begins at 8am. Let’s see if we can figure out how long each activity will take so that we’re sure to get everything on the list done and also be on time.” (Examples: 6:30 wake up; 6:40-6:50 get dressed etc.)





For some families this extra detailed step is helpful. For others, the list of tasks (or pictures) alone works fine. Do what works best for your family.

4.) **Choose where the new routine will be displayed** – Once the list (and timeframes) have been established, write it up on poster board or another paper of choice and decide where in the house it will be displayed. Some families use dry erase boards so they can make changes easily.

There can be one family schedule or each child can be in charge of his/her own individual routine (this depends on age of kids, # of kids in household, preference etc.)

5.) **Expect some testing and Encourage, encourage, encourage!** – If mornings or evenings have been extra stressful, expect some push back and testing. It's normal for kids to test the boundaries and limits to see if you really plan on following through with the new plan. Change isn't easy and takes time...stick with it!

Now, with the schedule in place, you can allow the routine chart to be the "boss." Aim to ask more often than you tell using encouraging statements. For example, "I see you got yourself all dressed, thank you. What's next in your routine?" Be sure to also acknowledge their cooperation once they complete their tasks. "I really appreciate the way you used your chart to get everything done this morning. We're on time now! Way to go! Thank you!"

Allowing our kids to be involved in family decisions, while expressing faith in their capability, is how we foster the essential traits of self-discipline, responsibility and confidence.

It starts with us!

Wishing you all the best,

Debbie



## Debbie Zeichner, LCSW

Debbie Zeichner, LCSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Parent Coach who has specialized in working with adults, children and families for over 18 years. As a Certified Parent Educator in both Positive Discipline and Redirecting Children's Behavior (RCB), Debbie facilitates engaging parenting classes, workshops and individualized coaching to assist parents in creating a sense of calm, confidence and connection within themselves and their families.

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# Positive Discipline Bulletin Board



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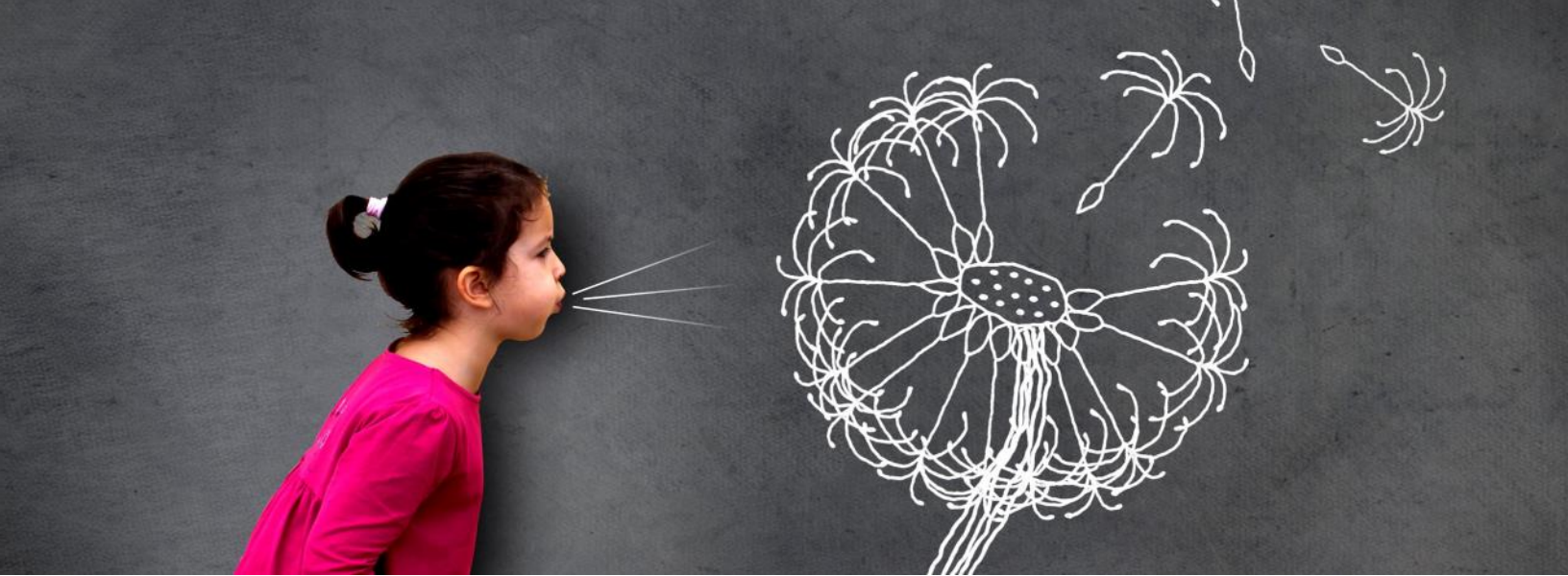
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# Misbehavior After School...Help Children Feel and Do Better After a Long Day Away From You

by Ariadne Brill

A day spent at school can be a very rewarding experience for children. A great school offers children plenty of opportunities to play, discover and learn. On the same hand, the experiences at school combined with time away from home can sometimes lead to feelings of disconnection, discouragement and overwhelm.

Children sometimes experience emotional ups and downs while away from you. Maybe a class mate didn't want to share a toy, an assignment felt just a bit more challenging than expected and recess felt way too short. Your child puts on a brave face, deals with it all and keeps on trekking through the day.

Then...when they get home all those feelings they managed to hold on to just spill right out... tears, tantrums, opposition or defiance, complaints.... Acting out we call it... Except acting out is just our kids showing us with their behavior how they are feeling.

## **Everything is Stupid!**

Maybe nothing is good, everything is stupid or the smallest little thing sets your child off. "Apricots for snack? Ugh, I didn't want that!! I wanted cookies and

apples..." they scoff and start crying.... A whole page of math homework "I can't do this!!!" they shout. Ever experience that?

## **What's going with kids after school?**

A day at school can actually feel a lot like a feelings powered roller coaster ride. With extra loops and twists and drops on particularly challenging days (I'm talking about field trips, testing days and conflict with friends here) And after several hours of holding it all together kids are sometimes emotionally tired. A bit on edge. Their connection tanks are most certainly tipping more towards empty and needing a re-fill.

## **Loving connection brings on misbehaviors**

The comfort of home and your loving connection is the perfect place for letting those emotions on the loose...And well that is why challenging behaviors can sometimes show up. Because your child suddenly feels safe enough to express some of what is going on inside. But your child is also emotionally immature and still growing so instead of saying "I had a really tough day mom" they might just find a good reason for complaining, telling you off or throw a big old tantrum!! And we can help children feel and do better, we really can, especially if we can stick to a positive approach.





*The truth is that children do better when they feel better—not when they are discouraged about themselves. - Jane Nelsen Ed.D.*

If you have noticed your child is having some difficult afternoons, tough bed times, siblings squabbles, meltdowns and tantrums now that school has started again, making some effort to restore connection after that day apart can not only prevent all that “misbehavior” but help your child feel and do better too. Sure it’s tempting to turn to consequences and stern lectures about expectations but making time for connection, hugs and listening is just so very effective and worthwhile.

### **Listening: Let the Feelings Come and Flow**

A first and very important step for young children to feel well is reconnecting with you. So if you want to help your child feel and do better after school and generally be cooperative with your requests, whenever possible, try to stay present and help your child transition into “being home” mode. If tears show up, listen and validate first instead of trying to fix or jump into solutions mode.

### **Connection and Calming Time**

Ideally, try to forget emails, cell phones and errands for the first fifteen to twenty minutes when everyone returns home from school. This is a great time to be together.

Make a deliberate effort to [listen to what your child has](#)

[to say](#) about school and any news, stories, jokes or “you’ll never guess what!” moments. Children love to know they have your full attention and it’s very reassuring that although you were separated, now you are reconnecting. Just a few minutes together each afternoon / evening can make a positive difference and reduce unhelpful behavior. On the same token, if you have a child that craves quiet and introspective time, try to honor that before asking questions about how the day was and what things the child needs to get done. More than anything try not to rush on to other activities without first having a short calm and connection time.

### **Beyond connection hugs and listening**

Just a few other things that can help your child transition well into being home mode are having a routine ([see page 16](#)) having a good lunch at school ([see page 7](#)) and snack when getting home, having a teacher that uses positive discipline ([see page 29](#)) and lots of opportunities to have meaningful time with you ([see page 34](#) for more on that!) Oh and don’t forget to **connect before you correct** those unhelpful behaviors which you can see some great examples on the next page. Peace & Be Well. ~Ariadne

Peace & Be Well,



Let’s Connect!



## **Ariadne Brill**

Ariadne is the mom to two boys and one girl. She is a Certified Positive Discipline Parenting Educator and her specialty is helping parents find more calm and confidence on their parenting journey. Ariadne has training in Psychology, child development, communication and family counseling.

Connect with Ariadne over at the Positive Parenting Connection, an online resource for parents and caregivers dedicated to promoting peaceful, playful and positive parenting. [Positive Parenting Connection](#)



# Three Ways to “Connect Before Correct”

By Marcilie Smith Boyle MBA, CPCC, CPDT

Connection Before Correction is one of my all-time favorite Positive Discipline\* mantras. I believe these are words to live by both in the moment of dissatisfying behavior, and in the long run as a foundation for any relationship.

Several years ago I began to feel like a nag to my then 11 year-old son so I tracked the content of our interactions. On one side of a paper, I tracked the “correction” interactions. On the other, I tracked the “connection” interactions. After only one day the corrections more than doubled the connections. No wonder we were both annoyed with me!

**When children feel strongly connected to you (they feel loved, valued, and understood), they are simply more open to your influence.**

It’s true for adult relationships, too. Think of someone who really likes or loves you, respects you, understands and listens to you. How open are you to that person’s influence?

On the other hand, how open are you to someone who’s frequently telling you what to do, how you’re wrong, and what you need to change? If you’re guilty of jumping to correct undesirable behavior without connecting first, it might be for one or more of the following reasons:

- It’s faster and more efficient to get right to the point
- You believe the other person values your candor
- You’re busy and have more important things to do
- You feel the behavior needs to be corrected immediately

Sometimes these reasons hold. However, when we focus on correcting behavior all the time without investing in the relationship, at some point, the relationship degrades and the correction falls on deaf ears (or even worse, defiant ones.)

So if you’re a “get it done and move on” kind of person, I invite you to pay attention to your own tally, and try out these three easy ways to practice Connection Before Correction.

## 1. Give Hugs

So simple and effective! Hugs (and any form of physical affection) release oxytocin, a “feel good” neurochemical, into the brain which helps the child calm down and be more receptive.

Correction: “I’ve asked you five times to put away your toys. Do it now!”

Connecting first with a hug: “Oh, come here, buddy (Big Hug). I see toys that need to be put

away. Do you need help or can you handle it alone?”

## 2. Acknowledge Feelings / Empathize.

Acknowledging feelings can help children learn that feelings are always OK, but how we act on those feelings is not always OK. Empathy also helps children feel understood, which again helps them feel more calm and receptive.

Correction: “You cannot grab things without asking first! Give that toy back to your brother!”

Connecting first by acknowledging feelings: “I can tell that you really want to play with that toy, it’s really cool! And, we have to ask first. Let’s try again.”

## 3. Say, “I love you.”

Start with these three words (spoken in a warm, heartfelt way), and whatever comes next feels softer.

Correction: “No, you cannot have ice cream before dinner, so stop asking!”

Connecting first with I love you: “I love you, and the answer is no.” When delivered with compassion and kindness, the “no” doesn’t feel quite so bad.

These three examples all use Connection Before Correction in the moment of undesirable behavior. However, this mantra is most powerful when connection defines the

relationship long term, not just in moments where parents want compliance.

You’ve probably heard the quote, “I don’t care what you know, until I know that you care.” I don’t know who said it first, but it sure rings true in my experience as a parent (and as a partner and professional, too.)

So make it a habit to play, laugh, listen, hug, empathize, and share your love with your child in good times and bad. That strong, connected relationship will be the foundation for the future, when your child is a teen or young adult, and you pray that your influence still counts!

Ready for more? Join me for a Free TeleClass: “6 Obstacles to Peaceful, Positive Parenting (and how to get around them)” September 7th!

Like what you’re reading? [Subscribe here to monthly newsletter](#) for tips on parenting and living with more peace, purpose, and joy.

\*The phrase, “Connection Before Correction” comes from Jane Nelsen’s “Positive Discipline Series”



## Marcilie Smith Boyle

Marcilie coaches high achieving parents and professionals toward authentic success so that they can live, work, and parent with more peace, purpose, and joy. A Certified Positive Discipline Parenting Educator and Life & Leadership Coach, she leverages her previous sixteen-year consulting and marketing career to ensure her clients get a return on their coaching investment.

Marcilie earned her MBA from Harvard Business School, and CPCC from The Coaches Training Institute. She offers 1:1 and group coaching (live or via phone/Skype) on topics such as parenting, work/life balance, career transition, and leadership as well as “Parenting with Positive Discipline” More info [here](#).

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[www.WorkingParenting.com](http://www.WorkingParenting.com)



# Why Lazy Parenting Maybe the Ticket to Raising Smarter, More Responsible Kids

It just slipped out. I didn't mean to say in front of the 25 parents who'd come to learn strategies to solve sibling conflict. There's something about it that just didn't sound right. Actually it sounded like the antithesis to everything out there selling like hotcakes in the world of public opinion parenting.

**I said it. "Positive Discipline (PD) is lazy parenting."**

While that's not exactly accurate, it can feel effortless when you're in the PD Zone compared to the prevailing helicopter/effortful parenting mode.

Here's what I see with parents I work with and what I've experienced firsthand...

You're working so hard to parent your child in a way that will encourage them to grow into loving, responsible, contributing members of society. Let's add a cherry or two on top and throw in hard working, honest, happy, conscious of the world around them, yada yada the list goes on.

Looking at it straight on, it's freaking intimidating.

**No wonder you're stressed about the hitting, lying, excluding, whining, complaining, isolating, arguing and bad attitudes happening today.**

Who has the luxury to be *lazy* when vigilance is required to produce the qualities you know are so important for your child's success?

What's clear is that while control might *feel* necessary, and to some degree satisfying, in the moment, control, as a parenting style doesn't invite the long term character traits you desire.

In short, control creates hollow results. When you do it all for your child (decide it all, manage it all, enforce it all), you inadvertently rob your kids of the opportunity to practice valuable life skills that they can only learn *by doing*.

With 'good character' as the destination, your child must travel through mistake-ville which inevitably leads to growth-town. They need to learn how to solve problems and think critically about the world around them in order to become who you want them to be. And that takes practice.

**I stand behind what I said.**

**H**ere are three real life examples, featuring a variety of ages, followed by the how-to tips for effective lazy parenting.

## *Example #1 from Kelly:*

While enrolled in my spring sibling series, Kelly sent me this email after our first session.

*These pictures were taken on Father's Day*



right after I used “put in same boat”<sup>\*</sup> technique & validation. The boys were fighting over the chair (we only had one) and I said, “hmm, one chair and two boys?”... Then Emmett had a solution. Xo

“hmm, one chair and two boys?”... elegant indeed. No refereeing or setting a timer to make sure it was fair, just a simple, observing, genuinely curious question.



Kelly’s story reminds me that when you don’t take sides, fix, solve, control — children have the space to use their own intelligence to figure things out and come up with their own, often elegant solutions.

That said, if your children are accustomed to you fixing, solving, refereeing, it will take training, practice, and time for them to reach for their own intelligence when faced with a problem.

Kelly’s tool of choice in this example was to ask a curiosity question (being genuinely curious about what solution they would come up with!) while treating kids the same (in PD lingo we call this putting them in the same boat... or in this case chair!)

## Example #2 from Rochelle:

*I have long been critical of parents who swoop in to solve their kids’ social problems, whether they be in school or on the athletic field. But when it comes to homework, I was clearly piloting this ‘chopper.’ Despite the fact that my son was just two years away from going off to college, I was still checking the online homework program for assignments and grades on a daily basis and harping at him about the status and quality of his work.*

*Both of us were miserable: my son blamed me if he missed an assignment and I felt angry because he wasn’t taking responsibility for his own work. But why should he? How could he, when I was always looking over his shoulder?*

*This year my husband and I decided we would take a different approach, we’d let our son be the master of his own destiny, free to make his own mistakes.*

*It was scary; he’s a junior in high school and there’s a lot of pressure on him to do well in school. While we worried that our messy, disorganized son, would lose important papers and forget about tests or quizzes, we have been more than pleasantly surprised. He has risen to the occasion.*

*When he forgot to do an AP assignment, he took responsibility for his inaction, contacted the teacher and asked for an extension. It was the first time I could genuinely say I hoped she would be supportive and honor his request. He’s learning to take responsibility, we’re learning to let go and let him succeed (or fail) on his own, and our relationship is so much stronger for it.*

Rochelle’s tool: having faith in her son period and showing faith in him by giving him the opportunity to make mistakes and then learn

The three tools in this story are all based on the Positive Discipline Series by Jane Nelsen Ed.D.

from his mistakes. Rochelle is taking the long range view, knowing the lessons he will learn outweigh the in-the-moment forgotten assignments, etc.

### *Example # 3 from Eric:*

Eric emailed me this success story during our 7-week Parenting with Positive Discipline series.

*Last week on my way home from work, my wife Stephanie sent me a text that our daughter Grace (5) was being a handful, was in a horrible mood, and that Stephanie had had it with her.*

*When I got home, I walked into the house and went straight to Grace and asked her for a hug. At first she turned her back and crossed her arms, and said no. I then decided to ask her one more time and after a 5 second pause, she turned and gave me a big hug.*

*Steph said it was like someone flipped a switch on Grace. Grace went from being in the worst mood to acting as if she was having the best day ever.*

It's amazing to see the kind of impact and dynamics that something as simple as asking for a hug can have on a 5 year old. Honestly, before taking your class, I probably would have come home and punished Grace for misbehaving and the entire afternoon would have been ruined for the entire family.

Eric's tool: Asking for a hug (note this does NOT mean asking your child, "do YOU need a hug?" You spark your child's sense of significance when you ASK *them* for a hug signalling that your child makes a difference to you — they're giving you a hug has an impact.) Pretty easy.

Warning: Don't try letting go of control once and give up when the results don't look exact-

ly as you'd hoped. Children need to adjust to your new behavior — they'll test and maybe test some more until they can trust your change is enduring.

### What does lazy parenting require from us?

**Flexibility** – if you're not dictating and controlling the outcome, you need to be open to a different outcome.

**Patience** – when children are figuring it out they're bound to make mistakes, a mess, etc. Beam out to remember the bigger picture — long term character building and ahhhh lazy parenting!

**Humility** – finding that place inside that accepts your limits – you might not have the answer, and what a relief that you don't have to solve every problem.

**Faith in your kids** – messy faith. Their solution may not look good and the neighbors could see or hear a mess. Your belief in them, regardless of what their solution looks like, will go a long way to build their problem-solving muscles.

What Kelly, Rochelle and Eric demonstrated seemed pretty easy and parenting can be— AT TIMES — when we've established a relationship of trust. Lazy, or if it makes you feel better, call it 'conscious effortless parenting' is possible, feels awesome, and can be yours!.

## Lisa Fuller

"My life's work is dedicated to helping you enjoy the precious time you have with your family."



Lisa has a B.A. from Georgetown University and a M.S.W. from the University of California at Berkeley. She is a Positive Discipline Educator, Trainer and Certified Professional Co-active Coach.

<http://lisafullercoaching.com>





## Four Ways To Keep Calm and Control Your Own Behavior By Kimberly Goncalves

You know the drill: you asked something reasonable of your tot or teen, and a moment later they let loose with attitude, spoken or unspoken, and that unbearably dismissive body language that made you want to scream. So you did. Now you feel like an idiot because you know that losing control doesn't help. We've all been there.

In the moment, we try to contain the damage: calm down, get back on track. But to work toward change, and stay cool under pressure, we need to understand what invites us to "lose it", and create a game plan to handle those situations.

First, recognize you have a choice about how you respond to upset.

If you do want to change, but you tend to lose control, you may need to find a way to pause in the heat of the moment so that you can do it differently.

When you're upset, your access to high level thinking skills is limited or non-existent. You're left with fight-flight-or-freeze. If none of those will solve your problem, you'll need to return to calm before attempting to work toward solutions with others.

**Any type of mindfulness or attention practices, such as breathing**

**deeply, or noticing your emotions, will help.**

If you tend to get angry or argumentative when upset, focus on techniques that will help you calm down.

Identify what emotion you're feeling and name it to yourself. This stimulates neurotransmitters that actually reduce the body's stress response. "I'm feeling angry because she ignored me."

### Perspective Changers

Frame a quote that reminds you of how you want to act, and read it when you're upset.

"Don't sweat the small stuff. And it's all small stuff."

Consider whether this will matter three months from now. Three years from now?

### Mood Changers

Listen to upbeat, happy music. Create a playlist on your phone. Soothe yourself with gentle touch (a hand on your heart, or gentle stroking), by stimulating the release of stress-reducing neurotransmitters like oxytocin.

### Physiology Changers

Breathe slowly and deeply to activate your para-sympathetic nervous system and restore calm.

To stand your ground, take up more space. Try the universal arms overhead "Victory" pose, or imagine your feet firmly



*After your crisis is managed,  
make a plan to prevent your next  
emotional outburst.*

rooted to the principles of kind and firm.  
Smile!

After the crisis is managed, make a plan to prevent your next emotional outburst. That's stress management on steroids.

**Begin with awareness.** We are not doing this parenting thing the way we dreamed we would. There is a seed of desire - to be able to do it differently - the pre-requisite for change.

**Acknowledge what is happening.** Stick to the facts, without judgment.

Answer three questions to break the interaction down and see where things go wrong.

- When do you tend to lose control?
- What do you do when this happens? What does your tot—teen do in response?
- How does this pattern impact your relationship with yourself? With your child?

It may be ugly, but an honest admission of what is precedes lasting behavior change.

**Unfortunately, you can't teach your kids what you don't know how to do yourself. Learning to control your own behavior is the first key.**

Next, work on cultivating greater awareness of the specific situations that invite you to lose your cool. As you notice your typical "go to" reactions, create a plan to deal with those challenges. Change may take time, but it begins with desire and a decision to do something differently.



## **Kimberly Goncalves**

Through workshops, training and coaching, Kimberly helps parents and others working with families to support kids in becoming capable people who thrive. A Certified Positive Discipline Trainer, ICF-accredited Coach, and mom of 2, Kimberly brings humor, insight and positive, research-backed principles and tools that build skills, restore clarity and confidence, and promote respectful relationships.

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# Positive Discipline in School

## Effective Ways to Deal with Challenging Behaviors and Help All Children Thrive

By Laurie Prusso

*The following applies to all children, with special focus on Trauma Informed Care and Positive Discipline.*

As we prepare for the school year, it will be helpful to consider effective ways to deal with challenging behaviors. The most effective teachers are the ones who connect with students, who support social emotional skills and who love their jobs. Effective means that learning occurs and that children are safe, secure, collaborative, happy and engaged in the learning process. Children know when a teacher likes them and when he/she doesn't.

I hope this article will help teachers recognize how important it is to be respectful and to demonstrate a consistent example of the attitudes and behaviors they want children to master. In addition, there are some actual skills for effectively dealing with behaviors that can challenge us.

*All children deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.*

That is how they will become socially and emotionally healthy, well educated, and learn to contribute in our world. Children who have experienced trauma in their lives are especially

vulnerable to typical school discipline policies and are re-traumatized by consequences, punishment, and any kind of criticism, rejection, blame, and/or humiliation. These types of adult reactions are harmful for all children and should be avoided. We can benefit from understanding the role of adult responses and the damage done by re-traumatization and how to avoid it in all of our interactions with all children.

Children who have experienced trauma present opportunities for us to discover and implement effective guidance and discipline policies that support all children and create caring communities in which they can learn and grow together. Children who have experienced trauma are the most likely to struggle in social situations and in the classroom and the most likely to be punished for their behavior. This is called re-traumatization.

*Respectful and encouraging adult relationships are the key to helping children heal and to inviting them into the community of learners.*

Teachers, administrators, and policy makers





have to look critically at existing “discipline” policies and turn away from those that don’t actually support children in learning better, doing better, getting better, and living better. When individual teachers, classroom environments and school policies focus on problem solving, respectful relationships, and creating caring communities, all children do better, learning improves, and classrooms and schools become real learning environments. Lucky for us, there are effective tools already established for use in schools. Positive Discipline (By Jane Nelsen Ed. D.) has been effectively teaching parents and schools for many years. It is highly successful in working with children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences.

We already know that “getting in trouble” is not helpful in supporting children’s improved behavior. It discourages learning, and creates a threatening and unsafe environment. For children who have experienced Trauma, the worst thing is for them to experience rejection, punishment, criticism, or embarrassment. Any sense that they are “getting in trouble” triggers strong emotions that are like re-

living earlier events. Their hyper-vigilant reactive brain goes into overload and they become consumed by feelings that they cannot verbalize or explain. They feel backed into a corner. They have been hijacked by the hyper-vigilant reactive systems that are so strong, so well connected and so familiar. Children have to work through the emotional tsunami before they can be responsive. Rather than “getting in trouble” it is most effective for traumatized children if adults demonstrate kindness, patience, and reassurance and then help the child discover solutions and work toward improved behavior.

Triggers are experiences that are perceived as similar to or just like hurtful events the child has faced previously. Children who have experienced trauma have more triggers than most other children. Because of the reactive nature of the limbic system and brain stem when they are triggered, they immediately become reactive. They are inflexible, rigid, and explosive.

A trigger can be almost any event. It might be a child calling him a name, saying he is wrong, laughing at him, threatening him, or simply brushing his arm as they walk by. All of these are very powerful emotional buttons for a child and invite a flood of powerful feelings that overwhelm him almost unconsciously.

In these instances he may “misbehave” to protect himself. He might hit or push another child. Almost certainly there will be a behavior that is unpleasant in the classroom.

**It is of no value to punish a child—any child—when these things occur but it is especially problematic to punish a child who has experienced trauma.**

It is, however, of great value to gather the children who were involved, help them to calm themselves, and then to listen, validate, and problem solve together. This is the key to healing and growth and learning for all



children and we need to practice it as part of the curriculum and policy of every classroom and school. While it seems time consuming, this is the investment that we need to make now to begin to bring about the changes we want in our schools and communities.

Collaborative problem solving is one of the most effective responses to mistaken behaviors. The time, energy and resources saved will be substantial as children become responsible and skilled in self-regulation and finding solutions between themselves. On task time actually increases when children can relax and when the class members support each other in focusing on solutions.

Here are some of the main ideas that are good for all children and that I have identified in my own work with children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences.

Based on knowledge of child development, neuroscience, and Positive Discipline (By Jane Nelsen Ed. D.) we can be sure that we aren't contributing to the problem and that we are helping all children do better and learn more effectively.

These are the Positive Discipline tools I recommend in responding to (traumatized) children's eruptive behavior.

- MAKE SURE THE MESSAGE OF LOVE GETS THROUGH!
- Follow through with kindness and firmness at the same time
- Decide what you will do and do it—respectfully and kindly
- Say yes whenever possible
- Say “No!” and mean it—but only say it if you mean it, and avoid it whenever possible
- Let the child make choices
- Support the child in having personal power when appropriate within an environment with clear limits and rules
- Be flexible whenever possible so the child doesn't feel cornered
- Do not base your relationship with the child on his/her behavior—a child is of value regardless of their behavior
- Do not focus on behavior—focus on strengths, effort, goodness
- Reflect feelings ONCE and then SHUT UP!!!

When a child is having an emotional outburst,

do not ask for ANYTHING, make any demands, or threaten.

Avoid statements like:

- “Stop crying and we can solve this”
- “If you can behave \_\_\_\_\_”
- “Next time, you should \_\_\_\_\_”
- “If you would listen to me, this wouldn’t happen”

Validate ONCE, naming the emotion and invite the child to speak then listen and validate for as long as needed.

### Teachers Avoid

- Acting in anger—If we expect children to manage their feelings, certainly, we should demonstrate that we manage ours.
- Blame—looking for a “victim” and a “bad guy”
- Shame
- Punishment
- Looking for Fault--NO “F” WORD!
- Behavior based relationships—children do not need to “deserve” respect--children are inherently deserving of dignity and respect.
- Withholding learning experiences or special activities

### Teachers Demonstrate

- Self-control and self-regulation

- Knowledge about children and the individual child
- Patience
- Compassion
- Love
- Trust
- Encouragement
- The teaching of problem solving and focusing on helpful solutions that support children in feeling better and doing better.

Remember that any teaching must happen when both the teacher and the child are calm. Wait until later to:

- Teach about feelings
- Teach the children about their brains!
- Teach expectations
- Value the child’s ideas and perceptions
- Explore, listen to and validate each child’s experience
- Use good children’s literature to support emotional intelligence
- Focus on solutions that teach children how to do better next time
- Develop strong, safe relationships with all children to improve the classroom climate and support the learning that occurs
- Depend on Routines and Structure to support the need for predictability and security



A Focus on solutions teaches children how to do better next time.

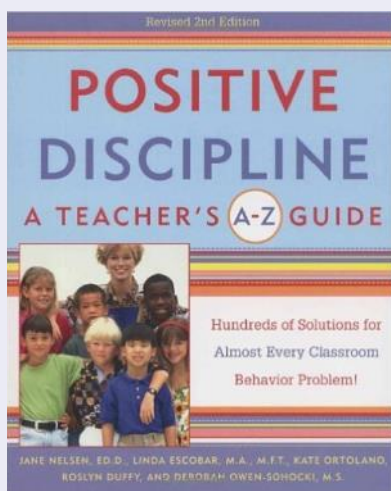




Start the school year with a determination to be compassionate, empathic.

An effective classroom is one in which teachers connect with children, establish and support strong relationships and provide learning experiences that teach solutions. In this classroom children will be happy and good learners.

Respectful and encouraging adult relationships are the key to helping children heal and to inviting them into the community of learners.



## Helpful Resources

For more information on Positive Discipline, Adverse Child Experiences, and the effects of trauma on children, check out these sites.

<http://positivediscipline.org/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFdn9479U3s>

<http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/>

<http://www.trauma-informed-california.org/>

<http://www.childrennow.org/uploads/documents/100914-toxic-stress-webinar.pdf>



## Laurie Prusso

Laurie Prusso is a retired Professor of Child Development. Focusing on foundational emotional and social development in young children and all human beings as well as the effects of trauma on children and families. Laurie earned her BA in Human Development and a Masters Degree in Education with an emphasis in Early Childhood from California State University. She has worked with children and adult learners in a variety of settings. In addition, Laurie has been a family childcare provider, a preschool teacher and director. She is a Certified Positive Discipline © Trainer and Parent Educator and presents workshops and trainings related to effective and respectful discipline.







# The Closest Thing to Fairy Dust : My Favorite Parenting Tool

By Kelly Pfeiffer

Dear Parent,

You're on a constant search for it. You think about it every day, especially when your head falls on the pillow at night. If only, if only you could find the parenting approach that would solve just a few of your child's whopper behaviors – banish them to a dragon filled dungeon. You're looking for a type of magic fairy dust – a nip it in the bud kind of sparkly powder. So far you've not unearthed any viable options.

You scour through books recommended by the queen soccer moms. You ask your great aunt Ida how she managed to raise eight children and have them all turn out so well. You click on facebook ads called “how to parent your challenging child,” but still you've not discovered any strains of fairy dust that magically transform your children.

You wonder why this parenting gig feels more challenging than you ever thought it would be. You wonder if it's just you who has this problem. You doubt yourself often because every day seems like it's the same as before with no improvement. If only you could find that d@^# fairy dust! It turns out that parenting is tons of work and none of it is easy. It also turns out that many of the tools suggested by smiling self-assured parenting gurus don't make a difference for your child.

**Magic fairy dust for fixing behavior is a complete myth.**

As humans, we all know the truth, but it's more fun and less work to wish that fairy dust is a real thing. I don't have any shimmering grains to offer you, but I can tell you

what I've found that is the closest things to fairy dust that I've discovered in my twenty-three years of parenting. You might not even believe me, but I've seen it work wonders. I've gotten more mileage out of this one parenting tool than any other I've tried.

**It's the semi-magical tool of connection.**

When I make connection the number one priority in the parent-child relationship, everything else is easier. I didn't say everything was effortless, but dealing with discipline issues, moving through the tasks of the day and being together with my children was much easier when I put connection at the top of my list of things to get done each day.

What exactly did I do? I tried to infuse connection into as many aspects of the day as possible.

Here's a short list . . .

- ☼ Our family ate the majority of our meals gathered around a table and we didn't invite our television into the meal.
- ☼ I asked my children to cook with me one to two nights every week. That meant I got some time alone with each child. When my kids were preschoolers, this might have meant that my child helped put taco shells onto a cold cookie sheet. As my children got older, they spent more time cooking together in the kitchen with me.





- ☀ My husband or I read at bedtime most every night to each child.
- ☀ I spent one on one special time with each child most every week.
- ☀ We played family games, again sitting around a table often on the weekends.
- ☀ I acknowledged and validated my child's feelings when he or she was hurting or angry. (I worked on this skill a lot and became better at it the more I practice.)
- ☀ When we went out to eat, we played simple games at the table while we waited on our meals.

**This list may seem like a lot at first, but after I got into the habits and routines of living my life this way, it was just my “normal.” Also I didn’t start implementing all of these elements at the same time. It evolved over time. I added little pieces along the way.**

Your way of connecting doesn't have to look exactly like my way. I'm sure you can find your own ways to include connection that will fit well into your family's unique style. But the thing that you can sprinkle all over yourself and your family is connection. It's the closest things to fairy dust that I know about.

Kelly Pfeiffer



### **Kelly Pfeiffer**

A Certified Positive Discipline Lead Trainer, Kelly teaches live interactive workshops to parents and child care providers on child development, social-emotional skills, self-care for parents, conflict resolution for families and Positive Discipline tools. She's authored over 100 web articles on child development topics, blogs about Positive Discipline parenting and also teaches creative writing as a writer artist in residence in elementary schools. Kelly is mom/step-mom to two teenagers and two young adults.

# Discipline without Disciplining: Reimagining our Role in Teaching Children Self-Control.

By Nathan M McTague

I don't know about you, but I usually glaze over when an article or essay begins with a quote from the dictionary. Nevertheless, I presently find myself wanting to clarify that, at least in English, we've entertained two seemingly concordant but I'd argue mutually exclusive understandings of what the word "discipline" means to us. On the one hand, we have the Latin sense of the word as "training or instruction given, learning, knowledge" and/or the "object of such training". And on the other hand, we have the Old French (I'm going to say, Catholic...) understanding of discipline as "penitential chastisement, physical punishment, teaching, suffering, martyrdom..." (That last one's the clincher, ain't it?) And although we currently still pretend these two meanings are virtually if not entirely the same, we're starting to have to admit that, particularly when it comes to teaching our children, the latter version impedes the progress of the former.

To put it more plainly, and more to the point, it's of course fine if we want to carry on using

this two pronged understanding of the word discipline itself, but if we truly want to guide our children to understand and adopt the codes of conduct that make living in society smoother and more successful for each of us, then we have to give up trying to force them with pain and suffering – in a word, punishment. That is – if we really want our kids to actually develop "discipline", then we have to stop "disciplining them" all the time. And further, if we want our children to exhibit "behavior in accordance with [the] rules of conduct" – to have discipline, in other words – then we would do well to keep the goal in mind when choosing the means to that end.

For instance, when little Johnny pulls his sister's hair for the umpteenth time, and we want to "discipline" him so that he learns to control his impulses better, and chooses more compassionate actions, and cares about his sister's experience and feelings – when the prevailing parenting mythology screams, "Punish him!" – we might be tempted to dole out some of that "penitential chastisement"...



As it turns out, though, research shows that when we punish our children, we short-circuit their ability to actually learn the lesson.

We've unwittingly tapped into their instinctual brain, that reptilian reactor underneath the thinking and feeling parts of the brain, and given it primary control, rendering their executive brain, the reflective and rational part, utterly inaccessible to them. While undergoing that internal shutdown, our children have no hope of grasping the "training and learning" portions of discipline that we're hoping to instill.

When our children feel threatened – either actually or figuratively – their reflexive, instinctual system takes over to protect them. It reacts with fight, flight, or fright type responses, much like a wounded animal (there's even solid evidence that the brain interprets emotional suffering in much the same way as it does physical pain...). And this lower, less-thinking part of the brain remains in command until the perceived threat diminishes significantly. Because faculties like logic, rationale, self-awareness, empathy, choosing compassionate actions, and impulse control – all vital components of the kind of discipline we want our children to develop – reside in the upper, reflective system of the brain we can't teach the skills or perspective involved while our children are in the lower, reactive brain. It's as simple as that, really. If we want them to come upstairs to where the light is on and they can see what we are showing them and do what we are asking them to do – then we have to let them out of the basement!

From a place of "being disciplined" for their mistakes, missteps, or poor (read; "still developing") judgment, kids have no access to "becoming disciplined" in their actions. Just like a recently convicted felon being sent to jail, or the alcoholic being forced into treatment, their first reaction is to say, "I didn't



do it! I'm innocent!" or "I'm not supposed to be here..." or "Why is this happening to me?!". From the reflexive brain, they're only able to see how they are being affected, not how their actions and choices affect others. They can't think about their own responsibility, let alone culpability, in the scenario because there are locked in the instinctual brain – hogtied in the neural basement. If we want them to be able to "learn their lesson", we have to help them out of the dark and into the light of their thinking, learning, aware, and empathetic upper brain.

Discipline is not something we can instill, and even more certainly, not by disciplining.

Our best bet – or more truthfully, our only hope – is to inspire our children to develop a robust sense of the spirit of the law, without tattooing the letter of it into their hides. And we'll get a lot further toward helping them learn how to act "in accord with the prevailing rules of conduct" – that is, becoming disciplined – if and when we stop trying to accomplish that by way of the "suffering and punishment" version of disciplining them.

This, of course, then begs the question – "How do we help our kids



## develop their own internal mechanisms for appropriately managing themselves??”

To which I can offer the quippy mnemonic – we discipline them without disciplining them! And again, it really is that simple. If we can just remember to keep the two verbs of “discipline” separate and to lean heavily in the direction of teaching, as opposed to martyring, then we’re well on our way to having more success inspiring them to become disciplined. This means, we avoid punishment and suffering-based coercion, and any other form of discipline that drives our children into their reflexive brain. And we instead look for opportunities to help them get upstairs, into the light of the reflective brain, where they can see, hear, take in, and care about what we are teaching them. And when they slip down the proverbial neural stairs into the basement, and reactively grab a wad of their sibling’s hair, we can remember that they are in a place where they



can’t see their actions, or how they affect others, can’t “choose wisely”, or remember to do as we’ve taught them – we can understand their predicament and not expect more of them than they can currently deliver. And rather than locking them down there in the basement, we can turn the light back on upstairs and help them find their way up. Back into the space from which they can choose, and can control themselves, and can develop self-mastery.

The good news is that once we start focusing on the teaching side of discipline, and helping our kids get neurally positioned to receive our instruction – as opposed to punishing them into compliance – we have the opportunity to help them develop the capacity to anticipate rules and guidelines we would otherwise have to teach them individually.

While we have them in their upper brain, where they are capable of developing synapses supporting further learning, they are also more able to grow the neural connections supporting deeper empathy, fuller self-awareness, and more control over their own (reactionary) impulses. And if we can teach them to empathize with others, maintain awareness of themselves and their impact, and develop their self-management skills, then we’ll have given them the keys to the kingdom of true self-discipline. We’ll have handed them the neural software to rule themselves appropriately rather than having to learn and force themselves (or be forced) to follow the endless lists of ever-accumulating laws and punishments we currently “have to” employ in order to maintain social congress.

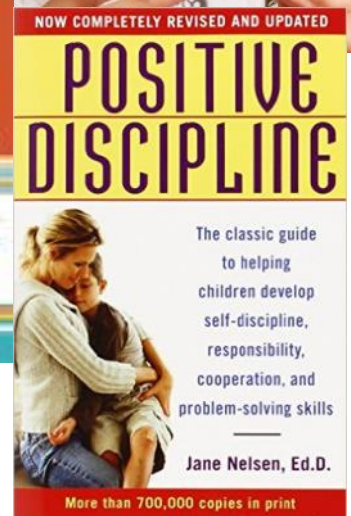
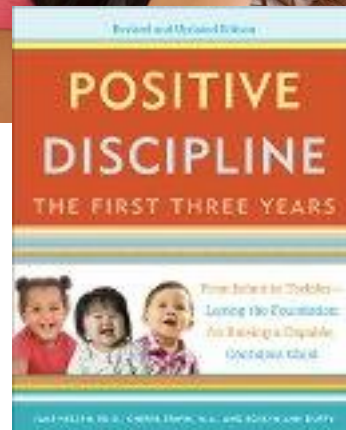
Who knows... If we get really good at disciplining our children without disciplining them, we could eventually do away with that secondary, punitive version once and for all.

And if we could finally let go of the behavioristic hanger-on of punishment for noncompliance, of “disciplining to instill discipline”, we could take hold of the promise of our amazing, brilliant, magical reflective systems and develop a more empathetic and more compassionate society than the world has yet seen or imagined.

I, for one, hope that we muster the discipline to take ourselves that far!

To learn more about effective, positive discipline you can read any of the Positive Discipline Books by Jane Nelsen Ed.D.

*I also recommend the books by Alfie Kohn. For more on how you can help the children in your life to switch on their upper brain lights and climb upstairs to the reflective system, as well as develop virulent faculties for empathy, compassion, self-awareness, and enhanced learning (among other key developmental capacities), please visit the Center for Emotional Education at [www.centerforemotionaleducation.com](http://www.centerforemotionaleducation.com).*



### Nathan M McTague, CPCC, CPDPE

Nathan is a life [coach](#), [parenting mentor](#), and certified positive discipline parent educator, committed to empowering people to reach their greatest potentials in family, work, and life. He writes the popular parenting blog [A Beautiful Place of the World](#) where he tenderly and meticulously shares the science and logic behind, and benefits of, parenting with connection.

# What Does Your Child Under Three Really Know About **No**?

by Jane Nelsen D.Ed.

Children under the age of three do not understand "no" in the way most parents think they do. (And, a full understanding of "no" doesn't occur magically when the child turns three. It is a developmental process.)

"No" is an abstract concept that is in direct opposition to the developmental need of young children to explore their world and to develop their sense of autonomy and initiative, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of [Positive Discipline for Preschoolers](#).

Oh, your child may "know" you don't want her to do something. She may even know she will get an angry reaction from you if she does it. However, she cannot understand why in the way an adult thinks she can. Why else would a child look at you before doing what she "knows" she shouldn't do, grin, and do it anyway?

Around the age of one, children enter the "me do it" stage. This is when they develop a sense of autonomy vs. doubt and shame. Two through six heralds the development of a sense of initiative vs. guilt. This means it is their developmental job to explore and experiment. Can you imagine how confusing it is to children to be punished for what they are developmentally programmed to do? They are faced with a real dilemma (at a subconscious level). "Do I obey my parent or my biological drive to develop autonomy and initiative by exploring and experimenting in my world?"



These stages of development do not mean children should be allowed to do anything they want. It does explain why all methods to gain cooperation should be kind and firm at the same time instead of controlling and/or punitive. This is a time of life when your child's personality is being formed, and you want your child to make decisions about him or herself that say, "I am competent. I can try and make mistakes and learn. I am loved. I am a good person." If you are tempted to help your child learn by guilt and shame and punishment, you will be creating a discouraging situation that is difficult to reverse in adulthood.

**To help a toddler develop autonomy instead of doubt and shame, and to help a two- to seven-year-old develop initiative instead of guilt, try some of the following methods that invite cooperation:**

If you are screaming, yelling, or lecturing, stop. All of these methods are disrespectful and encourage doubt, shame, and guilt in the future.

Instead of telling your child what to do, find ways to involve him/her in the decision so he/she gets a sense of personal power and autonomy. "What are we supposed to do next?" (For pre-verbal children say, "Next,



we \_\_\_\_\_," while kindly and firmly showing them instead of telling them.)

**Be respectful when you make requests. Don't expect children to do something "right now" when you are interrupting something they are doing.**

Ask, "Will it work for you to do this in five minutes or in ten minutes?" Even if you don't think a younger child understands completely what you are saying, you are training yourself to be respectful to the child by giving choices instead of commands. Another possibility is to give him/her some warning. "We need to leave in a minute. What is the last thing you want to do on the jungle gym?"

Carry a small timer around with you. Let your child help you set it to one or two minutes. Then let him/her put the timer in his/her pocket so he/she can be ready to go when the timer goes off.

Give him/her a choice that requires his/her help. "It will be time to go when I count to 20. Do you want to carry my purse to the car, or do you want to carry the keys and help me start the car?" "What is the first thing we should do when we get home, put the groceries away, or read a story?"

Pre-verbal children might need plain ol' supervision, distraction, and redirection. In other words, as Dreikurs used to say, "Shut your mouth, and act." Quietly take your child by the hand and lead him/her to where he/she needs to go. Show him/her what he/she can do instead of what he/she can't do.

Use your sense of humor: here comes the tickle monster to get children who don't listen. Be empathetic when your child cries (or has a temper tantrum) out of frustration with his/her lack of abilities. Empathy does not mean rescu-

ing. It does mean understanding. Give your child a hug and say, "You're really upset right now. I know you want to stay, but it's time to leave." Then hold your child and let the child cry and have his/her feelings before you move on to the next activity.

Children usually sense when you mean it and when you don't. Don't say anything unless you mean it and can say it respectfully. Then follow through with dignity and respect--and usually without words. Again, this means redirecting or "showing" them what they can do instead of punishing them for what they can't do.

Create routines for every event that happens over and over: morning, bedtime, dinner, shopping, etc. Then ask your child, "What do we need to do next on our routine chart?" For children who are younger, say, "Now it's time for us to \_\_\_\_\_." Understand that you may need to teach your child many things over and over before he/she is developmentally ready to understand.

**Be patient. Minimize your words and maximize your actions.**

Don't take your child's behavior personally and think your child is mad at you or bad or defiant. Remain the adult in the situation and do what needs to be done without guilt and shame.

Understand that your attitude determines whether or not you will create a battle ground or a kind and firm atmosphere for your child to explore and develop within appropriate boundaries.

**Your job at this age is to think of yourself as a coach and help your child succeed and learn how to do things.**

You're also an observer, working on learning who your child is as a unique human being. Never un-



derestimate the ability of a young child, but on the other hand, watch carefully as you introduce new opportunities and activities and see what your child is interested in, what your child can do, and what your child needs help learning from you.

Safety is a big issue at this age, and your job is to keep your child safe without letting your fears discourage him/her. For this reason, supervision is an important parenting tool, along with kindness and firmness while redirecting or teaching your child. For example, parents can "teach" a two-year-old child not to run into the street, but still would not let him/her play near a busy street unsupervised because they know they can't expect him/her to "understand" what he/she has learned well enough to have that responsibility. So why is it these same parents expect their children to "understand" when they say, "No!"

Mrs. Foster was wondering why she ever got into the parenting business. It felt to her that both she and her child were out of control. She did not like it that he would not "mind her," and she did not like it that she was yelling and using punitive methods that didn't work.

She attended a parenting class for parents of preschoolers and learned about age-appropriate behavior. When she changed her expectations about the "perfect child who obeyed her every command," she began to enjoy her child's experimentation with autonomy and initiative. Instead of trying to control him, she started guiding him away from inappropriate behavior by showing him what he could do.

She was most amazed at how much her child seemed to calm down when she calmed down. Frustrating episodes occurred less often and were solved more quickly because of her new understanding.

When you understand that children don't really understand "no" the way you think they should, it makes more sense to use distraction, redirection, or any of the respectful Positive Discipline Methods.

### Activity

The following demonstrations illustrate intellectual development, and help parents understand why children can't understand some concepts (such as no) as soon as they think they can.

Take two balls of clay that are the same size. Ask a three year old if they are the same. Make adjustments by taking clay from one ball and adding it to the other until the child agrees that they are the same size. Then, right in front of him/her, smash one ball of clay. Then ask him/her if they are still the same.

He/she will say "no" and will tell you which one he/she thinks is bigger.

A five year old will tell you they are the same and can tell you why.

Find two glasses that are the same size, one glass that is taller and thinner, and one glass that is shorter and fatter. Fill the two glasses that are the same size with water until a three

-year-old agrees they are the same. Then, right in front of him/her, pour the water from one of these glasses into the short, fat glass, and the other one into the tall, thin glass. Then ask him/her if they are still the same. Again, he/she will say "no" and will tell you which glass he/she thinks has the most. A five year old will tell you they are the same and can tell you why.

# Positive Discipline

Creating Respectful Relationships in Homes and Schools



## Dr. Jane Nelsen

Dr. Jane Nelsen is a licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor in South Jordan, UT and San Diego, CA. She is the author and/or coauthor of the Positive Discipline Series.



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