

THOUGHTS & GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

1. Discipline should be considered a positive learning experience rather than a negative, physically, or verbally punishing one. We do not punish a child because he does not learn to read the first time he is given a book. It also takes time and experience for a child to develop acceptable patterns of behavior.
2. The goal of guidance and discipline is to enable a child to regulate and control his own behavior – self-control.
3. It is our responsibility to create the atmosphere and provide the models that enable the young child to develop self-control.
4. Unless a child has deep-seated emotional problems, unacceptable behavior is usually a message to us:
 - I don't have enough to do.
 - I am not interested in what's available.
 - I have too many or not enough choices.
 - I need limits.
 - Pay attention to me.
 - I am angry or scared.
 - I've been backed into a corner.
 - I don't know any other way to get what I want or need.
5. What we can do:
 - Realize that limits are necessary and comforting.
 - Set up basic rules – let the children know the kind of behavior you expect.
 - Be firm – you are in charge and children need and want to know this.
 - Be sensible and fair – ask what is possible and necessary.
 - Be consistent – children need to know what they can expect from you.
 - Be affectionate – “I like you, but I do not like what you are doing.”
 - Redirect behavior as often as possible.
 - Listen to and observe the children – try to get the message.
 - Remove a child from the group rather than cause a scene for all.
 - Holding a child closely often helps. It stops his immediate behavior, lets him know someone else has taken over, and gives him a chance to cool off.
 - Treat the child with the same respect you expect from him.
 - Tell your children often how terrific they are and that you trust them.
 - Be positive – tell children what they can do and speak directly to the children – not across the room.