

Guidance and Discipline

WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS A BEHAVIOR PROBLEM or you are trying to understand a child's behavior ask yourself:

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DEVELOPMENT Is this problem based on the child's stage of development? Is it common to this child's age?

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FIND OUT what else is going on in the child's life. What change is the child experiencing? – School, center or teacher change, parent work schedule change, someone new in the house (baby, grandparents, parent, or friend), anyone known to the child who is sick or recently died, a holiday or birthday celebration? These can all have an effect on the child's behavior.

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WHAT is the child getting out of this behavior? All behavior happens for a reason. The child needs something from the adults in his/her life. Is the child in need of – attention, safety, protection, time alone, space? Find a way to meet the child's needs so the annoying behavior will stop.

IF YOU WANT A CHILD TO STOP A BEHAVIOR, CONSIDER THESE FOR IDEAS:

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SPEAK SOFTLY - and in **SHORT** sentences. Children tune adults out when we go "on and on". They also don't listen better if our voices are loud (yelling) . . . they tend to listen less. Everyone hates to be yelled at and children "learn" not to listen to voices that hurt their ears?

THINK about what you are saying. Are you really clear? Does the child really understand what you are asking them to do? Try saying what you want in another way. Children don't think like adults and don't have the years of experience with language. Be clear and be specific with your words.

OUT Give children a choice or a way **OUT** of the situation. Offer an "**OR**". Say, "You may do _____ or _____." The choice can be a simple one, but letting children have a choice tends to get children's cooperation better than ordering them around. No one wants to be told what to do

POSITIVE Speak in a positive way. Tell children what you want rather than what you don't want. "Put your feet on the floor.", "Sit in the chair.", "Walk". Small children tend to focus on the last word the adult said. Make sure it tells children positively what you want them to do.

HITTING CHILDREN CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN. CONSIDER THESE THREE REASONS WHY SPANKING AND HITTING CHILDREN DOESN'T WORK.

HATRED Hitting people makes them mad. People who are mad tend not to listen to what the other person is trying to teach. They only think about how to get back at the person who hurt them. Spanking makes children hate the adults who hurt them and communication stops.

IMITATION Children learn a great deal of what they know by copying the people in their lives. Adults need to show children how to solve problems without hurting another person. Problem solving skills modeled in front of young children lay the ground work for healthy people who know how to work out their differences.

TEACH Ask yourself, "What do I want the child to learn from this?" Hurting someone only teaches violence. Showing children other ways to handle their anger, frustration and problems teaches them things they will use their whole lives. Adults should not teach violence and pain.

ADULT REFERENCES:

- *Without Spanking or Spoiling* by Elizabeth Crary
- *The Discipline* by Dr. Sears
- *How to Talk* by Faber Mazlish