



"The ABC and D's of Discipline"

Sparing the Rod and Not Spoiling the Child

Discipline does not mean punishing a child, but teaching them. Discipline makes your child feel safe and teaches them what they can and cannot do.

When your child acts up:

- Stop the behavior and remove your child from the area.
- Don't hit or spank your child.
- Correct your child's behavior using short and simple sentences.
- If your child is upset, try and help her tell you what it is that is bothering her.
- Don't say "No" too often. Eventually your child will stop listening to the word. Save the use of "No" for when your child is doing something dangerous.
- Set limits and follow them.

Helping your child to be good:

1. Learn what is normal for your child at each age and stage to make sure you're not expecting too much too early.
2. Praise behavior that you want to encourage.
3. Keep your limits simple.
4. Children do not have a good memory. They learn by repetition. Be patient. It is normal to have to repeat yourself many times.
5. Show your child the right way to do things when they are doing something they shouldn't.
6. Make sure you set aside some time each day to spend with your child in which you will give her your undivided attention.
7. Since children often act up to get attention, make sure you always listen to your child and make them feel important.
8. If you are having trouble getting your child to cooperate, try giving your child choices rather than telling her what to do. For example, ask your child if she would like to brush her teeth before or after putting her pajamas on.
9. Use distraction. Give your child something else to do if she is misbehaving. Remember, when children are young they don't always know right and wrong.
10. If you get angry, take a break. Call a friend, take a shower, do whatever you need to do to calm down. Never hit, spank or shake a baby.

Spanking?

Spanking does not teach children how to make decisions, or what is right and what is wrong. What it does teach them is:

- Hitting is okay.
- If you get caught, you'll get hit, so don't get caught.
- Violence can make others do what you want.
- The reason to be good is so that you won't get hit.

Hitting your child may stop a bad behavior at that moment, but the message rarely lasts. As well, most parents find that the more they spank, the harder the spanks need to be to get the child's attention. This is a recipe for abuse.

It's okay to ask for help!

Parenting is one of the hardest, and also the most important job that you will ever have. If you have questions, concerns or just need someone to talk to, then call and ask to speak to a Public Health Nurse.

Chouteau County Health Department

406-622-3771

Our hours are Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

