



Discipline provides children with the tools to be the best they can be in any situation, both at home and away.

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Discipline: behavior away from home

With discipline, parents trust their children's behavior away from home

In summer, children spend extra time at friends' homes, day camps, traveling and visiting relatives. When your child is away from home, how can you be sure that he or she will behave in a way that meets your expectations?

One of the greatest challenges of raising a child is knowing how to provide discipline so your child will make good decisions, whether you are there or not. Discipline is how parents teach their children what is expected of them and how to behave in any situation. Setting the expectation for your child's behavior when they are not with you starts with discipline and age-appropriate expectations at home.

Many parents try to discipline children by using control or punishment, but discipline is about listening, not reacting, and setting the tone for acceptable behavior. Discipline is not punishment for poor behavior. Rather it is a process of teaching children consequences of their actions and teaching new, acceptable behavior. It is a slow and consistent process that yields positive results.

Discipline provides children with the tools to be the best they can be in any situation, both at home and away. It teaches children self-control and respect and requires parents to model these values themselves.

What parents can do

- Set rules with all of your family together. The family rules must have clear consequences when one is broken. This will include rules broken when your children are at home or away from home.
- Acknowledge and encourage good behavior. When your children have behaved well both in and out of your presence, acknowledge that and tell them that is the kind of behavior you expect from them.
- Be a role model for your child. Teach your child to behave appropriately by setting a good example.
- Before your child leaves, discuss the activities he or she will be doing and review your expectations for behavior. Depending on the child's age, some expectations could include: how your child will treat the adults who are caring for them in your absence, being polite and respectful, asking before touching something that is not theirs and what time you expect him or her to be home.
- Tell your child the reasons behind rules. Many children can say what their parents don't want them to do but can't explain why or what their parents want them to do instead.

Additional general principles of good discipline include:

- When you need to communicate with your child about his or her behavior, get down to the child's level, look the child in the eye and speak calmly.
- Discipline should be age-focused and should teach age-appropriate behaviors.
- When your child has done something wrong, think about what you want him or her to learn from this mistake, then approach discipline with this goal in mind.
- After the discipline occurs, hug your child. Make sure the child knows it is the behavior you are not happy with, not the child.