

Clear Expectations Make Discipline Easier

Sometimes it can be very challenging to communicate anything with your child. Setting clear expectations regarding what's acceptable behavior and what isn't imperative to successfully teaching your child right from wrong. If the parameters are muddled or the child learns that in one situation the rules hold true yet in another situation the same rule does not, it makes for confusion and frustration on both sides.

Sit down with your child well in advance and line out the expectations and consequences of misbehaving or a misdeed. Make it clear that in no uncertain terms is there any room for negotiation at the time of the infraction, and that should such a behavior occur you intend to be firm in your discipline. Rules regarding your child's safety, health or well-being should have no room for negotiation when being set or enforced. Other rules can be openly and honestly discussed with your child and an agreed upon action should be forged that both parents and child can agree upon. If necessary, make a contract between parent and child. Lay it all out in black and white, in language your child can clearly understand. For younger children, you might want to develop a good behavior chart within the contract, and for each week that goes by without any infractions being noted, a favorite or special activity might be earned. The connection between good deeds and special time with mom and/or dad might be just the currency they understand.

But all children need to understand that disciplining them is your way of teaching them what's acceptable behavior and what isn't. It may seem as though children fight rules and regulations, but they truly know that such parameters are meant for their well-being, health, safety, and enable them to grow into a mature person capable of making wise decisions.