

DISCIPLINE WITH PURPOSE[®]



A Developmental Approach to Teaching Self-Discipline

THE FOUNDATION OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

Informed parents know a baby will be completely dependent upon them to meet all their basic needs. A parent's time will be dictated by these needs.

Sometimes, parents are not aware of two important lessons young children need to learn as a foundation for becoming self-disciplined. They are, to teach children in the most loving way that:

1. there is a will stronger than their own, and
 2. that they are not the center of the universe.
- But teaching these tasks to children is not easy to do.

Parents of children from birth until the age of five have found these strategies to be effective ways to discipline.

- * Set routines so children get rest, eat at scheduled times, and have a balance between attention from adults and alone time.
- * Attend to the child's basic needs even if you must interrupt your own activities.
- * Refrain from arguing with a very young child.
- * Use a calm but firm voice when correcting a child.
- * Look at the child when talking and require the child to repeat back what was said.

- * Place the child on a stair step or chair for a brief 1-3 minute time-out or simply hold and rock the out-of-control child.
- * Reflect the seriousness of inappropriate behavior by having a sad or stern look on your face and a tone of voice that indicates displeasure.
- * Repeat instructions over and over like a broken record, rather than change what the child is asked to do.
- * Physically remove objects if they are harmful to the child.
- * Tell children what they should do rather than what they should not do. "Walk around the puddle," rather than "Don't walk in the water."
- * Use good listening skills.
- * Avoid making idle threats or idle promises.
- * Show the child HOW to do something rather than TELL them how to do it.

Children who have been taught that they are not the center of the universe and there is a will stronger than their own enter school able to comply with reasonable requests from adults. They can function well in a group. They have socially acceptable habits and behavior patterns. In short, they exhibit that there has been structure and nurture in their early lives.