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## Discipline Tips

### *How Not To Verbally Or Emotionally Abuse Your Child*

With increasing demands on time and energy, the job of parenting is not getting any easier. With the added daily stress of working and raising a family, it is tempting to let your anger out on your loved ones, especially your children. To help parents who feel overwhelmed with responsibilities, here is a list of tips on how not to verbally or emotionally abuse your child, especially in a confrontational situation.

Remember, discipline is a form of teaching, not punishment. Don't confuse actions caused by anger and frustration (yelling and hitting) with the actions necessary for effective discipline (time-outs).

- Do not raise your voice when you are angry with your child. Your displeasure can be communicated without unduly frightening your child.
- Never swear at or call a child names.
- Do not use unnecessary harsh language.
- Think before you speak. You can not take back cruel words. Once you have said them, the damage is done.
- When you are very angry, take time to cool down before talking to your child. Yelling and screaming only vents your anger and may only teach your child to yell and scream.
- Walk away from your child. This helps to diffuse your anger and will allow you the time to cool down and better evaluate the situation.
- When disciplining your child, talk about the specific behavior. For example, "I do not like it when you...." This allows the child to understand exactly what they did wrong, so that they will know not to do it again.
- When you are upset at your child's behavior, explain the reason for your concern. Your child may not act rationally, but as an adult you can explain why they are not allowed to continue this inappropriate behavior.
- Remember to praise your child frequently. If you don't tell your kid how great they are, who will?
- Tell your children you love them. They need to be reminded, especially when you are unhappy with them. They need to know that you can be unhappy with them, but you will always love them, no matter what they may do.
- It is their inappropriate actions that have upset you. No matter how mad you may seem at the time, your love for your child has not changed. It is extremely important to explain this to your child, especially when he/she says you "do not love me."
- Always provide privacy for discussions. Just as any adult would find a public dressing-down humiliating and distressing, so will your child. Your child will be more willing to listening and will better understand what you are saying if your discussions are held in private.
- Use the following when your child refuses to listen to you. Start out by saying, "As soon as you put on your clothes, we will go to the park," instead of "if you don't get dressed, we are not going

to the park." This approach gives your child a better sense of being in control. Children like to be given choices rather than always being told what to do. In this example, your child can make the choice of "going to the park" in exchange for "putting on his/her clothes."

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