

SHAPING YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR

INTRODUCTION

1. How are behaviour patterns learned?
 - Unpleasant consequences → behaviour will be avoided
 - Pleasant consequences → behaviour will be repeated
2. The difference between "discipline" and "retribution"?
 - Both involve the application of unpleasant consequences
 - Discipline is to train and to correct for the future (Hebrews 12:10)
 - Retribution is to exact "payment" for an offence (Revelation 20:15)
3. Is punishment harmful for a child's development?
 - Rules are essential for emotional security
 - Discipline is evidence of parental love (Proverbs 13:24)
 - However, harm is caused when discipline is exercised incorrectly

PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLINING

1. Don't punish the child for accidents or mistakes
 - Punishment won't restore the damage, nor prevent it in the future
 - Fear of mistakes/failure destroys a child's self-confidence
2. Don't get caught in a battle of the will
 - Don't teach a child to react only to threats
 - Apply the one-warning rule
3. Don't violate the child's self-esteem
 - Avoid scolding, criticising, condemning or mocking the child
4. Don't insist on "perfection"
 - Make allowances for childish shortcomings
 - Patient reminders will eventually bear fruit
5. Apply discipline consistently
 - Avoid threats that will not be carried out
 - Don't break the love relationship
 - Don't punish the child "out of the blue"
 - The biggest obstacle is the parent's emotional exhaustion
6. Reinforce your spouse's authority
 - Form a united front - it gives the child security
 - Discuss rules and punishments regularly with one another

NB: The precise method of discipline is not as important as adhering to these principles

METHODS OF DISCIPLINING

1. Natural consequences
 - Let nature take its course
 - Explain the "dangers" - but don't forbid the behaviour
2. No consequences
 - Withhold emotional attention
 - Distinguish between painful crying and wilful crying
 - React in an unexpected manner

3. Logical consequences

- Explain beforehand what the consequences will be
- Saying "lines" for minor transgressions
- Withholding of privileges
- Paying (partially) for financial damage
- Spanking

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

1. When should a child get a spanking?

- For deliberate defiance of authority
- For continued disobedience
- For calculated dishonesty
- For blatant misbehaviour

THE COMMON THREAD IS WILFUL WRONGDOING

2. How should a spanking be given?

- Explain the reason why - eg deliberate disobedience
- Use a rod - your hand is for loving, not for hitting
- One stroke is enough – you don't have to hit till the child cries
- Express forgiveness immediately afterwards

3. What are the advantages of spanking?

- It is over quickly - the parent does not have to remain angry
- It is particularly effective with smaller children - teenagers should not be spanked
- It is God's recommended method (Proverbs 29:15)

WHY DOES DISCIPLINE SOMETIMES HAVE NO EFFECT?

1. Punishment is sometimes the only form of attention a child gets

- It is better to be scolded than to be ignored (Proverbs 27:5)

2. It is "fun" to engage in a battle of the will

- It gives the child a sense of power over the parent

3. Punishing unacceptable behaviour is not enough

- Positive behaviour must also be taught and reinforced

PROVIDE POSITIVE GUIDANCE

1. In the natural course of events

- Incidents, news items, TV programmes, etc.

2. Make time to convey values

- Family devotions, meals, bedtime conversations
- Teach them manners from an early age
- Encourage them to express appreciation towards others

3. Teach them how to behave in difficult situations

- Let them practise whenever possible

FORM HABITS VIA GOAL-SETTING

1. Decide on no more than two areas at a time

- Let the children set their own targets

2. Design a control form that is visual - and keep record

- It requires tremendous self-discipline from the parent

3. Reward successful achievement
- Psychological, social, material rewards

4. The difference between reward and bribery?
- Bribery focuses on the compensation
- Reward focuses on the achievement

ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

- 1. Let children make their own decisions as much as possible**
- A child's independence is an indication of good parenting
- 2. Give them permission to fail**
- It does not take away the desire for success, it only takes away the anxiety that prevents success

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR

*Your behaviour as parent speaks so loud,
your children can't hear what you say!*

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