

Class Discussion Positive Guidance

As a future parent, what are you going to do when your child misbehaves, such as the examples around the room today? What is the difference between punishment and discipline? (see vocabulary) Punishment doesn't teach the child what to do, it only temporarily restrains the child from doing it until they choose not to obey authority. Discipline is instruction, training and teaching the child. It teaches the child so that they are able to one day control themselves. Positive guidance directs the child in a positive, teaching and self-esteem building way. Negative guidance is done in a negative way that tears down self-esteem, belittles the child and doesn't help teach the child self-direction.

Spanking is negative guidance and a form of physical punishment. (Discuss the following)

Spanking is a poor form of discipline.

1. It does not work. Although it sometimes changes behavior at the time, it does little to change behavior over the long run.
 2. It works on the principle of fear. There will come a time when they are no longer afraid of you or what you will do. At some point they will know they can leave, get away, or that they are no longer smaller than you- ("who is going to make me?").
 3. It often creates resentment rather than self-discipline. The spanking is remembered more than why they were spanked.
 4. It teaches violence and aggression. (Do parents ever spank their children for hitting someone else? Does that seem hypocritical?) It gives children the message that if you are the bigger, it's OK to hit someone smaller.
 5. It escalates. If you spank for little things when children are young, you may have to spank harder for more serious problems when they are older. What are you going to do when they get bigger than you? It may go beyond what you intended. It may be considered abuse.
 6. Spanking does not teach what you want them to do; only what you do not want them to do.
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(Option: There is a video from ABC News called **How to be a better parent**. It was a 20/20 broadcast that was aired 4/13/97. It has 5 segments and one of those segments is on spanking. It is a little dated by fashion (glasses esp.) but the information is good and it is interesting to the students. It bothers them to see the one family spank so much. It leads to great discussion. It can be found on abcnews.com, go to the ABC store and type in the title. The # is T970413. It is about thirty dollars. Each segment is about 10 minutes. The sibling rivalry segment is interesting as well.)

So, if you do not spank your kids, how should you discipline them?

There are many ways that parents go about disciplining their children. Grounding, time out, restrictions placed on something that the child enjoys, discussing with the child what was wrong and how to correct that problem or behavior. It can also include getting chewed out, yelled at, talked down to or threatened or spank. From these examples we see positive as well as negative guidance (punishment) used. There really is no one right way to guide children, but there is a difference between positive and negative guidance. Yelling, physical punishment, talking down to a child and threatening does not correct behavior (at least not on a long term basis). You will get better results with using positive guidance. Bookstores are filled with books on how to raise, discipline, and guide children. The following are some suggestions for getting acceptable behavior from children. In many cases, it is a matter of helping children avoid misbehavior rather than punishing misbehavior after it occurs.