POSITIVE DISCIPLINE
IN EVERYDAY PARENTING



Joan E. Durrant, Ph.D.

Fourth Edition

Positive
Discipline In
Everyday Life

Save the Children®

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN EVERYDAY PARENTING

Joan E. Durrant, Ph.D.

Save the Children fights for children's rights. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Save the Children works for:

- A world which respects and values each child
- A world which listens to children and learns
- A world where all children have hope and opportunity

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PREFACE

This book is a response to the 2006 World Report on Violence against Children, a global study of violence against children carried out by the United Nations.

The study found that maltreatment occurs in children's homes in every country of the world – and that it is often based in long-held cultural practices, as well as a lack of awareness of children's human rights.

The World Report on Violence against Children makes recommendations for reducing violence against children in their homes. These recommendations emphasize the importance of:

- Changing cultural practices that contribute to violence against children, including the elimination of corporal punishment.
- Promoting non-violent communication and relationships with children.
- Building parents' skills in non-violent discipline, problem-solving and conflict resolution.
- Respecting the whole child and their family, their dignity, and their developmental needs.
- Increasing understanding of child development.
- Increasing awareness of children's rights.

For more information on the World Report on Violence against Children, visit www.violencestudy.org.

What are children's rights?

All people have basic rights. These rights apply to everyone regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability.

Not only do adults have human rights – children have rights too. But because children are small and dependent, adults often do not consider them to be full human beings with rights.

In 1989, world leaders approved a treaty that sets out the basic human rights of every child. They wanted to make sure that everyone in the world knows that children do have rights.

This treaty, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has been ratified by almost all of the countries of the world. Any country that ratifies this treaty is committed to ensuring that children's rights are protected.

The Convention recognizes that parents have the primary role in bringing up children. Parents are their children's most important teachers, role models and guides.

But parents are not their children's owners. Human rights principles guarantee that no person may be the property of another.

The Convention guarantees children the following rights:

- The right to survival and full development of their potential:
  - adequate food, shelter, and clean water
  - education
  - health care
  - leisure and recreation
  - cultural activities
  - information about their rights
  - dignity

- The right to protection from:
  - violence and neglect
  - exploitation
  - cruelty

- The right to participate in decision-making by:
  - expressing their opinions and having their opinions respected
  - having a say in matters affecting them
  - having access to information
  - freely associating with other people

Positive discipline is based on children's rights to healthy development, protection from violence and participation in their learning.

This book shows parents how they can teach their children while respecting their human rights.

For more information on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child visit www.unicef.org/crc.

CONTENTS

Preface iii

Introduction 1
Who this book is for 5
How this book is organized 7

Chapter 1:
IDENTIFYING YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS 11

Chapter 2:
PROVIDING WARMTH AND STRUCTURE 23
Providing warmth 24
Providing structure 31

Chapter 3:
UNDERSTANDING HOW CHILDREN THINK AND FEEL 41
0 to 6 months 43
6 to 12 months 47
1 to 2 years 51
2 to 3 years 59
3 to 5 years 65
5 to 9 years 73
10 to 13 years 101
14 to 18 years 109

Chapter 4:
PROBLEM SOLVING 123
0 to 6 months 125
6 to 12 months 131
1 to 2 years 135
2 to 3 years 143
3 to 5 years 147
5 to 9 years 155
10 to 13 years 159
14 to 18 years 161

Chapter 5:
RESPONDING WITH POSITIVE DISCIPLINE 165
Step 1 – Remember your goals 166
Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure 168
Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels 170
Step 4 – Problem solving 171
Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline 172
0 to 6 months 173
6 to 12 months 179
1 to 2 years 191
2 to 3 years 213
3 to 5 years 227
5 to 9 years 255
10 to 13 years 267
14 to 18 years 287

NOTES:
A note on postpartum depression 178
A note on babies' crying 184
A note on parents' moods 190
A note on child-proofing 197
A note on parental anger 204
A note on toddlers' negativism 212
A note on children's fears 219
A note on tantrums 226
A note on spanking/slapping/smacking/hitting 233
A note on children and transitions 240
A note on criticism 247
A note on children's anger 273

Conclusion 331
About the Author 333

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a joyful, frustrating, exhilarating, exhausting journey. The challenge is enormous – to take the hand of a brand-new human being and guide her toward adulthood, teaching her all she needs to know to have a happy, successful life.

There are times in all parents' lives when the challenge seems overwhelming. Sometimes we just don't know what to do. Sometimes nothing we do seems to be right. And sometimes we are overcome by all of the other stresses in our lives.

Most of us learn parenting on the job. We have little information about child development, so we rely on our instincts or our own childhood experiences. But many times our instincts are really just emotional reactions that aren't well thought-out. And sometimes our own childhood experiences were negative, or even violent, ones.

As a result, many parents think that discipline is no more than scolding and hitting. Others feel badly about losing control of their emotions. And others feel helpless.

But there is another way. "Discipline" actually means "teaching". Teaching is based on setting goals for learning, planning an effective approach, and finding solutions that work.



The Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees children's protection from all forms of violence, including physical punishment. It also recognizes children's rights to respect and dignity.

"Positive discipline" is non-violent and respectful of the child as a learner. It is an *approach to teaching* that helps children succeed, gives them information, and supports their growth.

> Children have a right to protection from all forms of violence.
>
> *Article 19*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

This book is based on findings of decades of research that has taught us a great deal about how children develop and about effective parenting. The approach presented in this book is based on that research.

Positive discipline is:

non-violent

solution-focused

respectful

based on child development principles

Positive discipline provides a foundation for parents. It is a set of principles that can be applied in a wide range of situations. In fact, it is a set of principles that can guide *all* of your interactions with your children, not just the challenging ones.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that parents have the right to assistance in carrying out their important role. This book is intended to provide information and support that will help parents learn how to discipline their children without violence.

Parents have a right to support and assistance with childrearing.

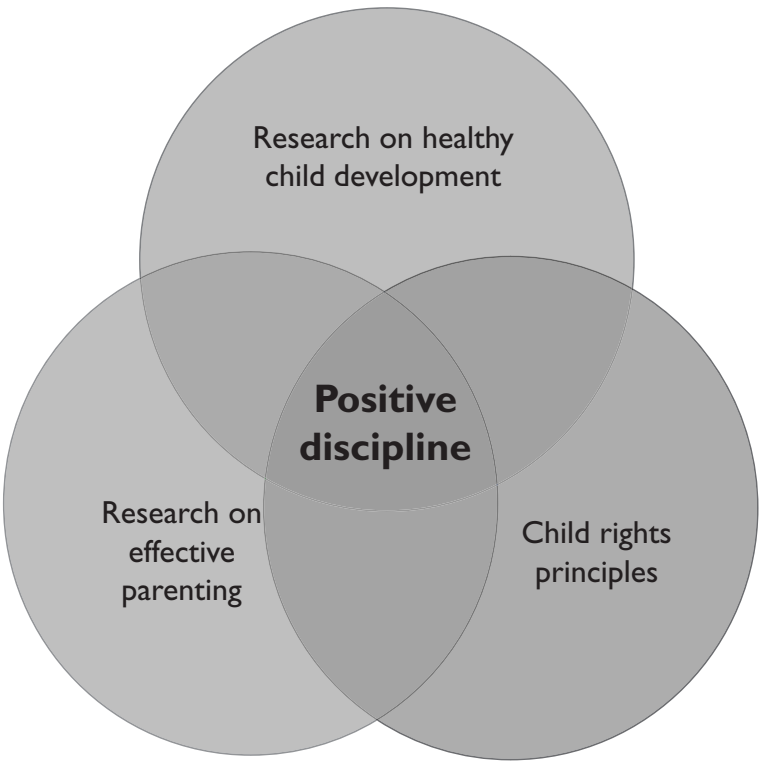
Articles 18 and 19
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Positive discipline brings together:

what we know about children's healthy development,

findings of research on effective parenting, and

child rights principles.



Who this book is for

This book is for parents of children of all ages. It addresses common issues that arise between birth and the end of adolescence. The information it contains can be helpful for any family.

This book is also for future parents. It can be very helpful to think about parenting ahead of time. When we are knowledgeable and prepared for challenges, we are much more likely to handle them successfully.

This book is also for those who support parents, such as parent educators, parent group facilitators, and family support workers. It can be used with individuals or groups to generate discussion and foster problem-solving.

Some children have particular challenges that are not typical for their age. These include autism, attention deficit disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), developmental delays and brain damage. If your child's behaviour is of particular concern, you should seek help and advice as early as possible. While the information in this book can be helpful for any family, parents of children with atypical conditions are advised to seek additional guidance from specially trained professionals, such as family doctors and public health nurses.

What positive discipline *is not*

Positive discipline *is not* permissive parenting.

Positive discipline *is not* letting your child do whatever he wants.

Positive discipline *is not* about having no rules, limits or expectations.

Positive discipline *is not* about short-term reactions or alternative punishments to slapping and hitting.

What positive discipline *is*

Positive discipline *is* about long-term solutions that develop your child's own self-discipline.

Positive discipline *is* clear communication of your expectations, rules and limits.

Positive discipline *is* about building a mutually respectful relationship with your child.

Positive discipline *is* about teaching your child life-long skills.

Positive discipline *is* about increasing your child's competence and confidence to handle challenging situations.

Positive discipline *is* about teaching courtesy, non-violence, empathy, self-respect, human rights and respect for others.

How this book is organized

This book is organized according to a sequence of steps. Each step builds on the ones before it. Therefore, it will be most helpful if you read the entire book and do the exercises as they appear.

As you develop your positive discipline skills, remember that all of us – parents and children alike – are learners. We all try, fail, try again, and ultimately succeed.

> Parenting is not a destination, but a journey.
> For any journey, we need to be prepared.

Let's begin by thinking about the equipment that we will need to make the journey a successful one.

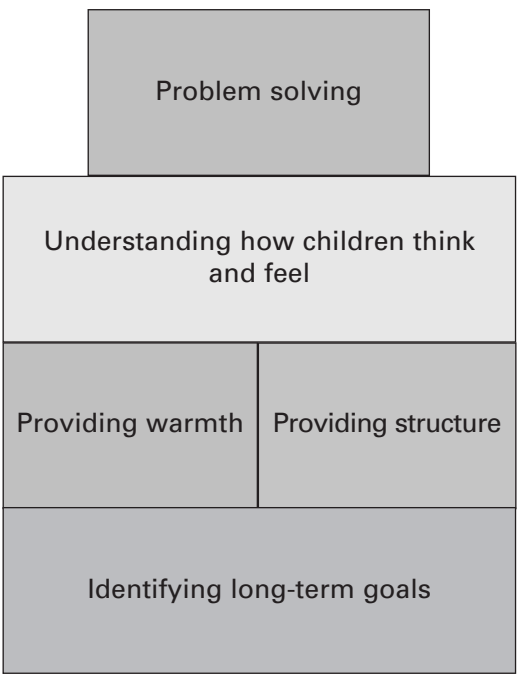


Positive discipline is *an approach* to parenting.

It is *a way of thinking.*

It is built on 4 principles of effective parenting – focusing on identifying long-term goals, providing warmth and structure, understanding how children think and feel, and problem solving.

The Building Blocks of Positive Discipline



Each of the next 4 chapters in this book focuses on one of these principles.

Chapter 1 explains the difference between short-term and long-term parenting goals. In this chapter you will think about your own goals for your child's development.

Chapter 2 explains the importance of providing warmth and structure for your child. You will think about how you do this now and how you can do it more.

Chapter 3 takes you through the stages of child development. It provides information on how children think and feel at different ages and why they behave as they do.

Chapter 4 provides examples of typical child behaviour at different ages. You will practice problem-solving to figure out why children might behave in these ways.

In Chapter 5, you will put all of this information together. You will evaluate the effectiveness of different responses to the behaviours described in Chapter 4. You will practice the positive discipline approach and gain a fuller understanding of why it is so effective.

It is recommended that you put your skills into practice gradually. It's important to understand all of the principles of positive discipline before trying to do it.

But as you interact with your child, start thinking about your long-term goals, the ways you could provide warmth and structure, and why your child might be behaving as she does. Gradually, your way of thinking will begin to change. Then, with practice, your skills will improve.

The building blocks of positive discipline are not only important in the early years of your child's life. They are essential throughout your child's development.

Even when your child is 20 years old, you will be able to use these principles to help her make decisions, solve problems and find constructive approaches to conflict.

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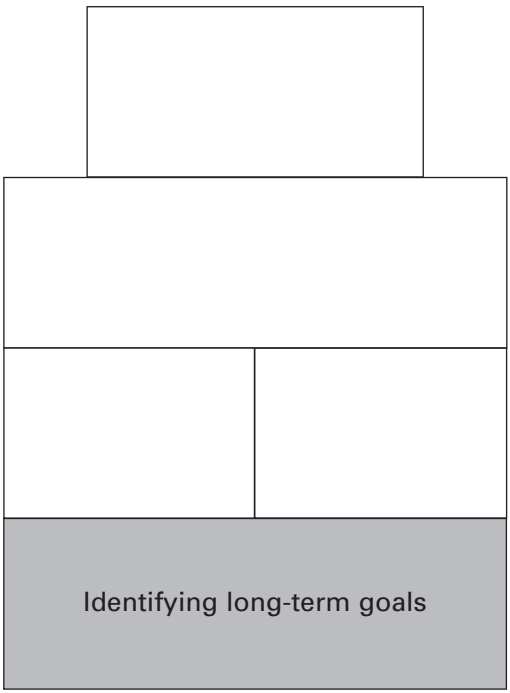
Identifying your long-term goals

CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFYING YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS

Raising a child from birth to adulthood is one of the most important things we will ever do. But many of us begin this journey without thinking about where we want to end up.

In this chapter, you will think about your parenting goals. Those goals will be the foundation on which you will build your positive discipline skills.



Imagine this...

It's a typical morning in your home.

Your child is getting ready for school and it's getting late.

What do you want your child to accomplish on this morning?

In other words, what are your **parenting goals** for this morning?

Exercise – Parenting Goals 1

List 5 things that you hope your child will accomplish before you leave the house this morning.

1. .....

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2. .....

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3. .....

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4. .....

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5. .....

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Now let's think about the kinds of goals that you listed.

Did you include goals for your child such as:

getting dressed quickly?

eating quickly?

obeying you?

doing what you say right away?

These are ***short-term goals.***

Short-term goals are those that parents want to achieve *right now.*

For example, you might want your child to:

get her shoes on *now*

get off the road *now*

come in the house *now*

stop hitting his sister *now*

Parents' days are filled with trying to find ways to meet their short-term goals. This is a reality of parenting.

In fact, we often lose sight of what we *really* want to accomplish.

Imagine this…

Your child is all grown up. You are about to celebrate your child's 20th birthday.

Close your eyes and imagine what your child will look like at that age.

What kind of person do you hope your child will be at that age?

What kind of relationship do you want to have with your child at that age?

Exercise – Parenting Goals 2

List 5 characteristics that you hope your child will have at age 20.

1. .....

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2. .....

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3. .....

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4. .....

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5. .....

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Now let's think about the kinds of goals that you listed.

Did you include:

- good problem solving?
- good communication?
- a good relationship with you?
- caring about you when you are old?
- empathy with and respect for others?
- knowing right from wrong?
- taking responsibility?
- honesty and integrity?
- loyalty to family and friends?
- dedication to a spouse?
- confidence?
- motivation to master tough challenges?
- an ability to think independently?

Long-term goals are those that parents want to achieve by the time their children are grown up.

For example, you might want your child to be:

kind and helpful

thoughtful and courteous

a wise decision-maker

honest and trustworthy

non-violent

caring towards you

a loving parent

Long-term goals take time to achieve – usually, many years. But they are the heart of parenting.

Long-term goals are those that
parents want to achieve by the time
their children are grown up.

One of the hardest things about parenting is meeting our long-term goals while also meeting our short-term goals – because the two often conflict.

Let's go back to the example of your child getting ready for school.

It's late. Your child must eat breakfast, get dressed, brush his teeth, and leave the house on time.

All you want at this moment is to get your child to school on time. You feel stressed. Your child is moving slowly and getting distracted by other things. You become frustrated.

You might yell at – or even hit – your child to get him to move more quickly.

At this moment, you are focusing on your **short-term goal** of getting your child out the door *now.*

But what happens to your long-term goals?

When you yell at your child, are you teaching him how to be courteous?

When you hit your child, are you teaching her how to solve problems?

The way we act in short-term situations is a model for our children. They learn how to cope with stress from watching how we do it. If we yell and hit when we are stressed, this is what they will learn to do.

Parents often react to short-term frustration in a way that blocks their long-term goals. Yelling and hitting will only teach your child the opposite of what you want her to learn in the long run.

Every time you react this way, you lose an opportunity to show your child a better way.

How can you meet both your short-term goals **and** your long-term goals?

A key to effective discipline is to see short-term challenges as *opportunities* to work toward your long-term goals.

When you feel yourself becoming frustrated, this is a signal that you have an opportunity to teach your child something important – something much more important than getting his shoes on *now*.

You have an opportunity to teach your child how to:

manage stress

communicate respectfully

handle conflict without hitting

consider other people's feelings

achieve your goal without harming others physically or emotionally

Each time you get frustrated, you have an opportunity to be a role model for your child. By coping well, you show him how to cope with his own frustration.

How is this possible? It is possible through practicing positive discipline.

2





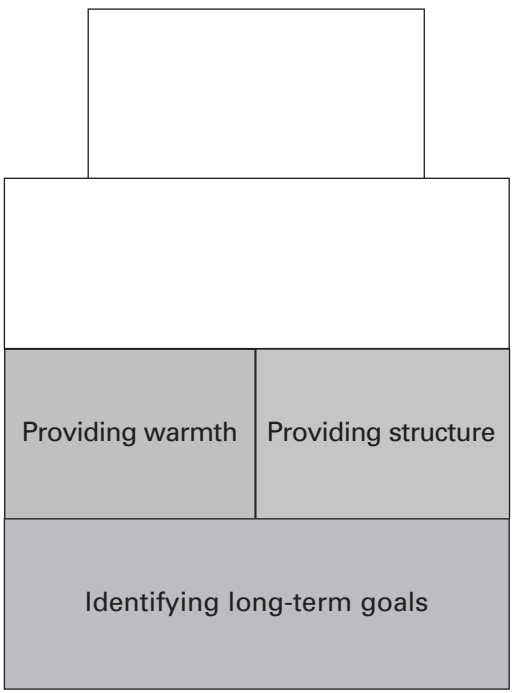
Providing warmth and structure

CHAPTER 2

PROVIDING WARMTH AND STRUCTURE

Your long-term goals are the foundation on which you will build your positive discipline skills. Building those skills requires two tools – warmth and structure.

In this chapter, you will learn what warmth and structure are and why they are important. You will think about how you can provide warmth and structure to your child in ways that will lead you toward your long-term goals.



Providing warmth

What is warmth?

emotional security

unconditional love

verbal and physical affection

respect for the child's developmental level

sensitivity to the child's needs

empathy with the child's feelings



In a warm family climate, children *want* to please their parents.



Warmth encourages short-term co-operation *and* teaches long-term values.

Here are some ways that parents give warmth to their children.

Saying "I love you."

Showing children they are loved even when they do something wrong.

Reading to them.



Hugging them.

Comforting them when they are hurt or afraid.

Listening to them.

Looking at the situation from their point of view.

Praising them.

Playing with them.

Laughing with them.

Supporting them when they are facing challenges.

Encouraging them when they have to do something difficult.

Telling them that they believe in them.

Recognizing their efforts and successes.

Showing them that they trust them.

Having fun with them.



Exercise – Why is Warmth Important?

To understand why warmth is such an important part of discipline, imagine that you are starting to learn a new language.

1. Will you learn better if your teacher:
   a) tells you what you are doing right, or ☐
   b) tells you only what you are doing wrong? ☐

2. Will you learn better if you feel:
   a) safe with your teacher, or ☐
   b) afraid that she will hit you if you make a mistake? ☐

3. Will you learn better if you think:
   a) your teacher will stay with you and support you no matter how many mistakes you make, or ☐
   b) he will storm out of the room in anger when you make errors? ☐

4. Will you want to please a teacher who:
   a) is kind and understanding, or ☐
   b) yells at, embarrasses and criticizes you? ☐

5. Will you want to learn other languages if your teacher:
   a) tells you how capable you are, or ☐
   b) tells you that you're stupid? ☐

6. Will you want to tell your teacher when you're having problems if you expect:
   a) he will listen and help, or ☐
   b) he will get angry and punish you? ☐

Exercise – Giving Warmth

List 5 ways that you give warmth to your child.

1. .....

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2. .....

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3. .....

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4. .....

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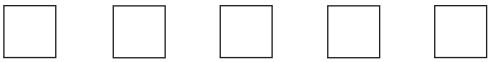
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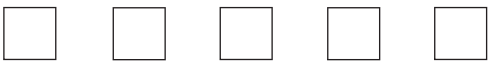
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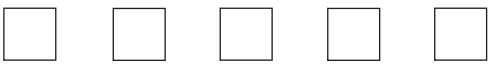
gives your child a feeling of emotional security?



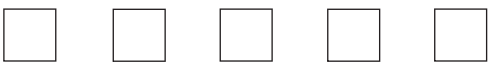
gives your child a feeling of unconditional love?



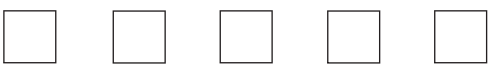
shows your child verbal and physical affection?



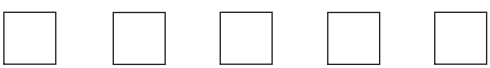
shows respect for your child's developmental level?



shows sensitivity to your child's needs?



shows empathy with your child's feelings?



Providing structure

What is structure?

clear guidelines for behaviour

clearly stated expectations

clearly explained reasons

support to help the child succeed

encouragement of the child's independent thinking

negotiation

Structure helps your child learn what is important.

It helps him to understand his mistakes and do what he can to fix them.



Structure gives your child the information she needs to succeed next time.

It gives her the tools she needs to solve problems when you're not there.



It shows her how to work out disagreements with other people in a constructive, nonviolent way.

Here are some ways that parents provide structure for their children:

Preparing them for difficult situations by telling them what to expect and how they can cope.

Explaining the reasons for rules.

Discussing the rules with them and hearing their point of view.

Helping them find ways to fix their mistakes in a way that helps them to learn.

Being fair and flexible.

Controlling anger.



Explaining their own point of view and listening to the child's point of view.

Teaching them about the effects of their actions on other people.

Giving them the information they need to make good decisions.

Talking with them often.

Avoiding threats of hitting, taking away love, monsters, or other things that children fear.

Acting as a positive role model and a guide.



Exercise – Why is Structure Important?

To understand why structure is such an important part of discipline, imagine again that you are starting to learn a new language.

1. Will you learn better if your teacher:
   a) shows you how to spell new words and teaches you the rules of spelling, or ☐
   b) expects you to figure out how to spell new words and punishes you when you make mistakes? ☐

2. Will you want to learn more if your teacher:
   a) recognizes and appreciates your attempts, even if they're not perfect, or ☐
   b) threatens to punish you if you make a mistake? ☐

3. Will you learn better if your teacher:
   a) gives you the information you need to succeed on a test, or ☐
   b) doesn't give you the information you need and then gets angry when you fail the test? ☐

4. Will you want to please a teacher who:
   a) talks your mistakes over with you and shows you how to improve next time, or ☐
   b) hits you when you make mistakes? ☐

5. Will you want to learn more languages if your teacher:
   a) gives you tips, advice and encouragement to try, or ☐
   b) tells you that you'll never be able to learn? ☐

6. Will you want to tell your teacher when you're having problems if you expect:
   a) he will try to understand why you are having difficulty and help you find a new approach, or ☐
   b) he will get angry and punish you? ☐

Exercise – Providing Structure

List 5 ways that you provide structure for your child.

1. .....

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2. .....

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3. .....

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4. .....

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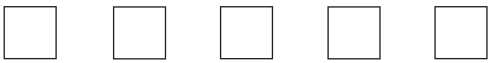
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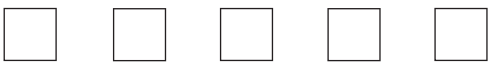
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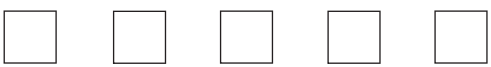
gives your child clear guidelines for behaviour?



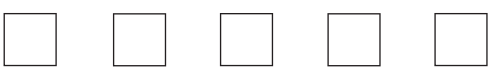
states your expectations clearly?



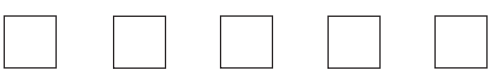
explains your reasoning to your child?



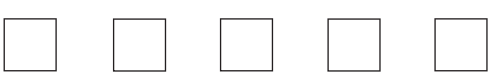
helps your child to succeed?



encourages your child's independent thinking?



involves negotiation with your child?



Positive discipline combines warmth and structure throughout the child's development – from infancy to young adulthood.

It is a way of thinking that helps parents to meet their short-term *and* long-term goals.

It is a way of teaching children how to:

solve problems

think for themselves

get along with others

resolve conflict in a non-violent way

do the right thing when you're not there



Positive discipline is based on the idea that children are born without knowing what we expect of them.

Children are learners. They learn best when they have support and information. Children of different ages need different kinds of support and information.

Warmth = Support

Structure = Information

The next chapter will describe how children develop. This will help you think about the kinds of warmth and stucture they need at different ages.

3







Understanding how children think and feel

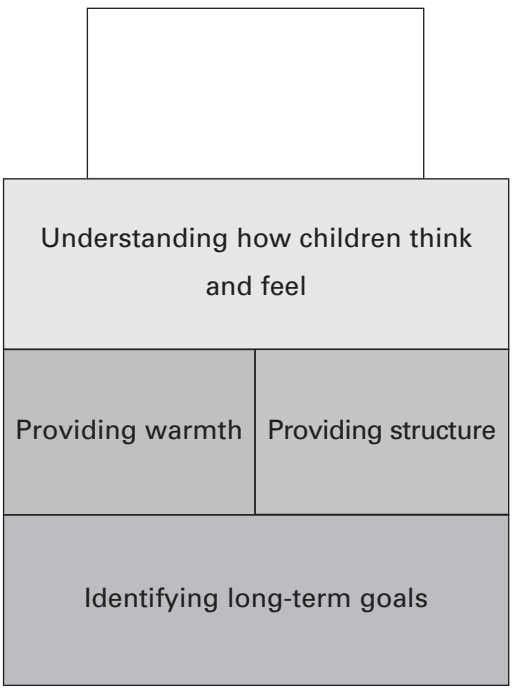
CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING HOW CHILDREN THINK AND FEEL

The third building block of positive discipline is understanding how children think and feel.

When we see the world through the eyes of a 1-year-old, a 5-year-old or a 13-year-old, we can begin to understand their behaviour. Then we can be much more effective teachers.

In this chapter, you will learn how to reach your parenting goals by providing warmth and structure that are appropriate to your child's stage of development.



0 to 6 months



Young infants are brand-new to the world.

They can't make much sense of things. They are easily frightened. They need to know that they are safe and protected.

It's very important at this stage that parents provide the baby with plenty of **warmth**.

Structure is not needed at this stage. Babies can't understand rules or explanations. They only need to know that their needs will be met.

Young babies don't know any words. They cry to let us know when they need something. They learn quickly whether they can trust us to listen and respond.

The most important thing parents can do at this stage is to respond to their baby and try their best to figure out what the baby needs.

One of the things that babies need most is to be held, cuddled, rocked, and carried.

Cuddling your baby is very important for your relationship. If your baby feels safe with you, she won't be afraid to learn new things when the time comes.



Cuddling is also important for the development of your baby's brain. Rocking and carrying are like brain food, building connections among brain cells.

Young babies don't understand *their own* feelings. They also don't know how *you* feel. When they cry, they aren't trying to make you mad.

They don't even know what "mad" is! They don't even know why they're crying! Sometimes, their own crying can scare them.

Remember that crying is normal. It is even normal for the crying to continue when you try to comfort your baby. And it is normal for crying to last a long time, especially in the evening.



At this stage, the most important thing that parents can do is show their baby that she is safe. When the baby feels safe with you, she will develop a strong **attachment** to you.

This attachment will be the basis of your relationship with your child for years to come.

During this stage, babies learn how to use their muscles. They learn to grasp and chew. They love to grab things and they put everything in their mouths.

Grasping and chewing objects develops your baby's muscles. By grasping, he learns how to use his hands and fingers. By chewing, he exercises the muscles he will need to eat solid food and to speak.

When your baby grabs your jewellery and puts it in her mouth, she is not being "bad". She is acting on her instincts. She is using the only method she has to learn about what those objects are. And she is exercising very important muscles.

As soon as babies are able to put things in their mouths, a parent's job is to make sure that there is nothing nearby that could harm the baby. If babies put small objects in their mouths, they can choke. If they put chemicals or dirt in their mouths they can get sick.

It is extremely important to remove anything from the baby's environment that could harm her if she touched or chewed it.

Remember that babies of this age do not understand danger. The best solution is to ensure that the environment is safe. Later, as her language and understanding develop, you can begin to teach your child about danger.

6 to 12 months



At this age, babies usually are crying less and smiling more.

When they cry, it might be because they are afraid that you are gone. A baby of this age will notice that you have left the room, but will not yet understand that you will come back.

This can be very frightening for a baby. He can feel completely helpless.

One of your most important tasks during this stage is to build your baby's **trust** in you. He needs to know that you are always close by.



Babies of this age also might cry because they are getting *teeth*. Teething can cause a lot of pain, but the baby can't yet tell you that it hurts.

Another reason for crying at this stage is illness. Without language, your baby can't tell you when he feels sick.

Babies don't know how to tell you that they have a fever, headache, stomachache, sore throat, or nausea. They only can cry.

Another reason babies cry is that their brains are becoming "organized".

It is normal for babies to cry at the same time each night. This is a sign that their bodies and brains are developing a rhythm. Crying is part of this process.

But your baby doesn't understand what is happening to him. It helps him to know that you are near when he is overcome by the feelings that accompany crying.

> Children have a right to care and guidance
> appropriate to their developmental capacities.
>
> *Article 5*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

One of the most exciting things that happens in this stage is that babies begin to speak. First, they babble. They might make sounds like "ba" or "da" or "ma".

Babies learn the sounds of their native language when their parents respond to their babbling. When your baby says "ba", you can say "ba ba ba" back to her.

When you respond to your baby's babbling, she learns that "ba" is an important sound and she gets practice saying it. Soon that sound will grow into a word.

She also learns that when she speaks, you will listen and respond.



Responding to your baby's babbling and first words encourages one of the most important building blocks of your relationship – **communication**.

At this early stage, you can help your child learn how to express feelings. You can also show her that you will listen to what she has to say and that you will respect her attempts to communicate with you.



1 to 2 years



This is a time of amazing changes!

During this stage, your child will begin to walk and he will have a "language explosion"!

Walking changes everything. Now your child can go wherever he wants to go. He can reach things that he couldn't reach before.

He is thrilled with his new independence. He loves to explore every corner. He loves to touch everything and taste everything.

This exploration is your child's journey of discovery. It is how he learns about his fascinating world.

All children need to explore, touch and taste. It is absolutely necessary to their brain development.

When he explores, your child is a scientist. He will do experiments to see which objects make noises, which ones fall, which ones float. These experiments teach him about the objects in his world.

For example, he will drop a toy over and over and over again. He is not doing this to annoy you. He is doing this to understand what "falling" is.

He will put his hands in his food to discover its texture. He will put toys in his mouth to discover their taste. He will spit out his food to see how it feels.

None of this behaviour is "bad". It is your child's task at this stage to discover his world. He is an explorer.

It is a parent's task to make sure that his world is safe for exploration. If your toddler can explore safely, he will learn a lot very quickly. He also will learn that his world is a safe place



With all of his exploration, your child will learn an amazing number of new words very quickly. He will want to know the name of everything that he sees.

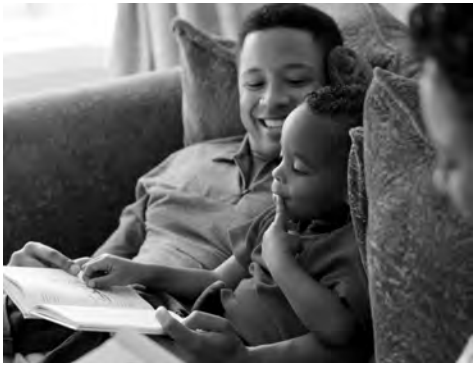
This is a wonderful opportunity to give your child a rich vocabulary and a love of words. It is important to:

talk with him

read to him

listen to him

answer his questions



During this stage, your task is to nurture your child's growing **independence**.

He needs to know that you will respect his need for independence and that you will support his strong desire to learn.

Your toddler's need for independence might lead to some conflict with you.

At this stage, children start to say "No!" When a toddler says, "No!" she is not being defiant or disobedient. She is trying to tell you how she feels.



While toddlers know the names of many objects, they don't yet know how to name feelings. It's very hard for them to explain their feelings.

When a toddler says, "No!" she might be trying to say:

"I don't like that."

"I don't want to leave."

"I want that."

"I want to choose my own clothes."

"I'm frustrated."

Also, they don't understand how other people feel. If they can't name their own feelings, they certainly can't name someone else's feelings.

When you're tired and need some peace and quiet, your child is not able to understand how you feel or what you need. If she's noisy, it's not because she's being "bad". It's because she doesn't understand how you feel.

When you're in a hurry and your child isn't getting dressed, it's not because he wants to make you late. It's because he doesn't understand why you have to leave now – right when he's drawing his masterpiece.

When it's raining and you want your child to put her coat on and she says, "No!" it's not because she is being defiant. It's because she doesn't understand yet how it feels to get wet in the rain – or because she wants to choose for herself what she will wear.

Toddlers experience a lot of frustration in their daily lives. They want to be independent, but we can't always allow them to do what they want to do.

Not only do they say "No!" a lot; they also hear "No!" a lot.

Toddlers are frustrated many, many times throughout the day because adults say "No!" to them so often. We are trying to keep them safe and teach them important rules.

But they don't understand our intentions. They only feel the frustration of hearing "No!"

As a result, toddlers can have tantrums. The frustration builds up in them and they don't know how to let it out. Their language is not developed enough for them to express their feelings.

So sometimes they collapse in sadness, discouragement and frustration. They express their feelings through tears, screams, and throwing themselves onto the floor.

Many parents can relate to this. When we don't understand our children's intentions when they say "No!" we sometimes become frustrated and have tantrums too!



In these situations, we can teach our children important things, such as how to handle frustration and express feelings in a constructive way.

These early teachings in **resolving conflict** are another building block in your child's development. They will strengthen your relationship and teach skills that will last a lifetime.



2 to 3 years



During this stage, you may see changes in your child's behaviour that worry you, but that are actually signs of her growing understanding of the world around her. Commonly, these changes take the form of **fears**.

Suddenly, your child might be afraid of the dark. Or she might become afraid of animals, new sounds, or shadows. Or she might cry and cry when you leave her.

Often, parents worry about these changes. They think that their children are acting less mature, rather than more mature. Actually, these changes are signs that your child *is* maturing.

As your child understands more about danger, he learns to fear being hurt. As your child's imagination grows and he can think about things he can't see, he begins to fear monsters and ghosts.

This can be a very frightening time for your child. He doesn't yet have enough experience to know the difference between make-believe and reality. He believes that what he sees truly exists.

He might suddenly become fearful of masks, drawings in books, cartoon characters, or scary-looking toys. This happens because he has learned about danger, but he doesn't yet know that some things aren't real.

In your child's mind, everything is alive. If you put on a scary mask, he thinks that you have become that creature. If he imagines that there is a monster under his bed, he believes it is true.

Your child might also be frightened when you leave him. This is because he understands about danger, but he still doesn't understand that you will always come back for him. He can be very frightened when he is left alone or with people he doesn't know very well.

At this stage, your child needs a great deal of **reassurance and suppor**t. He needs to know that you understand and respect his feelings – and that you will keep him safe.



Another sign of your child's development is sudden shyness. Even children who were very outgoing as toddlers can act quite differently at this stage.



Suddenly, your child might act shy around strangers. This is a sign of her growing understanding of relationships.

This new behaviour is not rudeness or rejection. It is an intelligent response to the situation. Your child understands danger and knows the difference between strangers and people she knows.

Your child's caution around strangers shows that she is understanding more and more about her world.

Another development that often worries parents is children's sudden refusal to be held by your friends or relatives.

When this happens, your child is not being rude. He is beginning to want control over his own body. He wants to decide for himself who can touch him.



This is a very important development. To teach children body safety and body privacy, we need to respect their rights to control their own bodies.

Remember that your child does not yet understand how other people feel.

When he cries for you, he does not understand that you have to leave. When he won't talk to a stranger, he does not understand that she is trying to be friendly.

Your child is just beginning to understand *her own* feelings. It will be some time before he can understand the feelings of others.

The most important task for parents at this stage is to **respect their children's feelings**.

We teach children to respect others' feelings by respecting theirs. When children trust that their parents will respect their feelings, they become more confident because they feel safe.

Respecting your child's feelings means:

helping him put his feelings into words

telling him that you feel that way sometimes too

not shaming or embarrassing him

not punishing him for being afraid



3 to 5 years



This is such an exciting stage! Your child wants to know everything!

Your child's mind has developed tremendously by this age. Now she understands that she is capable of learning anything!

When she sees something new, she wants to know what it's called, what it's for, how it works, why it moves as it does ... At this stage, children ask so many questions!

Sometimes, parents get tired of trying to answer all of their children's questions. Sometimes they don't know the answers themselves!

But parents can build a strong foundation for their children's learning by **responding respectfully** to their children's questions.

If we respect children's curiosity, they will experience the joy of learning. This feeling will stay with them as they enter school.

Parents who try to answer their children's questions – or help them find the answers – are teaching their children many things:

it's ok to not know everything

their ideas matter

there are many ways to find information

searching for answers and solving problems is fun

Children who learn these things will be more confident when they face challenges. They will learn patience. And they will learn that it is good to want to learn.



Sometimes, though, children want to learn about things that are dangerous. They might want to learn how to light a candle. Or what will happen if they jump from a tall tree. Or what will happen if they drop your favourite dish.

Because children cannot be allowed to do dangerous things, they begin to learn about rules at this stage.



The more your child understands about the reasons for the rules, the more likely she is to follow them.

Remember that your child wants to know "why?" Why do birds fly? Why do fish swim? And why can't I light the candle?

When your child asks "why?" she is not challenging you. She really wants to know the answer.

> Children have a right to seek information.
>
> *Article 13*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

At this stage, children love to play imaginary games. They pretend to be all kinds of things, including grown-ups. Sometimes they become lost in their play because it feels so real to them.

Playing is your child's "job". It's how he practices feeling what other people feel. He puts himself into other people's situations and sees things through their eyes. Play is extremely important to the development of children's empathy.

Play is also important for your child's brain development. Through play, children solve problems, invent new things, do experiments, and figure out how things work.



Children have a right to play.

Article 31
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children need time to play. It is another building block in their development.

If they have time to develop their imaginations, they will become more creative problem-solvers.

If they can take things apart and put them back together, they will realize that they can figure things out.



If they can draw and sing, they will become more confident in expressing themselves through art.

If they have opportunities to work out arguments, they will become better at resolving conflict.

Another feature of this stage is children's desire to help. They want to sweep the floor, make treats, wash the clothes, paint the house, and build things.

By helping, they are "apprenticing". They learn and practice important life skills by watching and helping.



When children help, they make many mistakes. They don't do things perfectly. They have little experience with these tasks, so they might not do them as we would like them done.

But this is how they learn. Just as we are not always good at things the first time, children also need a chance to make mistakes and to learn.

When we encourage children to help, we give them a chance to learn. And when we let them practice, we are showing them that we respect their skills and their capabilities.

This message has a big impact on children. If they see themselves as capable, they will be much more confident about learning new things.

An important task for parents at this stage is to **foster their children's confidence in their abilities**, by:

answering their questions, or helping them to find the answers

making sure they have time to play

encouraging them to help



A young child's confidence in his ability to learn is the foundation of all future learning.



He will face many challenges in the years ahead. If he begins this journey believing that he is capable, he is much more likely to overcome those challenges.

5 to 9 years



This stage marks a major turning point in the life of the child – and of the parents. During this stage, most children will start school.

When a child enters school, her world changes. She must quickly learn how to:

manage on her own, without her parents

get along with many new children

meet the expectations of many new adults

follow new schedules and routines

Children's first school experiences can affect their feelings toward school and learning for many years to come.

Although all children start school at the same age, they are not all ready at the same time. Children can have very different **temperaments** that can greatly affect how they respond to school.

A child's temperament is inborn. It cannot be changed. It is a big part of what makes your child who she is.

There are no "good" or "bad" temperaments – just different ones. Our temperaments are what make us unique. Every temperament has its own strengths.

Let's look at some important dimensions of temperament.

1. Activity level

Some children are highly *active,* wanting to run, jump, or climb most of the time. They hardly ever sit still, even at mealtimes. They seem to be always in motion.

Other children are *inactive*, preferring quiet activities, such as looking at books or playing with puzzles for long periods of time.

Other children's activity levels fall somewhere in-between.

2. Regularity

Some children have *predictable* rhythms. They get hungry at regular intervals, and wake up, fall asleep and go to the bathroom around the same time each day.

Other children have *changing* rhythms. They might be very hungry at noon one day and not at all hungry at noon the next day. They might wake up very early on Monday, but sleep late on Tuesday.

Other children have rhythms that fall somewhere in-between.

3. Response to new situations

Some children *approach* new situations. They smile at strangers, walk up to new groups of children and join in their play, easily make new friends, like to try new foods, and enjoy going to new places.

Other children *withdraw* from new situations. They move away from strangers, take a long time to join new groups, spit out new foods, and hesitate or avoid going to new places.

Other children's responses to new situations fall somewhere in-between.



4. Adaptability

Some children *adjust quickly* to new routines, places, people and foods. It might only take a day or two for them to adjust to a new schedule, living in a new house or going to a new school.

Other children *adjust slowly.* It might take months for them to make friends in a new neighbourhood, feel comfortable in a new school, or follow a new schedule.

Other children's adaptability falls somewhere in-between.

5. Distractibility

Some children are *easily distracted.* They move from one thing to the next, depending on what they happen to see or hear that moment. It takes a long time for them to finish tasks because their attention is constantly being drawn off in different directions. But when they are sad or disappointed, it is easy to shift their attention to something else and change their mood.

Other children are *not easily distracted.* They will sit and read for long periods. And when they are hungry or sad, it's not easy to shift their attention.

Other children's distractibility falls somewhere in-between.

6. Persistence

Some children are *very persistent*, sticking with a challenging task until it is done. They have a goal in mind and they will keep going until they achieve it. They don't give up in the face of failure. But it's not easy to convince them to stop doing things that they want to do.

Other children are *less persistent.* If they fall, they will stop climbing. If they don't succeed in solving a puzzle quickly, they lose interest. And it's easy to convince them to stop doing things that we don't want them to do.

Other children's persistence falls somewhere in-between.

7. Intensity

Some children have very intense responses to events and situations. If they have difficulty with a puzzle, they yell and throw the pieces. They show intense anger and sadness, but they also show intense happiness. They cry loudly when they are sad and laugh joyfully when they are happy. You always know how these children are feeling.

Other children have subdued reactions. When they are sad inside, they cry quietly. When they are happy, they smile quietly. It's difficult to know how these children are feeling.

Other children's intensity falls somewhere in-between.

Exercise – Your Child's Temperament 1

Rate your child on each of the 7 dimensions of temperament.

1. Activity level

Low			High
1	2	3	4
Sits still for long periods			*Always on the go*

2. Regularity

Low			High
1	2	3	4
Gets hungry and sleepy at different times on different days			*Gets hungry and sleepy at the same time every day*

3. Response to new situations

Avoidance			Approach
1	2	3	4
Shies away from new people, unhappy in new places, rejects new things			*Likes to meet new people, go to new places, try new things*

4. Adaptability

Low			High
1	2	3	4
Takes a long time to adjust to changes in routines or environments			*Quickly adjusts to changes in routines or environments*

5. Distractibility

Low			High
1	2	3	4
Focuses on one activity for a long period			*Notices everything, shifts attention often*

6. Persistence

Low			High
1	2	3	4
Loses interest in activities quickly			*Sticks with activities until they are finished*

7. Intensity

Low			High
1	2	3	4
Doesn't show much change in emotions			*Shows intense sadness, anger and happiness*

Exercise – Your Child's Temperament 2

Think about the ways in which your child's temperament is a strength.

Ways in which my child's temperament is a strength:

Now think about the ways in which your child's temperament is not a strength.

Ways in which my child's temperament is not a strength:

Your child's temperament has a powerful influence on his readiness for school.

Some children will find the new environment interesting and exciting, will adapt quickly to the new routines, and will enjoy making new friends.

Others will find the new environment stressful, will take time to adjust to the new routines, and will find it difficult to make new friends.

It is important for parents to recognize their children's temperaments and respect their individuality.

It is not possible to make an active child into an inactive one, or to make a less persistent child into a persistent one.

But we *can* identify each child's strengths and build on them. We can also identify each child's unique challenges and create a supportive environment that allows each child to thrive.

Not only does you child's temperament affect her behaviour. Your temperament also affects her behaviour – and it affects your behaviour, as well.

Parent-child relationships are strongly affected by *the match* between the child's temperament and the parent's temperament.

Think about a parent who is not very active. This parent likes to stay indoors, read quietly and listen to gentle music.

Now think about what might happen if this parent has a child with a high activity level. What will happen if this child is kept indoors and is expected to sit quietly?

If this parent recognizes that her child has a higher activity level than she has, she will be able to adjust her expectations and find ways to meet her child's needs for activity. If she doesn't realize that her child's behaviour is due to his temperament, she might think that her child is being "bad".

It's very important for parents to think about their own temperaments and consider how well they match their children's temperaments. Doing so can help us to understand the reasons for many family conflicts.

Exercise – Your Temperament 1

Rate yourself on each of the 7 dimensions of temperament.

1. Activity level

Low			High
1	2	3	4
I like quiet activities best			*I like to be physically active and on the go*

2. Regularity

Low			High
1	2	3	4
I get hungry and tired at different times on different days			*I get hungry and tired at the same times every day*

3. Response to new situations

Avoidance			Approach
1	2	3	4
I'm uncomfortable in new situations, meeting new people and trying new things			*I enjoy going to new places, meeting new people, and trying new things*

4. Adaptability

Low			High
1	2	3	4
It takes me a long time to adjust to new routines or environments			*I adjust quickly to changes in routines or environments*

5. Distractibility

Low			High
1	2	3	4
I can focus my attention on one thing for a long time			*My thoughts are easily distracted; my attention shifts often*

6. Persistence

Low			High
1	2	3	4
I lose interest in activities quickly and move on to other things			*I stick with an activity until it is finished*

7. Intensity

Low			High
1	2	3	4
I don't really show my emotions; other people often can't tell how I'm feeling			*When I'm happy, sad or mad, other people know it*

Exercise – Your Temperament 2

Think about the ways in which your temperament is a strength.

Ways in which my temperament is a strength:

Now think about the ways in which your temperament is not a strength.

Ways in which my temperament is not a strength:

Exercise – The Match

Use a blue pen to fill in the boxes that correspond to the ratings that you gave your child. Then connect those boxes with a line.

Activity level	①	②	③	④
Regularity	①	②	③	④
Response to new situations	①	②	③	④
Adaptability	①	②	③	④
Distractibility	①	②	③	④
Persistence	①	②	③	④
Intensity	①	②	③	④

Exercise – The Match

Use a red pen to fill in the boxes that correspond to the ratings that you gave yourself. Then connect those boxes with a line.

Activity level	①	②	③	④
Regularity	①	②	③	④
Response to new situations	①	②	③	④
Adaptability	①	②	③	④
Distractibility	①	②	③	④
Persistence	①	②	③	④
Intensity	①	②	③	④

Differences Between Our Temperaments

My child and I differ on .....

This difference could contribute to conflict when

My child and I differ on .....

This difference could contribute to conflict when

My child and I differ on .....

This difference could contribute to conflict when

My child and I differ on

This difference could contribute to conflict when

My child and I differ on

This difference could contribute to conflict when

Similarities Between Our Temperaments

My child and I match on

This similarity could contribute to our getting along by

My child and I match on

This similarity could contribute to our getting along by

My child and I match on

This similarity could contribute to our getting along by

My child and I match on

This similarity could contribute to our getting along by

My child and I match on

This similarity could contribute to our getting along by

The match between your child's temperament and your own can have a powerful effect on your relationship. By recognizing the role of temperament in your child's behaviour and your behaviour, you can begin to understand the reasons behind many conflicts that arise.

You can also understand why hitting and yelling don't help.

Your child is an individual, just as you are. His temperament cannot be changed and neither can yours.

Where your temperaments don't match, you can find ways of resolving the difference without fights or arguments. You can find ways of respecting your differences and working them out.

During the early school years, children's social relationships become more and more important. Their growing interest in friendships is a sign of their growing independence.



Your child's world is expanding. She is learning more about how others think, what others believe, and how others behave.

Sometimes, parents worry that they are losing control over their children at this stage. They worry about all of the new influences on their children.

But this is a necessary and important part of your child's development. During this stage, she will learn a lot about other people. She will learn even more about herself.

In this stage, children must figure out very complicated issues for the first time. They must learn how to:

manage conflict with other children

communicate with others, even when they disagree

stand up for themselves

stand up for others

deal with bullies

be loyal, even when it is difficult

be kind, even when others are not

The skills and confidence that your child acquired in earlier stages will give her a strong foundation for facing these new challenges.

Children who see themselves as good, caring and capable are more likely to make good decisions.

Children who feel supported and accepted by their parents are more likely to turn to them for advice and help.

Children who have watched their parents handle conflict, anger and stress without aggression or violence are more likely to resolve their own conflicts well.

Children who learned from their parents how to listen, communicate and treat others with respect are more likely to do the same with their peers and teachers.



Everything that you did to build a strong, trusting relationship with your child in the earlier years will now give him strength to handle difficult situations.

For a child, figuring out all of the complicated parts of relationships is a huge challenge. He is brand-new at this. He will make mistakes because he doesn't understand everything that we understand.

But as he tries, fails and succeeds, he will learn a lot about other people and about himself. His empathy for others will increase. And his understanding of his own beliefs and values will grow and grow.

Parents' major task in this stage is to **support and guide their children**. Children look to us as their models and guides

> We must be the people
>
> we want our children to become.

As their first and most important teachers, we can show them through our own behaviour how to:

respect the rights of others

show kindness

help others

understand when they have hurt others

make amends for their mistakes

apologize from the heart

be loyal

act with integrity

This stage is a very important one because it is a bridge between childhood and adolescence.

We can build on the foundation we created in the early years. And we can set the stage for independent decision-making in the teen years.



10 to 13 years



Your child is about to enter puberty. Many exciting changes are about to take place.

His body will change. He is no longer a little boy. Your child is preparing for adulthood. But he is still a child.

This situation can lead to family conflict.

Why is family conflict so common at this stage?

Reason 1
At this stage, children want more *independence* from their parents. But parents worry that their children do not yet have all of the knowledge and skills that they need to make decisions on their own.

Reason 2
The huge changes happening in your child's body can lead to *moodiness*. A child who used to be cheerful might suddenly become sullen and easily angered.



Reason 3
Children are spending more time with their *peers* and less time with their parents. Sometimes, they want to do what their peers do, even if their parents disapprove.

Reason 4
Children realize at this stage that they might disagree with their parents. They are forming their own *beliefs* and figuring out who they are as individuals.

Reason 5
During this stage, parents can feel afraid for their children. They might worry about their *safety* or their health. They might worry that their children will get into trouble or do poorly in school. Sometimes, parents feel powerless.

Together, these reasons can lead to frequent family conflict.

Friendships become increasingly important in this stage.

Friends are very important to children's emotional well-being. They can be a great source of support, comfort and enjoyment. They can teach your child skills and help your child to develop new interests. Children need social supports just like adults do.

But children's growing interest in making and keeping friends can also lead to parental concerns. Parents often worry about "peer pressure" at this stage. Sometimes children will do things that their parents disagree with just to feel accepted by their peers.

A major parenting challenge at this stage is to **keep your child safe while respecting his growing need for independence**.

Ways of Building a Safety Net for Your Child

- Spend time together
  - do things together as a family
  - talk with him about his friends
  - listen to his worries and concerns
  - recognize his accomplishments
  - tell him about the challenges he will face in the coming years and let him know you'll be there to help
  - be honest with him
  - be affectionate with him
  - try to understand the feelings behind his behaviours

- Build her self-esteem
  - help her to discover – and to like – who she is
  - encourage her to believe in her own abilities
  - help her to see her strengths and her special characteristics

- Be involved with her school
  - go to school events
  - get to know her teachers
  - talk with her about her homework and offer your support
  - take an interest in what she is reading and discuss it with her

- Get to know his friends
  - let them spend time at your home
  - meet their families
  - attend events that he and his friends are involved in

- Stay close – but at a distance
  - know where she is and who she is with, but respect her growing needs for independence and privacy
  - show her that you trust her and believe in her

Ways of Encouraging Your Child's Independence

- Help him develop his own sense of right and wrong
  - talk with him about risky activities and explain why he should avoid them, like smoking, taking drugs and dangerous physical dares
  - talk with him about your values and listen to his
  - talk with him about the physical and emotional changes he will experience at puberty
  - talk with him about the pressures he will face to do things that he thinks are wrong or dangerous
  - help him to plan ahead so that he feels prepared to face peer pressure
  - help him to find ways of resisting peer pressure that will work for *him*

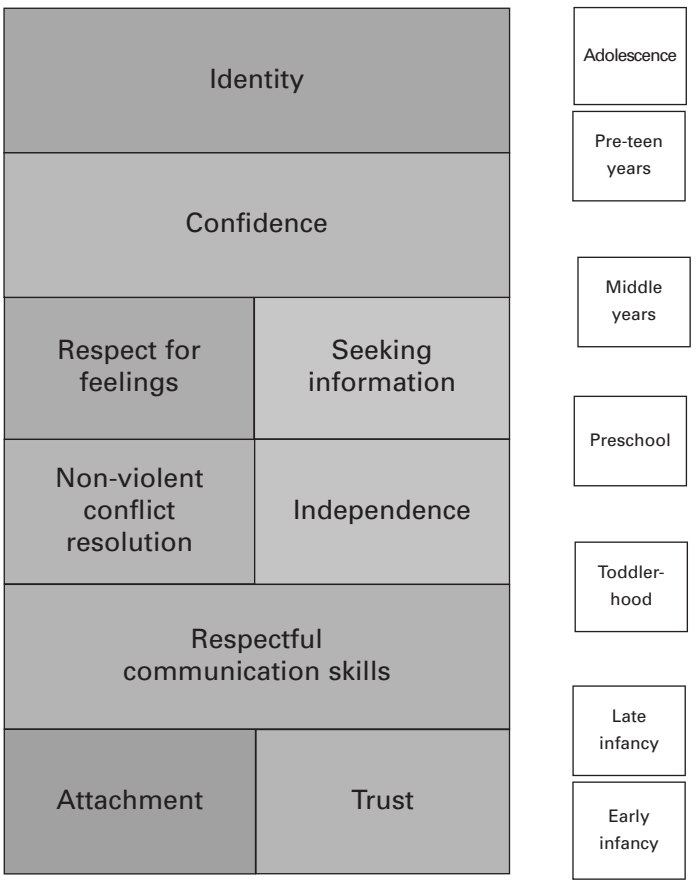
- Help her develop a sense of responsibility and competence
  - keep her involved in household activities
  - talk to her about money and how to use it wisely
  - involve her in developing rules and expectations for the family

- Help him develop empathy and respect for others
  - encourage him to help people in need
  - talk with him about what to do when others are unkind

- Help her to think about the future
  - help her set her own goals
  - talk with her about the skills and knowledge she would like to have when she is older
  - encourage her to have a dream, a vision of what she wants her life to be
  - help her find ways to reach her goals

All of the building blocks that parents put into place in earlier years become very important now.

Building blocks of earlier stages that strengthen family relationships in later stages



Children who learned early in life that their parents can be trusted are now more likely to listen to their advice.

Children whose parents nurtured their independence when they were young are now less likely to be negatively influenced by their peers.

Children who had their feelings respected when they were little are now more likely to express their fears and worries to their parents.

Children whose parents fostered their confidence early on are now more likely to believe in themselves.

Children who have received support and guidance from their parents are now more likely to go to them *before* trouble strikes.

The relationship you have built with your child will be her anchor as she makes her journey through adolescence.



14 to 18 years



This is a stage of incredible richness. Your child is now on the edge of adulthood.

Throughout childhood, he has been practicing for this stage. He has learned how to:

respect others

resolve conflict without violence

communicate his feelings constructively

stand up for himself and others

During this stage, your child will put all of these important skills to use every day.

Parents often find that they don't see their children very much at this stage. Your child now must use his skills on his own.

Parenting an adolescent can be a joyful experience.

Your child is almost an adult, able to communicate with you about almost anything. She can think about new ideas, develop her own ideals and set her own course.

There will be many challenges along the way as you negotiate your changing relationship. But, as always, those challenges provide opportunities to teach your child how to make good decisions, resolve conflict and cope with failure.

In this stage, your child experiments with all kinds of possibilities in an effort to find out who he really is. His primary task is to find his own **unique identity**.

Your child has a powerful drive to express who *he* is, not who others expect him to be. He may express himself through a sudden change in his choice of:

music

clothing

hairstyle

friends

beliefs

food preferences

out-of-school activities

academic interests

plans for the future

> Children have a right to freedom of expression and freedom of thought.
>
> *Articles 13 and 14*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

Parents sometimes become fearful at this stage. They might think that everything they have taught their children has been lost.

Their children might develop new religious or political beliefs. They might stop going to religious services or eating particular foods. They might dye their hair or dress only in black.

Just as your toddler experimented with objects, your teenager is now experimenting with his identity. He is trying on different ones to find out which one fits him best.



To do this, he first must cast off some of his old ways. He is like a caterpillar shedding his cocoon. He must do this in order to emerge as his own unique person.

Often, adolescents try on identities that are very different from those of their parents. They listen to music that their parents don't like, wear clothes that their parents don't like, and hold viewpoints that their parents disagree with.

By becoming very different from their parents, they are better able to figure out who *they* are.

But parents often worry about where their adolescents' experiments might take them. Sometimes, youth consider experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Or they might consider experimenting with sex and relationships.

Adolescents have difficulty understanding that bad things can happen to them. They don't yet fully understand that they can be hurt, that they can get pregnant, or that they can die. Sometimes they do very risky things because they believe that nothing will go wrong for them.

They try on adult roles and experiment with things that have been forbidden. They want to do the things that they have always seen adults do – including their parents.

Parents often worry that their children are being influenced by other youth who might lead them to do dangerous things – or by adults who are poor role models.



Now your child's trust becomes extremely important. She needs to know that she can turn to you *without fear* for information and advice.

She does not want to be controlled. But she does need to know that you are there, providing clear and honest information, clear expectations and structure, and a safe environment.

Now the confidence, decision-making ability, communication skills, self-respect, empathy, and conflict resolution skills that your child has learned will be put to the test. This is when he needs them most.

Sometimes, in his efforts to make independent choices, he will make mistakes. Just as he was hurt sometimes as a young child when he wanted to learn about objects, he may be hurt in his new desire to learn about life.

And just as you kept his environment safe, gave him information, and supported his growth as a young child, you can do this now as well.

Your child is testing his wings. He will fall sometimes. But he will learn to fly with your help.

The most important things that parents can do in this stage are:

strengthening the parent-child connection

monitoring the child's activities

nurturing the child's independence

Strengthening the parent-child connection

The parent-child connection began forming when the child was born. Through building trust and attachment early on, and making this connection more solid as the child grew, the parent has shaped the relationship that will launch the teenager into adulthood.

Children are more likely to go through adolescence successfully if their connections with their parents are:

- warm, kind and loving
- stable, consistent and predictable

Teenagers with strong connections to their parents are more likely to:

- have positive relationships with other adolescents and adults
- feel trusted by their parents and want to maintain that trust
- respond to others with respect and empathy
- have self-confidence and higher self-esteem
- be more cooperative with others
- have better mental health
- listen to and act on their parents' advice

Parents who treat their teenagers with respect and kindness are more likely to be treated in the same way in return.

On the other hand, when the parent-child relationship is controlling and punitive, teenagers are more likely to:

- fear and avoid their parents
- lie to escape punishment
- become depressed and anxious
- feel angry and resentful
- take their anger out on other people
- rebel against their parents

The emotional connection between a parent and an adolescent is the context for all of their interactions.

A connection that is warm, kind and loving makes it much easier to guide the youth successfully through this stage.

Monitoring the child's activities

Providing structure for teenagers is especially challenging because of their need for greater independence. But even though they need independence, they also still need their parents' guidance.

The parent's task is to provide a map to guide the youth. The parent will show the youth where the rough roads are and what the safest routes are to her destination. But the youth will decide which direction to take.

One of the best ways for a parent to provide the map and guide a youth along safe routes is through monitoring.

Monitoring means knowing what a teenager is doing, in a way that respects her need for – and right to – privacy and independence.

Parents can monitor their teens by:

- taking a genuine interest in their activities
- talking with them often
- being around them as much as possible, but not in an intrusive way
- attending events they are involved in
- knowing who their friends are
- welcoming their friends into their homes
- inviting their friends along on family outings
- knowing what they are doing in their free time
- finding activities that they both enjoy and doing those things together
- supporting their children in achieving their goals

Monitoring is most successful when parents find ways of interacting frequently with their teenagers in ways that are positive and fun.

When youth enjoy the time they spend with their parents they are more likely to:

- see their parents' monitoring as caring
- spend more time with their parents and less time unsupervised
- feel relaxed about talking with their parents
- listen to their parents' advice
- want to maintain a positive relationship with their parents

However, when a parent's interactions with a child are negative, angry and punitive, teenagers are more likely to:

- see their parents' monitoring as control and interference
- spend less time with their parents and more time unsupervised
- be afraid to talk to their parents when they have concerns
- reject their parents' advice
- rebel against their parents

It is extremely important that monitoring is done within the context of a warm, kind and loving relationship.

Nurturing the child's independence

Adolescence provides parents with a final opportunity to help their children practice their decision-making skills in a safe and supportive environment. Soon the child will be an independent adult.

Parents can make use of this opportunity to nurture their children's independence by:

- genuinely respecting their children's ideas, even when they are different from their own
- encouraging their children to decide what their values are
- showing unconditional love
- engaging in discussion with their children as equals
- showing confidence in their children's abilities to make decisions – and to cope with the outcomes of their decisions
- respecting their children's feelings
- supporting their children when they make mistakes
- encouraging their children to try again after they fail
- considering their children's point of view when they feel unfairly treated
- negotiating solutions to disagreements

These experiences lead teenagers to feel trustworthy, optimistic and capable.

Sometimes, parents discourage their teenagers' independence without realizing it. They do this by:

- criticizing their children's ideas
- making their children feel guilty when they disagree with them
- changing the subject when their children try to talk with them
- dismissing their children's feelings
- saying "I told you so" when their children make mistakes
- withdrawing love or rejecting them when they have problems
- ignoring their children's point of view
- being rigid and unwilling to negotiate solutions to disagreements

These experiences can lead teenagers to become resentful, angry and depressed. They begin to doubt their worth as people and to believe that they aren't capable of having good ideas or making good decisions. They become less independent, relying more on other people to make their decisions for them.

Independence is encouraged when parents show their children that they respect and believe in them.

Now what?

With an understanding of how children think and feel at different stages, parents are much better equipped to respond to challenging situations in a positive and constructive way.

This knowledge gives you a foundation for *problem solving.* Instead of simply reacting in the moment, you can think about what your child's behaviour means and where it is leading her.

Often parents misinterpret the reasons why children behave as they do. When we think that they are defying us or trying to make us mad, we respond with anger and punishment.

When we understand that they are doing what they need to do in order to grow into the next stage, we are more likely to respond with the information and support they need.

4





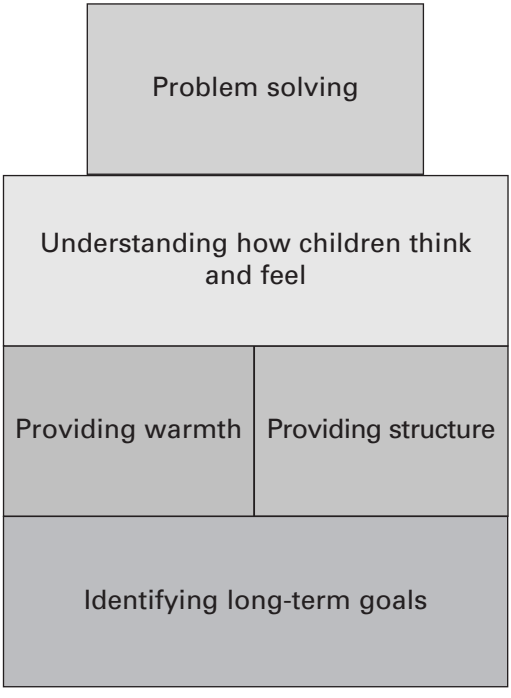
Problem solving

PROBLEM SOLVING

The fourth building block of positive discipline is problem solving.

In the previous chapter, you learned that you can reach your long-term goals by providing warmth and structure that are appropriate to your child's developmental stage.

In this chapter, you will read about some challenging situations that can arise with children of different ages. You will apply what you have learned about child development to think about what might be **causing** the child's behavior. This practice will help you to develop an effective response.



0 to 6 months

The major challenge for parents of young babies is coping with crying.

Imagine this…

Your 10-week-old baby has been crying for several minutes.

Think about what you read in Chapter 3 about this developmental stage. Now list as many reasons as you can for your baby's crying.

Did you include reasons such as:

hunger

thirst

pain

too warm

too cold

wet diaper

sickness

fear

needing to be cuddled

needing to be rocked or carried?

If so, congratulations! You have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why the baby is crying.

Now imagine this…

It is early evening. Your 10-week-old baby has been crying for 30 minutes. You have tried:

feeding her

checking to make sure that nothing is pinching or poking her

removing clothes or blankets

adding clothes or blankets

checking for a fever

soothing her with rocking, singing or carrying

rubbing her back

and she is still crying.

Think again about what you read in Chapter 3 about this developmental stage.

Now list as many reasons as you can for your baby's continued crying.

Did you include reasons such as:

pain that you can't detect

illness that you can't detect

stomach gas

normal crying patterns?

If so, congratulations! You have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your baby is still crying.

Remember that babies **never** cry to make you mad. Babies don't understand that you have feelings. They only cry because they have to.



6 to 12 months

In this stage, a major challenge for parents is getting enough sleep! Babies often cry in the night and parents can become exhausted when their sleep is repeatedly broken.

Imagine this…

Your 6-month-old baby still wakes up at 4:00 am – every night. You're tired and you want him to sleep through the night.

Think about what you read in Chapter 3 about this developmental stage. Now list as many reasons as you can for your baby's waking in the night.

Did you include reasons such as:

hunger or thirst

teething pain

too warm or too cold

wet diaper

sickness

fear that you have disappeared

brain organization

needing to be cuddled

needing to be rocked or carried?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your baby is waking up.

Remember that babies don't cry to make their parents mad or because they are spoiled. It's impossible to spoil a baby with too much care and attention.

Babies are like young plants.
They need a great deal of care and attention to grow and thrive.

Now imagine this...

Your baby has begun to make loud sounds. She will suddenly yell, making sounds that no-one can understand. Sometimes this happens in public places or in situations where people are usually quiet.

Think about what you read in Chapter 3 about this developmental stage. Now list as many reasons as you can for why your baby is making loud sounds.

Did you include reasons such as:

trying to imitate speech

enjoying her ability to make sounds

experimenting to see what happens when she makes different sounds

practicing the sounds of her language

normal babbling

the beginnings of speech?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your baby sometimes yells.

Your baby isn't yelling to embarrass you or to make you mad. She is excited about her discovery of sound. She loves to experiment and discover new sounds that she can make. Her sounds – even the loud ones – are a sign of her development.

1 to 2 years

In this stage, children are walking and they love to explore. Parents' major challenge is keeping their children safe.

Imagine this...

Your toddler is very active. He walks quickly all through the house touching things – including knives and scissors.

You worry that he will get injured if this continues.

To solve this problem, think about what you read in Chapter 3 about this developmental stage. Now list as many reasons as you can to explain why your toddler does dangerous things.

Did you include reasons such as:

needing to touch in order to learn

a strong drive to explore

lack of experience with danger

lack of knowledge of which objects are dangerous

limited language for understanding warnings and explanations

excitement about seeing, feeling and tasting new things

trust in the safety of his environment

a love of learning?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your toddler sometimes does dangerous things.

Now imagine this...

During one of her trips through the house, your toddler sees a bowl sitting on a table. It just happens to be your favourite hand-made bowl. It belonged to your mother and you treasure it.

When your toddler sees it, she reaches for it and knocks it to the floor, where it breaks.

To decide how to respond in this situation, think about what you read in Chapter 3 about this developmental stage. Now list as many reasons as you can for why your toddler knocked down your favourite bowl.

Did you include reasons such as:

lack of knowledge of which objects are breakable

inability to understand your feelings about the bowl

not understanding how her actions can cause things to happen

needing to touch in order to learn

a strong drive to explore

limited language ability for understanding warnings and explanations

excitement about seeing new things

trust in the safety of her environment

a love of learning?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your toddler sometimes breaks valuable things.

Remember that your toddler doesn't touch, taste and drop things to make you mad. She doesn't have any understanding of which objects will hurt her, which ones are valuable to you, or which ones will break. She doesn't know anything about money, so she doesn't know how much things cost.

When a toddler touches, tastes and drops things, she is learning about her world.

Now imagine this…

It's a rainy day. You need to take your child to a doctor's appointment. Your bus will be coming very soon. When you try to put your child's coat on, he refuses to wear it. He says, "No!" and runs from you. Your can feel your frustration rising.

Take a moment and think about what you read in Chapter 3 about toddler development. List as many reasons as you can for why your child is refusing to put on his coat.

Did you include reasons such as:

a powerful drive for independence

lack of understanding of time

inability to understand why it matters if he wears his coat

inability to understand why it matters if you miss the bus

inability to understand why he has to go *now*

being interrupted during an activity that is important to him

a wish to make his own choices about what to wear

lack of experience with rain and the discomfort of getting wet

increasing stress as he senses your anger rising

dislike of the sensation of wearing his coat

normal toddler negativism?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your toddler sometimes refuses to do things that are necessary, logical or important to you.

2 to 3 years

In this stage, children often develop fears. It can be stressful for parents when their children cry when they leave – or when their children become afraid of other people.

Imagine this...

Your child has begun to resist going to bed at night. She cries and cries when you leave her. You find yourself becoming angry with your child for refusing to go to bed.

Think about what you read in Chapter 3 about this developmental stage. List as many reasons as you can for why your child is refusing to go to bed.

Did you include reasons such as:

a powerful imagination that can make up scary monsters

not understanding the difference between imagination and reality

a belief that shadows are ghosts, strange sounds are intruders, the wind is a scary creature

a belief that a drawing in her room is alive

a feeling of danger when she is alone in the darkness

inability to understand that when you leave, you will come back

inability to express her fears in words

increasing stress as she senses your anger rising?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child refuses to go to bed at night.

Now imagine this...

Your child loves to play with balls. He loves to bounce them, roll them, sit on them and throw them. One day, you are in a store and he sees a big, bright red ball. He squeals with joy, grabs it off the shelf and runs away with it. You don't have enough money to buy the ball. You run after him and tell him to put the ball back on the shelf. He cries and begins to have a tantrum.

Consider your knowledge of this developmental stage. List as many reasons as you can for why your child is having a tantrum.

Did you include reasons such as:

a lack of understanding of how stores and money work

an inability to understand why the ball is not his

an inability to express his feelings in words

an inability to know how you are feeling

a strong wish for independence

a desire for control over his world?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child is having a tantrum.

3 to 5 years

In this stage, children are extremely curious. They want to know how everything works – and why. They love to experiment with objects.

Imagine this…

Your child opens a cupboard, takes everything out, stacks the objects and knocks them down. When the objects fall, some are damaged. You feel your anger rising.

Take a moment and think about your child's developmental stage. List as many reasons as you can for why your child has behaved in this way.

Did you include reasons such as:

a powerful drive to understand how things work

a love of experimenting with objects to learn about their characteristics

a natural desire to learn about the world around her

a strong need to play

a tendency to become "lost" in her play

not enough experience with objects to be able to predict which ones can be damaged

a lack of understanding of why it matters if those objects are damaged?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child behaved in a way that damaged the objects.

Now imagine this...

You are getting ready to leave for work. Your child is playing quietly with his favourite toys. When you are ready to leave, you tell your child that it is time to go, but he doesn't stop playing. You tell him again and he still doesn't stop. You start to become frustrated and angry.

Take a breath and consider your knowledge of this developmental stage. List as many reasons as you can for why your child is not responding to your instruction.

Did you include reasons such as:

a powerful biological drive to play

a deep involvement in his play activities

the importance of his play to him

a desire to complete what he is working on

an inability to understand why you need to leave right *now*

difficulty in seeing the situation from your point of view

his sense of being suddenly interrupted in the middle of an important activity?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child is not stopping his play to go with you.

Now imagine this...

You are preparing supper and you're tired. You have everything planned and all of the ingredients are ready for mixing. Your child asks you if she can help. You know that it will take longer to prepare the meal if she helps and that it will take longer to clean up afterwards.

You really want to just prepare the meal yourself so you discourage your child from helping. But she is insistent. You can feel your stress level rising.

Take a moment to consider your knowledge of this developmental stage. List as many reasons as you can for why your child is being so insistent about helping you.

Did you include reasons such as:

a powerful desire to learn new skills

a natural drive to master challenges

enjoyment of the sensations of handling ingredients

curiosity about what happens when ingredients are mixed and cooked

an inability to understand why you would not want her to help

difficulty in seeing the situation from your point of view

a desire to do the important things that adults do

a wish to be like you?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child is so insistent on helping you.

Now imagine this...

You are outside working in the yard. Your child is playing with a ball nearby. Suddenly the ball rolls onto the road, just as a car is coming. Your child runs into the road to get the ball. You are terrified that he will be hit by the car. You panic and run into the road to grab him. You know that he must learn to never do that again.

Before you react, think about your knowledge of his developmental stage. List as many reasons as you can for why your child would run into the road.

Did you include reasons such as:

a lack of experience with being hit by a huge, powerful machine

a lack of understanding of the relative size and power of a car compared to a child's body

a lack of understanding of the impact of a moving vehicle on a child's body

an inability to take the driver's point of view

a lack of understanding of what it means to be seriously injured

a lack of understanding of death and its permanence

a tendency to become lost in play, unaware of everything else around him?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child would run into the road.

5 to 9 years

Your child has entered a new world – school. Expectations of him have changed. His life has become more complicated.

Imagine this ...

You receive a report from your child's teacher telling you that he is getting into trouble. He can't sit still and takes a long time to finish his work.

Your child's success at school is very important to you. Before he comes home, you want to think about how you will respond.

Think about what you know about his developmental level and his temperament. List as many reasons as you can for why your child would be behaving this way at school.

Did you include reasons such as:

a high activity level that makes it difficult for him to sit still

a high activity level that leads to boredom with quiet activities

an irregular rhythm that makes it hard for him to follow the same routine each day

a rhythm that leads to him fall asleep late, making him tired the next day

a rhythm that leads him to be hungry at times that do not match the classroom schedule

an enthusiasm for new situations and people

difficulty adapting to all of the new expectations, rules and routines of the classroom

an awareness of, and interest in, everything going on around him

a tendency to lose interest when he is not immediately successful at an activity

an increased interest in social relationships and making friends?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level and temperament to figure out why your child would have difficulty meeting the teacher's expectations at school.

Now imagine this…

Your child and a friend are playing with toy animals. There is only one horse and both of them want it. When the other child takes it, your child hits her and takes the horse from her. Her friend cries and gets angry. Suddenly the two children who were playing happily are arguing loudly.

You want to stop the argument and teach your child not to hit. Before you respond, consider what you know about your child's developmental level and her temperament.

List as many reasons as you can for why your child would hit another child.

Did you include reasons such as:

a lack of experience in handling conflict

difficulty in seeing another child's point of view

difficulty in expressing her feelings in words

difficulty controlling her impulses

a temperament that leads her to react intensely to frustration

seeing you hit others when you are angry or frustrated?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level and temperament to figure out why your child would hit and argue with another child.

10 to 13 years

In this stage, children's social relationships become more and more important. They experience growing friendships, as well as conflict with their peers. They are learning about who they are, and who they want to become.

Imagine this…

Your child comes home from school in a very bad mood. She doesn't want to talk to you and she sounds angry. You feel that she is being rude and are offended by her behaviour. You want to teach her that she cannot speak to you that way.

Before you tell her off, think about your knowledge of her developmental stage. List as many reasons as you can for why she would act this way.

Did you include reasons such as:

the stress of dealing with complex social relationships all day

anxiety about meeting teachers' expectations for behaviour and schoolwork all day

difficulty in learning certain subjects because of learning disabilities or ineffective teaching

worry about doing poorly on tests

fear that you will be angry about her school performance

being bullied by other children

being rejected by a friend or excluded by classmates

facing a difficult decision that will test her loyalty

difficulty in expressing her fears and worries

feeling pressured by peers to do things that you disapprove of

a desire to handle her problems on her own

feeling safe in letting out her frustrations on you

not getting enough sleep to handle all of the social and academic demands she faces

inadequate nutrition for her growing body

hormonal changes that affect her mood?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child would be upset or angry.

14 to 18 years

In this stage, your child is discovering who he is and deciding who he wants to be. He is searching for his own unique identity.

Imagine this...

Your child has always dressed in a way that you approve of. One day, you see that he has a ring in his eyebrow, spiked hair and a shirt with a rude slogan on it. You are shocked and embarrassed by how he looks. You want him to change his clothes, wash his hair, and remove the eyebrow ring *immediately.*

Before you panic, consider his developmental level. List as many reasons as you can for why your child would suddenly decide to dress in a way that you disapprove of.

Did you include reasons such as:

a powerful drive to express his individuality

a need to separate himself from his parents to discover who he is

the importance to him of fitting in with his peers, rather than fitting in with his parents

a need to feel that he is independent, rather than controlled by others

a strong desire to express his own tastes, beliefs and preferences

a need to try on new identities to find the one that fits him best?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child would suddenly change his appearance.

Now imagine this …

You have told your 17-year-old child that she must be home by 10:00 pm on weekends. It is now 10:30 on Saturday night and she has not yet come home.

You are extremely worried because you know that she was going to a party in a car with an inexperienced driver. You also know that there are other young people at the party who you do not know. And you suspect that alcohol is available at the party.

You are about to explode with fear, worry and anger when she walks through the door. Before you explode, you think about her developmental level. List as many reasons as you can for why your child would come home late under these conditions.

Did you include reasons such as:

a belief that nothing will harm her

difficulty in understanding how you are feeling, knowing that she can be harmed

a need for independence and control over her decisions

a lack of confidence in her ability to say "No" to other youth

a need to demonstrate to herself and to other youth that she is grown up

understanding that she needs both independence and your help

a desire to demonstrate to you that she is an independent person

a need to improve her skills in asserting her own needs and values?

If so, you have applied your knowledge of developmental level to figure out why your child would come home late under dangerous conditions.

5





Responding with positive discipline

CHAPTER 5

RESPONDING WITH POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

You have identified your long-term parenting goals, so you know what you are trying to accomplish through positive discipline.

You understand the importance of providing warmth and structure in order to reach your goals.

You have an understanding of how children think and feel at different ages, so you know how to provide warmth and structure in appropriate ways.

You can problem-solve to figure out why your child might behave in a certain way.

Now it's time to put it all together and respond to challenging situations in a way that respects your child's developmental level and leads you toward your long-term goals.

In this chapter, we will revisit the challenging situations that you considered in Chapter 4 and explore ways of responding to them with positive discipline.

Step 1 – Remember your goals

Let's review the long-term goals that you identified in Chapter 1. Once again, imagine your child at age 20. Imagine the situations that she will confront, the choices he will have to make, the challenges she will face.

What are the characteristics that you hope to see in your child at that age? List all of the characteristics that are important to you.

The aim of positive discipline is to respond to a child's behaviour in ways that will lead to those long-term goals. To be effective in using positive discipline, your long-term goals should always be uppermost in your mind.

Certainly, some of the situations that can arise with children can easily lead you to think only about your short-term goals and forget your long-term goals. But if you use your long-term goals as your guide, you will be able to respond more effectively to short-term challenges.

Remember that your child is always developing, growing, learning and changing. He will not always cry in the night or put everything in his mouth. These are short-term challenges. But your response to them can set you on the path to achieving your long-term goals.

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

In Chapter 2, you thought about the ways that you provide warmth and structure for your child. Let's think about that again.

First, think about the ways that you give your child warmth (affection, security, respect, empathy). Write down as many ways as you can think of.

Now think about the ways that you provide structure for your child (information, guidelines, support). Write down as many as you can think of.

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

In Chapter 3, you thought about how children develop. When children are born, they have no knowledge or understanding of the world around them. They learn very gradually as they gain more experience.

Throughout their development, children are striving toward *understanding* and *independence*.

Most of the behaviours that parents find frustrating or challenging are simply children's attempts to understand things and gain more independence.

If we see these situations from the point of view of the child, we can respond with the warmth and structure that the child needs in order to gain that understanding and independence.

Step 4 – Problem solving

In Chapter 4, you thought about how you can apply knowledge of children's development to see how their behaviour usually makes sense from their point of view.

When we see a child's behaviour only from our own point of view, we tend to feel frustrated and angry when they do things that we don't want them to do. Sometimes we think that the child is purposely trying to make us angry.

But children don't want to make us angry. They feel very small and weak when adults are angry with them. They don't like that feeling any more than we do.

Usually, when children are doing things that we don't want them to do, it is because they don't have enough understanding and because they want to make their own choices. If we respect their developmental levels, we can help them to increase their understanding and help them to become more competent at making good choices

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now it's time to figure out how to respond to challenging situations.

Responding in new ways takes a lot of practice, which requires a lot of repetition. In the following exercises, you will answer the same questions many times, but for different situations.

It is important to answer every question for every situation if you want to get enough practice to actually make a change in your real-life responses. This will get repetitive. But this repetition is necessary in order to make it easier for you to respond to your child with positive discipline.

Be sure to really think about each question and how each of your responses might affect your child's behaviour.

Let's go back to the situations that you thought about in Chapter 4 to see how remembering your goals, providing warmth and structure, and considering the child's point of view can help you choose a positive, constructive response.

0 to 6 months

The situation

Your 10-week-old baby has been crying for 5 minutes.

What should you do? Let's think through each of the following responses to decide which one is best – and why.

1. Shake her to punish her for crying.

2. Ignore her and let her cry it out.

3. Try feeding her, changing her, rocking her, singing to her, cuddling her.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Shaking ☐
2. Ignoring ☐
3. Feeding, changing, rocking, singing, cuddling ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth

Let's compare each response with what we know about providing *warmth*. For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

It's important to remember that babies don't need or benefit from structure. They don't yet have the language or reasoning abilities that they need to understand expectations, rules or explanations.

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do babies of this age cry?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Now let's compare each response with what we know about the developmental level of young babies. Check off each response that would respect your baby's developmental level.

1. Shaking ☐
2. Ignoring ☐
3. Feeding, changing, rocking, singing, cuddling ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth, and your baby's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, congratulations!

You are on your way to building your positive parenting competence.

A note on postpartum depression

A new baby creates huge change in mothers' lives. Sometimes, mothers long for the time when they didn't have their baby, when they could eat, sleep and go out when they chose to. Sometimes new mothers can feel completely overwhelmed by the demands of caring for a baby.

In addition to the lifestyle changes a new baby brings, mothers are experiencing major physical changes. Their hormones are fluctuating to speed recovery from the birth and to create milk for the baby.

Even though they love their babies, mothers can become depressed following a birth due to the combination of lifestyle and physical changes they are experiencing. Such depression is not unusual. It does not mean that the woman is a bad mother or a bad person. It is simply a reaction to the huge changes she is experiencing.

If you are crying a lot, feeling "down", lacking energy or not feeling attached to your baby, you should talk to your doctor or public health nurse right away. You need support, people to talk to and time for yourself. It also can help to read about postpartum depression and to connect with other mothers.

In some cases, this kind of depression can become quite severe. If you feel detached from your baby or if you have thoughts about harming your baby, tell your doctor immediately. Treatment is available.

6 to 12 months

The situation

Your 6-month-old baby has been crying for 30 minutes.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Spank him to teach him not to cry at night.

2. Ignore him so that he doesn't become spoiled.

3. Try feeding him, changing him, rocking him, singing to him, cuddling him.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Slapping ☐
2. Ignoring ☐
3. Feeding, changing, rocking, singing, cuddling ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth

Compare each response with what we know about providing *warmth*. For each response, check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

It's important to remember that babies don't need or benefit from structure. They don't yet have the language or reasoning abilities that they need to understand expectations, rules or explanations.

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do babies of this age cry?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Now let's compare each response with what we know about the developmental level of your baby. Check off each response that would respect your baby's developmental level.

1. Slapping ☐
2. Ignoring ☐
3. Feeding, changing, rocking, singing, cuddling ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth, and your baby's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, congratulations!

> Children have a right to protection from all forms of physical violence.
>
> *Article 19*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

A note on babies' crying

Parents can get very tired caring for babies. Sometimes they might feel like shaking or hitting the baby when he doesn't stop crying.

Shaking or hitting your baby will not stop the crying, but it might:

make him afraid of you

injure him with bruises or even broken bones

damage his brain

kill him

Babies' bodies and brains are very fragile.

Never shake or hit a baby.

If your baby can't stop crying, he needs to know that you are there. He needs to be held and comforted. You can't spoil a baby.

But you won't always be able to calm your baby.

If you find that you are very tired or stressed, be sure to ask for help from your family, friends, doctor, or other resources in your community.

The situation

Your baby has begun to make loud sounds. She will suddenly yell, making sounds that no-one can understand. You are in a café having lunch and you are just about to feed her when she lets out a loud yell.

What should you do? Think through each of the following responses to decide which one is best – and why.

1. Tell her that she can't have any food because she yelled.

2. Slap her to teach her not to yell.

3. Speak softly to her to calm her and distract her with a toy.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Telling her that she can't have any food ☐
2. Slapping her ☐
3. Speaking softly and distracting her ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth*. For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

It's important to remember that babies don't need or benefit from structure. They don't yet have the language or reasoning abilities that they need to understand expectations, rules or explanations.

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do babies of this age yell?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Now let's compare each response with what we know about the developmental level of your baby. Check off each response that would respect your baby's developmental level.

1. Telling her that she can't have any food ☐
2. Slapping her ☐
3. Speaking softly and distracting her ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth, and your baby's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

> Children have a right
> to the highest attainable standard of health
> and to adequate nutritious food.
>
> *Article 24*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

A note on parents' moods

Your mood is a major factor in both your child's behaviour and your response to it. If you are feeling tired, stressed, worried or angry about something, you are more likely to get angry with your child. Sometimes parents find themselves taking out their frustrations on their children.

When parents' moods are unpredictable, children feel insecure and anxious.

When parents ignore a behaviour one day, but get angry for the same behaviour another day, children feel confused.

When parents get angry at children because they are worried about other things, children feel resentful for being treated unfairly.

When parents are often angry or in bad moods, children feel threatened and afraid.

Parents' moods affect children's behaviour. It is important for parents to be aware of their own moods. They need to avoid taking their own moods out on their children.

It is important for parents to get enough sleep and to eat lots of nutritious food so that they have the energy to cope with all of life's stresses.

If you find that you are frequently angry, sad, worried or stressed, you should talk to your doctor, a public health nurse, a counselor or a supportive friend or family member. It is important to solve your problems in a constructive way that does not harm your children.

1 to 2 years

The situation

Your toddler is very active. He walks quickly all through the house. Wherever he goes, he touches things. He has just reached for a pair of scissors that he saw on a table.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Slap his hands to teach him not to touch dangerous things.

2. Scold him loudly, to scare him away from the scissors.

3. Take the scissors from him gently, tell him calmly what they are called, and show him how they cut paper. Explain that they can hurt him, so you will put them away in a safe place. Then distract his attention with a toy.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Slapping his hands ☐
2. Scolding him loudly ☐
3. Gently naming the object, calmly showing him what it is for, explaining that it can hurt him, putting it in a safe place, distracting his attention ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth*. For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure*. For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

At this age, children begin to learn from structure. They can understand more words than they can say, so they can begin to learn through explanations. Remember that it takes time for them to learn all that they need to know. And they still need to learn mainly by touching things.

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do toddlers touch dangerous objects?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of toddlers. Check off each response that would respect your toddler's developmental level.

1. Slapping his hands ☐
2. Scolding him loudly ☐
3. Gently naming the object, calmly showing him what it is for, explaining that it can hurt him, putting it in a safe place, distracting his attention ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your toddler's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on child-proofing

Young children need to explore. This is how they learn. It is absolutely necessary for their brain development.

Parents need to keep their children safe.

The best solution for this situation is to "child-proof" your home.
Crawl through your house and see it from your child's point of view.

Where are the dangers – the sharp objects, poisons, breakables? Put them all up high or in locked cupboards.

Cover electrical outlets.

Lock up knives and tools.

Lock up medicines.

Turn pot handles toward the centre of the stove.

Make sure that heavy objects can't be pulled down.

Be sure that your home is safe for exploration.

The situation

During one of her trips through the house, your toddler sees a bowl sitting on a table. It just happens to be your favourite hand-made bowl. Your toddler sees it, reaches for it and knocks it to the floor, where it breaks.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Shout angrily to show her how her actions have hurt you and send her to her room.

2. Slap her on the bottom to teach her not to touch your things.

3. Let her see your sad face and explain that you are very sad that the bowl broke because it was very special to you. Have her help you to clean it up. Have her help you try to fix it. Explain that when some things are broken, they can never be fixed. Put all of your treasures in a safe place out of her reach. Sit with her and show her how to touch objects gently. Let her practice on unbreakable objects.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Shouting and sending her to her room ☐
2. Spanking her ☐
3. Describing your feelings, teaching her how to clean up, showing her how to fix it, explaining what "break" means, putting your treasures in a safe place, teaching her how to handle objects gently ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth*. For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure*. For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

At this age, children begin to learn from structure. They can understand more words than they can say, so they can begin to learn through explanations. Remember that it takes time for them to learn all that they need to know. And they still need to learn mainly by touching things.

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do toddlers touch precious objects?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of toddlers. Check off each response that would respect your toddler's developmental level.

1. Shouting and sending her to her room ☐
2. Slapping her ☐
3. Describing your feelings, teaching her how to clean up, showing her how to fix it, explaining what "break" means, putting your treasures in a safe place, teaching her how to handle objects gently ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your toddler's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

> Children have a right to protection
> from all forms of physical and mental violence.
>
> *Article 19*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

A note on parental anger

There are many times during life with a toddler that you will feel frustrated or fearful. Sometimes these feelings will lead to anger.

We feel angry when we think that our children are intentionally being "bad". If we think that they can control their behaviour and that they are trying to make us mad, we are likely to get mad.

But toddlers don't understand how we feel. They don't know what will make us mad and what won't make us mad. They are trying to figure all of this out. They are frightened by our anger. It's not a response that they are hoping for.

During the toddler years, patience is extremely important. They will learn from us how to act when they are angry.

It takes self-discipline on the part of the parent to control anger and respond with positive discipline. Sometimes it can help to take deep breaths, go for a walk, or leave the room until you cool down.

Children's learning is gradual. It will take time for them to fully understand what we are trying to teach them. But their understanding is the key to our long-term goals.

Tips for controlling your anger:

1. Count to 10 before you say or do anything. If you still feel angry, walk away and give yourself time to calm down.

2. Drop your shoulders, breathe deeply and repeat a calming phrase to yourself, like "calm down" or "take it easy".

3. Put your hands behind your back and tell yourself to wait. Don't say anything until you have calmed down.

4. Go for a walk and think about the situation. Think about why your child might behave as he did. See it from his point of view. Plan a response that respects his point of view and also explains why you got angry.

5. Go someplace quiet and work through the steps of positive discipline. Return to you child when you have planned a response that meets your long-term goals, provides warmth and structure, and recognizes how your child thinks and feels.

6. Remember that the situation is an opportunity to teach your child how to resolve conflict through communication and problem-solving.

Anger is a signal that you and your child do not understand each other's points of view. It tells you that your communication needs to be restored.

Don't let anger lead you to say mean things, put your child down, yell or hit. Don't try to get even or hold a grudge.

Remember that our most important learning happens in the most difficult situations. Seize every opportunity to be the person you want your child to become.

The situation

It's a rainy day. You need to take your child to a doctor's appointment. Your bus will be coming very soon. When you try to put your child's coat on, he refuses to wear it. He says, "No!" and runs from you.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Grab him and slap him to show him that he can't defy your authority.

2. Take away his favourite toy to punish him.

3. Explain that it is raining outside. Take him to the door and show him the rain. Put your hand out and show him what "wet" means. Tell him that he will be able to carry an umbrella to help him stay dry.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Grabbing him and slapping him ☐
2. Taking away his favourite toy ☐
3. Explaining what rain is, offering to let him carry an umbrella to help him stay dry ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure*. For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do toddlers sometimes refuse to do what we want them to do?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of toddlers. Check off each response that would respect your toddler's developmental level.

1. Grabbing him and slapping him ☐
2. Taking away his favourite toy ☐
3. Explaining what rain is, offering to let him carry an umbrella to help him stay dry. ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your toddler's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on toddlers' negativism

It is completely normal for toddlers to refuse to do things that you want them to do. They are not doing this to make you angry or to defy you. They are doing this because they have discovered that they are individuals and they are experimenting with their ability to make decisions.

Sometimes you will explain things to them, but they still won't do what you ask them to do. This is because they want to make their own choices.

It can be helpful at this stage to offer children choices so that they can exercise their decision-making skills. "Do you want to wear your green coat or your yellow coat?" "Would you rather walk or be carried?" As long as the child chooses one of them, your short-term goal is met.

Just be sure that the choices you offer are choices that you can accept. If you have to go somewhere, don't say, "Do you want to go or do you want to stay home?" If the child chooses staying home, but you have to go, your child will only learn that his choices don't matter and that you don't mean it when you offer them.

Also, a threat is not a choice. "Either put on your coat or I'll slap you/leave you home by yourself/never take you with me again." This is not a choice, but a threat. Threats only lead to fear in your child. They also create a trap for the parent. If your child refuses to put on his coat, you will feel that you must follow through on your threat, which will only make the situation worse.

2 to 3 years

The situation

Your child has begun to resist going to bed at night. She cries and cries when you leave her. Bedtime is becoming a time of conflict between you and your child. You find yourself becoming angry with your child for refusing to go to bed.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Put her in her room, close the door and walk away.

2. Tell her she is a bad girl and if she doesn't go to sleep the monsters will get her.

3. Before bed, give her a warm bath to relax her. Tell her that it is bedtime and that she needs sleep to have energy for tomorrow's activities. Tell her that you will stay with her until she falls asleep. Sit on her bed and read to her until she gets sleepy. Sing to her until she falls asleep. Leave a dim light on.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Leaving her alone in her room ☐
2. Telling her she is bad and monsters will get her ☐
3. Giving her a bath, explaining bedtime, reading and singing to her, leaving a light on ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do many young children dislike going to bed?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Leaving her alone in her room ☐
2. Telling her she is bad and monsters will get her ☐
3. Giving her a bath, explaining bedtime, reading and singing to her, leaving a light on ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on children's fears

It's very difficult to convince young children that the things they fear are not real. They don't understand the difference between reality and imagination yet. Sometimes, the best thing to do is to check under your child's bed and in the closet to show her there is nothing there. Then provide reassurance and company so that she can relax and fall asleep knowing that she is safe.

Remember that most of us dislike being alone in the dark. Fear is a natural human response to feeling vulnerable. Sometimes adults' imaginations can run wild when they are alone in the dark. If we are aware of our own fears, we can understand our children's fears more easily.

In some cultures, children sleep in the same room as their parents. This closeness can help children feel safe and protected at night.

In other cultures, parents and children sleep in separate rooms. In these cultures, parents must make an extra effort to ensure that their children feel safe and protected at night.

For young babies under 6 months of age, room-sharing (sleeping in the same room as the parent, but on a separate, safe surface) has been shown to keep babies safer during sleep. Room-sharing allows the benefits of close sleeping, such as responding quickly to baby's needs, without the risks of bed-sharing such as falls, entrapment and overlying which can happen when sharing a bed with a baby this age.

The situation

Your child loves to play with balls. He loves to bounce them, roll them, sit on them and throw them. One day, you are in a store and he sees a big, bright red ball. He squeals with joy, grabs it off the shelf and runs away with it. You don't have enough money to buy the ball. You run after him and tell him to put the ball back on the shelf. He cries and begins to have a tantrum.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Slap him to teach him how to behave.

2. Tell him that if he acts this way no-one will like him.

3. Explain that you understand that he loves balls and this is a very nice one. Tell him that you don't have money to buy it. Tell him that you understand that he is sad and frustrated. Explain that you both have to go outside until he feels better. Take him outside and stay near him until he settles down. Talk to him about feeling sad and frustrated. Explain that we can't buy things if we don't have enough money. Distract him and continue with your original plans.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Slapping him ☐
2. Telling him no-one will like him ☐
3. Understanding his feelings, explaining why he can't have the ball, labeling his feelings, removing him from the situation, staying close, distracting him, continuing on ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do young children have tantrums?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Slapping him ☐
2. Telling him no-one will like him ☐
3. Understanding his feelings, explaining why he can't have the ball, labeling his feelings, removing him from the situation, staying close, distracting him, continuing on ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on tantrums

Parents sometimes get angry when their children have tantrums, either because they are embarrassed or because they think they must control their children's behaviour.

Remember that your relationship with your child is much more important than what other people think. When your child has a tantrum in a public place, focus your thoughts on your long-term goals and on providing warmth and structure to your child. Try hard not to worry about what other people think.

Also, remember that trying to control a tantrum is like trying to control a storm. You can't. Children have tantrums because they don't understand why we are saying "no" and because they don't know how to handle frustration. Tantrums are your child's way of telling you that he is very, very frustrated. If you yell at him or hit him at such a time, he will only feel more frustrated. He will also feel frightened and misunderstood.

The best thing to do is to wait it out. Stay close so that your child feels safe while the storm overtakes him. Sometimes, holding your child gently can help to calm him.

When the tantrum is over, sit with your child and talk about what happened. Use the opportunity to teach him what feelings are, how strong they can be, and what their names are. You can also explain why you said "no" and that you understand why he was frustrated. Tell him what you do to calm yourself when you're very frustrated. And be sure to tell him that you love him, whether he's happy, sad or mad. Then move on.

3 to 5 years

The situation

Your child opens a kitchen cupboard and takes everything out of it. She stacks the objects and knocks them down. When the objects fall, some of them are damaged.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Take away her toys to punish her.

2. Slap her for getting into mischief.

3. Have her help you put the objects back. Try to fix the broken ones together. Explain to her that when some things fall, they can be damaged and that you don't want that to happen. Show her the things that she can play with that won't get damaged. Re-arrange your kitchen so that breakables are out of reach. Put unbreakable, safe objects in the low cupboards.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Taking away her toys ☐
2. Slapping her ☐
3. Having her help you fix things, explaining about damage, giving her an alternative, putting breakables away, making unbreakables easy to reach ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do young children like to play with your things?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Taking away her toys ☐
2. Slapping her ☐
3. Having her help you fix things, explaining about damage, giving an alternative, putting breakables away, making unbreakables easy to reach ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on spanking/slapping/smacking/hitting

Sometimes parents think that slapping a child's hand, spanking her bottom or hitting her with a switch will teach her an important lesson. Actually, what physical punishment teaches children is that:

we communicate important things through hitting

hitting is an acceptable response to anger

the people who they depend on to protect them will hurt them

they should fear their parents, rather than trusting them to help and to teach

their home is an unsafe place for learning and exploration

We need to think about what we want to teach our children in the long term. If we want to teach them to be non-violent, we must show them how to be non-violent. If we want to teach them how to stay safe, we need to explain to them and show them how to do this.

Think about the effect that being hit has on adults. When we are hit, we feel humiliated. We don't feel motivated to please the person who has hit us; we feel resentment and fear. We might even feel like getting even.

Hitting children harms our relationships with them. It doesn't give them the information they need to make decisions. And it doesn't increase their respect for us.

The situation

You are getting ready to leave for work. Your child is playing quietly with his favourite toys. When you are ready to leave, you tell your child that it is time to go, but he doesn't stop playing. You tell him again and he still doesn't stop.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Tell him that if he doesn't come right away, you will leave without him.

2. Grab him and pull him out the door.

3. Tell him where you are going and why you need to go. Set a timer to go off in 5 minutes. Tell him that you must leave when the timer sounds, so he should finish what he is doing. Reassure him that he will be able to go back to his play when you get home. Let him know when there are 2 minutes left and challenge him to a race to getting your coats and shoes on.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Threatening to leave without him ☐
2. Pulling him out the door ☐
3. Telling him where and why you are going, setting a timer, giving him time to prepare for the transition, letting him know that you respect what he is doing, making the departure fun ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do young children resist leaving their play activities?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Threatening to leave without him ☐
2. Pulling him out the door ☐
3. Telling him where and why you are going, setting a timer, giving him time to prepare for the transition, letting him know that you respect what he is doing, making the departure fun ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on children and transitions

It's very common for young children to have difficulty shifting from one activity to another. Transitions are stressful for them. They don't know if they will ever be able to return to what they are doing and they don't know what lies ahead. With greater experience, they get much better at making transitions.

You can make transitions easier by preparing your child for them. Let her know ahead of time what the plan is. Remind her 10 minutes before the transition that you will be leaving soon and where you are going. Reassure her that you will come back (if that is the case). Remind her again 5 minutes later that you are leaving and where you are going. Help her to start getting ready to go.

It will be easier for you and your child if you make the transition into a game, such as a race, putting your hats on backwards, or otherwise distracting your child from what she is leaving. If the transition is fun, it will be much easier for her to make the shift.

The situation

You are preparing supper and you're tired. You have everything planned and all of the ingredients are ready for mixing. Your child asks you if she can help. You really want to just prepare the meal yourself so you discourage your child from helping. But she is insistent.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Tell her that she's not old enough to help and that she'll just make a mess for you to clean up.

2. Tell her that she's interrupting you and being rude and disobedient.

3. Explain what you are making and the names of the ingredients. Choose a task that her small hands can handle and show her how to do it. Then ask her to do it, offering help if needed. Thank her for her help. Repeat this if she wants to help some more.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Telling her she's not old enough to help ☐
2. Telling her she's being rude ☐
3. Explaining what you're doing, showing her how, setting her up for success, supporting and recognizing her efforts ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do young children want to help?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Telling her she's not old enough to help ☐
2. Telling her she's being rude ☐
3. Explaining what you're doing, showing her how, setting her up for success, supporting and recognizing her efforts ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on criticism

Sometimes parents try to correct their children by telling them that they are bad, rude, clumsy, immature, or incompetent. When children hear such criticism, they feel rejected and they feel like failures.

If they see themselves as bad, they are more likely to do things that we think are bad.

If they see themselves as incompetent, they are less likely to try to master new skills.

Children are learners. They depend on us to build their knowledge and their skills. They need our encouragement and support.

Children with high self-esteem are more successful because they are willing to try. They are happier because they feel good about their abilities to cope with failure. They have better relationships with their parents because they know their parents believe in them.

Parents can do a lot to build their children's self-esteem. They can:

- recognize their children's efforts, even if they're not perfect
- appreciate their children's desire to help
- support their children when they fail and encourage them to keep trying
- tell their children all the things that make them special

We all thrive on encouragement. Replacing criticism with encouragement can have a powerful effect on your child.

The situation

You are outside working in the yard. Your child is playing with a ball nearby. Suddenly the ball rolls onto the road, just as a car is coming. Your child runs into the road to get the ball.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Slap him hard so that he learns never to do that again.

2. Tell him that he won't be able to play outside for 2 weeks.

3. Tell him, and let him see, how scared you are. Explain that cars can really hurt him. Let him touch a car to feel how hard it is. Sit with him and watch how fast they move. Let him sit on the front seat of a car to see how hard it is for drivers to see children. Practice stopping, looking and listening before stepping onto the street.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Slapping him ☐
2. Telling him he can't play outside for 2 weeks ☐
3. Showing him your fear, explaining why you were afraid, teaching him why cars are dangerous, practicing road safety ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do young children run into the road?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Slapping him ☐
2. Telling him he can't play outside for 2 weeks ☐
3. Showing him your fear, explaining why you were afraid, teaching him why cars are dangerous, practicing road safety ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

5 to 9 years

The situation

Your child has been going to school for 4 months. You receive a report from his teacher telling you that he is getting into trouble because he can't sit still, talks to other children a lot, and takes a long time to finish his work.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Tell the teacher to slap your child when he misbehaves.

2. Explain to your child why he is getting in trouble with the teacher. Tell him that you love him and want to help him to pay attention better. Ask him about his experiences at school and hear his point of view. Find out if something is happening at school that is bothering or distracting him.

3. Explain to your child why it is important that he pays attention at school. Let him know that you understand that it is hard for him to do this sometimes. Ask him if he has ideas for solutions. Meet with the teacher to develop a plan that will improve the fit between your child's temperament and the classroom environment.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Telling his teacher to slap him ☐
2. Explaining and listening to his point of view ☐
3. Explaining, understanding, hearing his ideas, meeting with his teacher to discuss solutions ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do young children have difficulty paying attention at school?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Telling his teacher to slap him ☐
2. Explaining and listening to his point of view ☐
3. Explaining, understanding, hearing his ideas, meeting with his teacher to discuss solutions ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #2 and #3 well done!

> Children have a right to school discipline that respects their human dignity.
>
> *Article 28*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

The situation

Your child and a friend are playing with toy animals. There is only one horse and both of them want it. When the other child takes it, your child hits her and takes the horse from her.

What should you do? Let's think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Put all the toys away, tell the children that if they can't play nicely they can't play at all. Send the other child home.

2. Tell your child that hitting is not allowed in your family. Explain that hitting hurts other people. Show her how to ask politely for what she wants. Show her how to find an alternative if her request is turned down. Have her practice asking politely for the horse. Recognize her effort to learn this social skill.

3. Slap your child to show her how it feels to be hit.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Putting the toys away, sending the other child home ☐
2. Stating the rule, modeling the social skill, having her practice ☐
3. Slapping her ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support her learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage her independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do young children sometimes hit other children?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about the developmental level of young children. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Putting the toys away, sending the other child home ☐
2. Stating the rule, modeling the social skill, having her practice ☐
3. Spanking her ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #2, well done!

10 to 13 years

The situation

Your child comes home from school in a very bad mood. She doesn't want to talk to you and she has an angry tone in her voice.

What should you do? Think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Send her to her room without supper.

2. Slap her for being rude.

3. Tell her that you can see that something has upset her. Let her know that you will listen and try to help when she is ready to talk. If she talks to you, listen carefully and help her to find a solution to the problem. When she is feeling better, explain to her that it's important for people to treat each other with respect, even when they are upset. Model this for her.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Sending her to her room without supper ☐
2. Slapping her face ☐
3. Recognizing and respecting her feelings, listening, supporting her, explaining the importance of respectful communication ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support her learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage her independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do pre-teen children get moody?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Sending her to her room without supper ☐
2. Slapping her face ☐
3. Recognizing and respecting her feelings, listening, supporting her, explaining the importance of respectful communication ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

A note on children's anger

One of the major tasks of childhood is learning how to manage and express emotions. This is a difficult task because emotions can sometimes keep us from thinking clearly. Emotions can lead us to act impulsively, saying things we wouldn't otherwise say or doing things we wouldn't otherwise do.

For a child to understand emotions and to be able to manage them and express them is a positive way is a huge task.

Sometimes children's emotions overwhelm them. Just as they had tantrums in the early years, they might have angry outbursts in the middle years. Or they might simply be silent, unable, or afraid to express how they feel.

At these times, they need to know that they are safe and loved. It's not really possible to have a calm conversation with your child when he is very angry. The best thing to do is to simply stay nearby, letting your child know through your actions that you are there if she needs you.

Once the storm has passed, you can talk about the issue and, by staying calm, you can show your child how to express feelings in a positive way. You also can show her ways of finding solutions to the problem that led to the outburst.

Remember that emotional storms do pass. And each one provides an opportunity to be a role model for your child.

The situation

Your child is spending a lot of time playing video games. Every day, you have to fight with him to get him to turn off the games and get his homework done. You worry that he is getting "hooked" on games and that he will lose interest in everything else.

What should you do? Think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Unplug the video equipment and tell him that he won't be able to play ever again unless he gets top marks in school.

2. Show him how concerned you are by getting angry with him and threatening to throw away his books if he isn't interested in them any more.

3. Choose a quiet time to talk with him. Recognize that he enjoys the games. Explain why you are concerned about how much time he spends on them. Invite him to work out some rules with you regarding what games he can play and how much time he can spend playing each day. Reach an agreement that you both think is fair and post it beside the video equipment. Recognize his efforts to stick to the rules.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Unplugging the equipment and requiring him to get top marks in order to play ☐
2. Getting angry and threatening him ☐
3. Recognizing his interest, explaining your concerns, developing rules together, recognizing his efforts ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support his learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage his independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do pre-teen children like to play video games?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Unplugging the equipment and requiring him to get top marks in order to play ☐
2. Getting angry and threatening him ☐
3. Recognizing his interest, explaining your concerns, developing rules together, recognizing his efforts ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

The situation

Your child has become friends with a child who knows many "bad words". You have heard this child using language that you don't want your child to use. One day, you hear your child using this language. You feel very upset. You're afraid that your child is going to ignore all you have tried to teach him.

What should you do? Think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Take this opportunity to talk with him calmly about peer pressure, the effects of his behaviour on other people and the importance of making his own decisions.

2. Wash his mouth out with soap to teach him to never use those words again and to show respect for you.

3. Make him stay in the house every day after school for a month and tell him that he can never play with that friend again.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Talking with him about peer pressure and decision-making ☐
2. Washing his mouth out with soap ☐
3. Making him stay in the house and forbidding him to see his friend ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support his learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage his independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do pre-teen children swear?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Talking with him about peer pressure and decision-making ☐
2. Washing his mouth out with soap ☐
3. Making him stay in the house and forbidding him to see his friend ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #1, well done!

14 to 18 years

The situation

Your child has always dressed and cut his hair in a way that you approve of. He has fit in well with his peers and with his community. One day, you see that he has a ring in his eyebrow, spiked hair and a shirt with a rude slogan on it.

What should you do? Think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Explain why you are upset. Decide which of his changes you can live with. Explain why you can't live with the others. Ask him for his point of view. Work out an agreement with him that allows some changes but respects your feelings.

2. Tell him he looks like a freak and that he will not be allowed out of the house for 2 weeks.

3. Sit him down, cut his hair off and flush his eyebrow ring down the toilet.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Explaining your feelings and negotiating a compromise ☐
2. Grounding him ☐
3. Cutting his hair and flushing his eyebrow ring ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support his learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage his independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do adolescents change their appearance?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Explaining your feelings and negotiating a compromise ☐
2. Grounding him ☐
3. Cutting his hair and flushing his eyebrow ring ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #1, well done!

> Children have a right to protection
> from degrading treatment or punishment.
>
> *Article 37*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

The situation

You have a rule that your 14-year-old son is to come right home every day after school. Even though you're not home at that time, he has always followed this rule. But one day, he is invited to a friend's house and he accepts. You just happen to come home early that day and discover that he isn't there. You are frantic with worry. He comes home soon after.

What should you do? Think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Tell him that you can no longer trust him. Make a new rule that he must phone you every day when he gets home. Tell him that he won't be going out on weekends for the next month.

2. Ask him to explain why he broke the rule. Listen to his reasons. Consider whether your rule is fair for a child his age. Involve him in setting a new rule that is fair and that keeps him safe.

3. Cane him for showing disrespect for your rules.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Telling him you can't trust him, making a tougher rule and grounding him ☐
2. Listening to his point of view, re-assessing the rule and working with him to develop a rule that works for both of you ☐
3. Caning him ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect his developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to his needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with his feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support his learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage his independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do adolescents break rules?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Telling him you can't trust him, making a tougher rule and grounding him ☐
2. Listening to his point of view, re-assessing the rule and working with him to develop a rule that works for both of you ☐
3. Caning him ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #2, well done!

The situation

Your 15-year-old daughter's boyfriend has just gotten his driver's license. You have told your daughter that she is not allowed to drive with her boyfriend. One day, he invites her to drive with him to the beach. She tells you that she is going to a friend's house to work on a school project. Instead, she gets in the car and spends the afternoon at the beach. You find out that she lied to you.

What should you do? Think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Tell her that you feel betrayed and that you will not be able to trust her again. Tell her that she must stop seeing her boyfriend because he is a bad influence on her.

2. Tell her that lying to a parent is the worst thing a child can do and that your relationship will never be the same. Send her to her room. Ground her for 2 months.

3. Tell her that her safety is the most important thing in the world to you. Explain that your rules are driven by your love for her and concern for her safety. Tell her that you cannot compromise when it comes to her safety. Ask her why she broke the rule and why she lied to you. Listen to her explanation and understand her motivation. Talk with her to find out ways of meeting her needs for independence while ensuring her safety. Talk to her boyfriend and explain your rule and your reasons. Get his agreement that he will not tempt your daughter to drive with him.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Telling her you can't trust her, making her break up with her boyfriend ☐
2. Telling her she did the worst thing possible, sending her to her room and grounding her ☐
3. Explaining the reason for your rule, listening to her reasons for breaking the rule and lying, standing firm on your rule, finding ways of giving her independence in safe ways, talking with her boyfriend ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support her learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage her independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do adolescents break rules and sometimes lie?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Telling her you can't trust her, making her break up with her boyfriend ☐
2. Telling her she did the worst thing possible, sending her to her room and grounding her ☐
3. Explaining the reason for your rule, listening to her reasons for breaking the rule and lying, standing firm on your rule, finding ways of giving her independence in safe ways, talking with her boyfriend ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

The situation

You have told your 17-year-old child that she must be home by 10:00 pm on weekends. It is now 10:30 on Saturday and she has not yet come home.

You are extremely worried because you know that she was going to a party in a car with an inexperienced driver. You also know that there are other youth at the party who you do not know. And you suspect that alcohol is available at the party.

What should you do when she walks through the door? Think about each of the following responses and decide which one is best – and why.

1. Ground her for a month and tell her that the next time it happens you will lock her out of the house.

2. Slap her face to show her that you will not tolerate her disrespectful behaviour.

3. Tell her how worried you were. Explain how it feels to think that someone you love is in danger. Explain the risks that she was taking. Ask her what she will do to ensure her safety and get home on time. Develop a set of rules that you can agree on. Tell her that you will only consider extending her curfew if she follows those rules for two months.

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. Grounding her and threatening to lock her out ☐
2. Slapping her ☐
3. Explaining the effect of her behaviour on you and the risks for her, involving her in setting the rules, offering more freedom if she follows them responsibly ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect her developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to her needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with her feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support her learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage her independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do adolescents do risky things and break rules?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. Grounding her and threatening to lock her out ☐
2. Slapping her ☐
3. Explaining the effect of her behaviour on you and the risks for her, involving her in setting the rules, offering more freedom if she follows them responsibly ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

If you chose #3, well done!

> Children have a right to express their views on matters affecting them.
>
> *Article 12*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

What about other situations?

This book has provided a number of examples of challenging parenting situations. Of course, there are many other situations that can lead to conflict in families.

The following pages can be used to help you through the problem-solving process in situations that are particularly challenging for you.

Just write a brief description of each situation and then work your way through the process. By the end, you will have some new ways of thinking about how to respond in those situations.

The situation

What should you do when .....?
Write down 3 possible responses.

1. .....

2. .....

3. .....

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

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Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. ..... ☐

2. ..... ☐

3. ..... ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect your child's developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to your child's needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with your child's feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do children of this age behave in this way?

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Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. ..... ☐

2. ..... ☐

3. ..... ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

The situation

What should you do when ..... ?
Write down 3 possible responses.

1. .....

2. .....

3. .....

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

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Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. ..... ☐

2. ..... ☐

3. ..... ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect your child's developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to your child's needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with your child's feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do children of this age behave in this way?

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Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. ..... ☐

2. ..... ☐

3. ..... ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

The situation

What should you do when _____?
Write down 3 possible responses.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Step 1 – Remember your long-term goals

What are some of your *long-term goals* that are relevant to this situation?

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Check off each response that would lead you toward your long-term goal.

1. ..... ☐

2. ..... ☐

3. ..... ☐

Step 2 – Focus on warmth and structure

Compare each response with what you know about providing *warmth.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide emotional security	☐	☐	☐
show unconditional love	☐	☐	☐
show affection	☐	☐	☐
respect your child's developmental level	☐	☐	☐
show sensitivity to your child's needs	☐	☐	☐
show empathy with your child's feelings	☐	☐	☐

Now compare each response with what you know about providing *structure.* For each response check off whether it would

	1	2	3
provide clear guidelines for behaviour	☐	☐	☐
give clear information about your expectations	☐	☐	☐
provide a clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
support your child's learning	☐	☐	☐
encourage your child's independent thinking	☐	☐	☐
teach conflict resolution skills	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 – Consider how your child thinks and feels

Why do children of this age behave in this way?

Step 4 – Problem solving

Compare each response with what you know about developmental level. Check off each response that would respect your child's developmental level.

1. ☐

2. ☐

3. ☐

Step 5 – Responding with positive discipline

Now that you have thought about your long-term goal, ways of providing warmth and structure, and your child's developmental level, which response would you choose?

CONCLUSION

This book has provided the principles of positive discipline – focusing on long-term goals, providing warmth and structure, understanding how your child thinks and feels, and problem solving.

You have practiced applying these principles to common challenges that arise with children of various ages. This practice will help you to find solutions to a wide range of challenging situations.

Of course, it is more difficult to think clearly when you are emotional. When you feel your anger rising, take a deep breath, close your eyes and think about:

1. your long-term goal
2. the importance of warmth and structure
3. your child's developmental level

Then take a moment to plan a response that will lead you toward your goal and respect your child's needs.

This way, you will teach your child how to deal with frustration, conflict and anger. You will give your child the skills needed to live without violence. You will build your child's self-respect. And you will earn your child's respect.

No parent is perfect. We all make mistakes. But we need to learn from those mistakes and do better next time.

Enjoy your positive parenting journey.

> In all actions concerning children,
> the best interests of the child
> shall be a primary consideration.
>
> *Article 3*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joan E. Durrant, Ph.D. is a Child-Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Community Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. She has worked with many children and their families, helping them to find positive solutions to their conflicts.

She conducts research on the factors that lead parents to strike their children, as well as on the impact of laws that prohibit physical punishment. Her research has been published in journals including *Child Abuse and Neglect, Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law, International Review of Victimology, International Journal of Children's Rights,* and *Youth and Society,* as well as in several edited books.

Dr. Durrant was the principal researcher and co-author of the Canadian *Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth*; a member of the Research Advisory Committee of the *United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children;* and a co-editor of *Eliminating Corporal Punishment: The Way Forward to Constructive Discipline* (UNESCO).

Active in public education, Dr. Durrant has written parenting materials for the Canadian government, and has given speeches and workshops to parents and professionals in many countries on the topics of physical punishment and positive parenting.

ABOUT FAMILIES CANADA

Families Canada (formerly the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs) is the distributor of hardcopies of this book. For over 40 years, Families Canada has been providing national leadership in program development and skill-enhancing resources to a vibrant network of community-based organizations located across Canada. This leadership has created a cohesive family support sector with common identity, principles, tools and training. Families Canada's resources reach over 1600 family resource programs and related services located in all provinces and territories. They in turn connect with hundreds of thousands of families through the various services they offer.

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FAMILIES CANADA






Parents, communities and governements around the world are recognizing children's rights to protection from physical punishment and to discipline that respects their dignity. Increasingly, parents are being advised to use "positive discipline". But parents often ask, "What is positive discipline and how do I do it?"

This book provides concrete answers to those questions. It sets out 4 clear principles of positive discipline. Parents will learn how to: 1) set goals, 2) create a positive home climate, 3) understand how children think and feel, and 4) problem solve in challenging situations. They will practise their skills in hands-on exercises. And they will learn how to apply the same principles across a wide range of situations.

This book is aimed at parents of children of all ages, from infancy to adolescence. It also can be used by family support workers, parent educators, and other professionals who work with parents and children.

> Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.
>
> *Preamble*
> *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*