

**Don't expect more from children than they are capable of doing.** Although a five year old can be expected to sit still in a doctor's waiting room, you can't expect a two year old to do the same. Be tolerant and keep the child's age in mind.

**Avoid smacking children** as it only teaches children that violence is the best way of maintain control and it encourages them to hit other children.

Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.

## CHILDREN AND DISCIPLINE: A PARENT'S GUIDE.

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## **CHILDREN AND DISCIPLINE: A PARENT'S GUIDE**

Young children aren't born knowing how to be well behaved. They need help and guidance from parents and other carers - and as all parents know this isn't always an easy job. Here are some good ideas from the Multicultural Parenting Program, a new program for Arabic, Vietnamese and Tongan speakers.

### **Know what is 'normal' behaviour for what age**

Opening kitchen cupboards and dragging every saucepan on to the kitchen floor isn't naughty for a two year old child, for instance - it just means he or she wants to find out more about her surroundings. It's also very common for four-year-olds to fight with their younger brothers and sisters. Talking to other parents with children of the same age is one way of finding out what is normal at what age - many parents are often relieved to learn that other children are behaving in much the same way.

### **Teach by example**

One way children learn is by imitating others. This is why parents need to behave in ways which set good examples. It's important that we, as parents, show respect for children - children who are shown respect themselves will show respect to others. Although children need to know they are unique individuals, they also need to know they are part of a group too. This is why we need to teach them to share, to listen to others and to take turns.

### **Think about what you say and how you say it**

Use the same tone of voice with children as you want people to use with you. Talk respectfully to them and about them, rather than saying things like, "Ann is always so naughty", or, "Joseph is always so lazy." It's very tempting to criticise children in the hope that constantly pointing out bad behaviour will make them stop doing it. But this often has the opposite effect. Children soon learn that they get attention by doing things parents don't like.

A better way to encourage good behaviour is to remember to praise them as often as possible, even in small ways, such as, "Ann was very helpful today - she put away all her toys". This doesn't mean never reprimanding them for doing something wrong. But it's important to criticise the child's behaviour rather than the child as a person. Instead of saying, "You are very naughty", say something like, "I don't like what you're doing", or, "We don't allow that behaviour".

### **Set limits**

Let children know what behaviour is allowed and what isn't. Giving children clear limits makes them feel secure. Be consistent about what is and what isn't acceptable.

**Accept a child's right to say, "No", sometimes** - especially about things that affect only the child - such as which clothes he/she wants to wear. Remember that children need to learn that saying, "No", is sometimes a good thing. Saying, "No", to strangers, for instance, may be the safest thing to do.

**Praise and hug children when they co-operate**, as this encourages them to behave well.