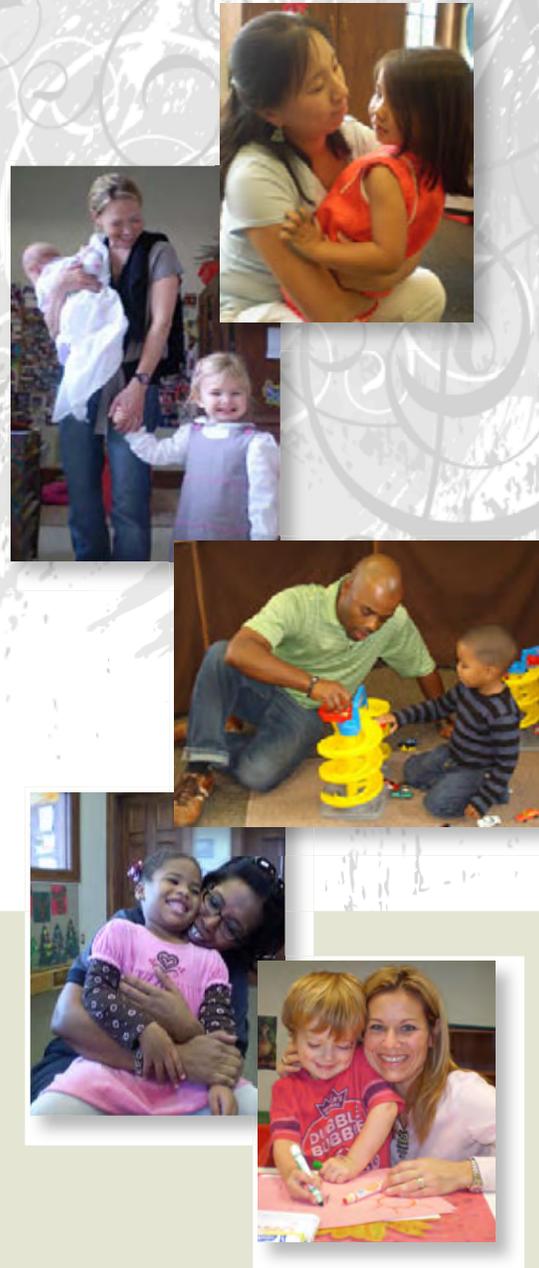


Children do not come with instructions and it is often hard to find a one size fits all mold that works with every parent and every child. The key to discipline, in a nutshell, is model what you desire! Everything we do and say, our children will put into practice. The manner we use to speak to children, the words we choose and our attitudes toward them and others will all filter down to them and return like an echo and a boomerang. Children will use your words, your attitudes and your actions on you and their peers. Our lifestyle is their mentor, not so much our words, but our actions.

Investing in the lives of children by considering our lifestyle contribution is one of the wisest investments we can make.

## What Do We Want Our Children to Learn?

- To think for themselves
- To have the ability to reason
- To count the cost
- To consider the consequences of their choices
- To see their options
- To solve their own problems
- To feel equipped
- To be capable and confident



## For Additional Information

Reference materials:

*Moral Intelligence*  
by Michelle Borba

*Discipline for Life*  
by Madelyn Swift

*Helicopters, Drill Sergeants and Consultants*  
by Foster Cline



KINDERPLATZ  
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# Discipline

## Avoiding Power Struggles

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PARENT EDUCATION SERIES

# Let's Think About The Words We Use

## **"You will do what I say."**

This is an authoritative approach for gaining cooperation. Imagine someone coming to you and speaking in that manner, perhaps a spouse or an employer. It causes an invisible reaction that creates the equivalent of two pitbulls going head to head. It will actually work with compliant children, but I challenge you to think about what it teaches them as individuals. Does it teach them that they are valued individuals who matter? Is it the manner you want them to use with you and their friends? I realize that there are times when this style must be used, but what are the long-term affects? For strong-willed children it creates conflicts every waking moment of the day and for compliant children it creates followers. The goal of parenting is to raise children that grow up thinking for themselves and making decisions based upon reasoning. Should we be teaching our children to question, consider, and speak their opinion in respectful ways or silence what they think and obey orders? What tools do we want them to carry into adulthood?

## **"Please honey...."**

Using this approach sets you up as someone who is powerless and gives the children the power. It actually models begging as an example for children when they want something. We do not want to teach children to manipulate us by using manners. Can you see them coming back after you have already said "no" with an angelic look upon their faces and a, "Pweeze?" We actually get back what we give them.

## **"Be good and I will bring you a surprise."**

This approach encourages the child to behave only if there is a reward. As children grow, a small toy will not be enough to get them to behave. If you start using this approach when they are two, each year the bribe will have to become larger.



Do we want to teach our children to bribe or be bribed by others? The sad thing is that rewards do work for the parent and teacher temporarily, but who actually wins in the long run? Don't we want children to make the right choices just because it makes our world a better place to live in, and it is the right thing to do?

## **"If you do not stop that I am going to...."**

Threats are against the law in the real world and this is not the way we want our children to learn to treat others to be manipulated by others. Model the behavior you want them to take into the future.

## **Punishment**

Punishment is authority imposed and authority controlled. Yes, the parent is in control, but does it teach children to think for themselves, control themselves, and solve problems themselves when there is no authority figure in their presence?

The wisest investment we can make for our children is to live the life we want them to imitate.

# Ten Tips for Avoiding Power Struggles...

## **Distracting the Child**

If children are very young, you can simply direct them to a different activity. Inappropriate behavior caused them to lose the toy or the activity. They can be redirected elsewhere.

## **Ignoring Misbehavior When Appropriate**

Not all behaviors can or should be ignored, but there are times when it is appropriate. When children are whining, you can simply state that you will answer when they speak in a normal voice. If children throw tantrums, simply tell them they will have to do that in a place that does not disturb others.

## **Structuring the Environment**

Often we put our children in positions that set them up for failure. Having expensive valuables within children's reach and expecting them not to touch them is guaranteed failure. If possible, remove items that are off limits. Choose wisely where you take children and consider the environment. Provide things appropriate to touch.

## **Controlling the Situation**

It is important to consider the time of day it is for your child. Taking them to visit anyone or anything near nap time, or when a child is not feeling well and expecting them to behave is not a reasonable expectation.

## **Involving the Child Through Choices**

I have seen parents use this approach unsuccessfully by giving their children too many choices. Allowing a child to choose from three sets of clothing, or two reasonable choices of what to eat for breakfast, is acceptable. Allowing the child to choose clothing from a closet that has every season of clothing available is a nightmare waiting to happen.

## **Planning Time for Loving**

We live in such a fast paced world. I hope you will remember to take the time to make memories with your child outside the normal routines.

## **Letting Go**

The goal of every parent and teacher is to teach the child to get along without you. Beware if your parenting styles are creating dependence where you become the one who solves all of your child's problems. We want children to be able to function independently and feel confident in their own abilities.

## **Increasing Consistency**

Inconsistency is our worst parenting enemy and creates a misunderstanding about clear boundary lines. Rules need to be consistent 24/7, when you are on the phone, when friends are over, or when weekends come.

## **Noticing Positive Behavior**

We spend far too much time focusing on weaknesses and what is wrong with others rather than focusing on what is right. Noticing strengths and what is positive in your child will pay big rewards. What you focus on grows.

## **Excluding the Child with A Time to Think About Their Behavior**

When a child is misbehaving repeatedly, it is time to intervene. Remove the child to a quiet place and ask him or her to think about his or her behavior. A good rule of thumb is one minute per year of the child's age. After he or she has had time to think, return and discuss what is happening and how the issues can be resolved.

