



Hibiscus Coast Grandparents Parenting Grandchildren Inc.

27 Rushden Terrace, Red Beach 0932

Phone: 09 426 7595

Discipline without Shouting, Force or Fluster

Presented by John Cowan, Parenting Place

Parenting Motto: **“Firm, fair and friendly”**

Firm: your authority is based on love and your wisdom; it is not meant to be harsh; John had a message for mum’s – Do not let your boys bully you, don’t be pushed around

Fair: allow children to question, query and challenge, but don’t let it be out of your weakness; encourage “whys” and give reasons; ask them to “convince you” when they are older and don’t be afraid to change your minds if they have made good points

Friendly: be loving, cuddly, warm, friendly but still be the parent; you don’t need the children’s approval or that gives them power over you

“A child who feels right, acts right”

Consistently difficult behaviour can be a symptom of something else. Take a step back. Are they having their needs met? Are their emotional tanks full? There may still be penalties or consequences. Discipline when a child’s emotional tank is empty does not work.

What sort of parent are you?

Sergeant Major: authoritative, lots of rules, threats, unrealistic punishment. Children will outwardly comply but internally they may rebel. They will fail to internalise their parent’s rules.

“Rules without relationship leads to rebellion”

Jellyfish: permissive, lacks boundaries. Children don’t learn the relationship between consequences and their actions. A lack of external discipline leads to underdeveloped self-discipline.

“Don’t rob kids of the consequences”

Back-bone Parenting: loving and firm. Flexible but strong. Looks for teachable moments, which is discipline focussed on what they should do next time. Coaching them to make a better decision. A back-bone parent response is calm, slow and deliberate. They understand that **atmosphere**, **boundaries** and **communication** come before discipline, they contribute to discipline. ABC is discipline.

Atmosphere: a child who feels right acts right. How does your home make your child feel – loving, friendly, warm and fun? Rules without relationships don't work. The best antidote to a bad atmosphere is fun. Encouragement; noticing individual flair and skill; fun; thankfulness; focussed attention builds atmosphere.

“Gratitude is a great attitude”

The best gift to give your child is noticing them and meeting their eyes. Focussed attention can be one on one time, playing alongside the, commenting on what they are doing for approximately 20 minutes, 2 or 3 times a week. This can help to change any negative attitudes towards themselves.

Boundaries: taking care of yourself, others and property. Make the boundaries age appropriate. You can negotiate with your children and they can help make the boundaries. Ensure they understand what is expected of them. The “V” of Love is a great way of setting boundaries (see handout). Ask yourself, “Are your children ready for new privileges and duties?”

Communication: This is perhaps the hardest area for busy parents to work on.

“Being listened to is so much like being loved, most people can tell the difference”

When children have issues or difficulties focus on next time, come up with solutions that they could do if the same situation arises again. Parent use reflective listening, repeat back to them what they have told you, help them to find their own solution. Reflect their feelings i.e. “mmm...you sound mad.” When you help them to diffuse their feelings they can then come up with solutions. Try and focus on the love languages (see handout)

Loving Discipline: discipline when angry can be more like revenge. When we are calm, we make better decisions.

“Goal is to discipline our children, not to punish them”

Safety First: intervene if children are fighting.

“you hit, you sit”

Stop any inappropriate behaviour. Support the children's feelings. Try to be proactive rather than reactive.

Pause if you can: cool down yourself; think through what you intend to do; is this firm, fair and friendly; can I carry through with what I am about to say?

“only run for fires and haemorrhages”

If no one is in danger, take a moment, calm down, then deal with it.

“Kids run down to your bedroom, you’ll be safer there”

This gives you time to calm down as well as the children. If you make a silly threat, it’s okay to change it to a more reasonable consequence

Feeling, Thinking, Acting:

functioning behaviour - I feel I think I act

dysfunctional behaviour - I feel I act

Punishment vs. Discipline:

Punishment can make a child angry, rebellious, defensive and ashamed

Discipline allows the child to take ownership of the problem; develops tools to solve it; leaves dignity intact

“If I create a problem, I can fix the problem”

Praise your child for fixing the problem.

Gunboat Diplomacy: your child is not the enemy. Get your children on side. Separate the child from the behaviour. The behaviour is unacceptable but the child is always acceptable and always loved. The child knows that the behaviour is the problem, not them. A parent’s love is unconditional, not conditional on behaviour.

Changing Behaviour: practice the behaviour that you do want i.e. saying things nicely; practice coming when called “yah, you’re getting quicker, let’s have another go” send them back to where they were and call them again.

Isolate the behaviour you don’t want

Praise when they do it right – it increases the behaviour you do want.

Basic Psychology: a child will repeat the behaviour if they achieve what they want i.e. if they whine and you give them attention they will keep doing it.

When Confronted with Misbehaviour: ask yourself “what’s the payoff”, what are they going to get from doing this? Once you remove the payoff the behaviour disappears

Hotspots:

1. Corner Technique: standing in a corner allows them time to stand and think, turns confrontation into problem solving “**what do you have to do to get out of the corner?**” Once they have figured it out, encourage them

2. Distraction: divert their attention onto something else. Make a distraction box that has lots of little things in it to do. Suggest for them to **“pop outside and find your happy voice”**
3. Walking Away: if attention rewards the behaviour, remove the reward **“when you are ready**
4. Tantrums: there are two types – panic and control. Panic needs emotional closeness and physical closeness. These may occur when a child is tired. Control occurs when they are wanting something, the child needs emotional and physical distance. These may occur when a child wants a lolly at the shops. The behaviour may get worse before it gets better

Stern Face and Voice: if children see these seldomly used they will be very effective. Use them all the time and they lose their effect.

Consequences: use something therefore that the child really likes such as pocket money; a social activity; access to technology. The period that you remove that item can be revised if the child really improves

Model the Behaviour: make your influence a positive one. How do they see you behave when there is conflict? It is good for your child to see you resolve issues.

