



Better Behavior Though Loving Discipline

As your children grow up, it's natural for them to challenge you. Sometimes, it seems easier to just let them have their way. But all kids need limits, and they need parents to guide them.

Discipline works best with a balance of love, respect, clearly defined rules, and understanding. Here are some secrets of effective discipline.

Make the Rules Clear

Children do best when they know what to expect. Talk about family rules, explaining the consequences clearly. *Example:* "Put your bicycle away when you've finished riding it. If you don't, you won't be allowed to ride it the next day." As your youngsters learn to read, write down the rules and put them on the refrigerator as a reminder.

Be Consistent and Firm

You can expect your kids to "test" the rules from time to time. When they do, try to stand your ground and apply the set of consequences. Being firm and consistent lets them know that you mean business.

Give Positive Feedback

Try to focus more on what your children do right than on what they do wrong. This will encourage them to try even harder to behave. So, when you see behavior you'd like repeated, let your kids know. *Example:* "Thanks for hanging up your coat and backpack!"