Parenting with Love: **Discipline that Works**

**Build a good relationship with your child**
Give lots of hugs and kisses. Talk with and listen to your child. Have fun together! Children will not feel like they have to misbehave to get your attention if you set aside some time to play and interact with them each day. If you have more than one child, be sure to spend one-on-one time with each of them every day.

**Catch your child being good**
Too often children are given attention only when they misbehave. Praise your child often for doing things right, and be specific. Instead of just saying, “Good girl,” say, “Thanks, I really like how you helped put your toys away.”

**Childproof your home**
Be sure your home is safe. Sometimes parents slap babies’ hands when they are about to touch something they shouldn’t touch or spank older kids for getting into things. Parents need to keep children safe instead of punishing them for doing things that put them in danger. As they age, you will have to say “No” a lot less often if you make your home safe.

**Distraction**
When you see your child getting ready to do something you do not want him to do, turn his attention to something else. It can be as easy as saying, “Where’s your ball?” “Hey, come give me a hug” or, for younger children, start a game of Peek-a-boo.

**Give choices, but not too many**
Let them know their opinion is important. Be sure you can honor their decision. For example, “Do you want to wear your blue shirt or green shirt?” or “Do you want green beans or corn?”

**Be consistent**
Be consistent and stick with the rules and discipline that you use with your child. Also, it’s important that everyone involved in disciplining your child agrees and is consistent with how they give rules and discipline to children.

**Limit your limits**
Avoid setting too many rules. Stick with those that are most important. If you scold for minor things, you might find yourself being too harsh when your child does something worse. Sometimes children just want attention, so ignore minor misbehaviors or find a way to distract your child.

**Set good examples**
Young children love to imitate adults, especially their parents. If you do not want them to say or do certain things, think about your own words and actions.

**Establish clear routines in infancy**
Children feel safer when they know what will happen next. Newborns need to be fed on demand rather than by the clock. But as they grow a little older, help them learn routines by having them nap, snack, and go to bed at regular times.

**Think then act**
Think about what is happening, calm yourself, then act.

**Plan ahead**
Do not wait until the last minute to get ready to go places. Be sure to plan shopping trips when your child is well fed and rested and take along plenty of snacks and a favorite toy or two. As your child grows older, talk with your child on the way there to let him know what behaviors you expect.

**Have a sense of humor**
Being able to laugh will help you keep your mind on things that are really important. It will also help you distract your child when he or she is doing something you don’t like. For example, sometimes a tickle match or making silly faces can make your child stop crying or doing things you don’t like.

**Teach-show-practice**
Tell your children how you expect them to behave. Model for your children what you want them to do, and remind them of the rules often.

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