

Discipline Tip 1: Keep it Positive



When we look at general North American society, many, if not most adults rely on punishment as a form of discipline and hold fast to the thinking that children should “pay for their behaviour”.

Yet a wide body of research shows that punishment is harmful to children - especially harsh punishments such as spanking and yelling. And even punitive time out (sending children **away** to think about what they did) can be harmful to children.

As a childcare professional, it's important to understand why punishment isn't effective in dealing with children's challenging behaviours. In fact, you may sometimes find yourself thinking “if only I could punish this child for their behaviour” or “this child should PAY for this behaviour in some way”.

The reality is that punishment is one of the least effective ways to bring about more positive change in a child's behaviour. (Learn more about the most effective way in Tip 2.)

Punishment in any form generally invites the some of the following responses from children:

1. Resentment
2. Rebellion
3. Revenge or
4. Retreat - i.e. kids may feel they are “bad” and develop low self-esteem or they may decide to carry on with the behaviour anyway, but they go underground - i.e. they get sneaky.

Punishment is discouraging to children and doesn't develop responsibility like adults often think.

What we should be focusing on is **guiding and teaching** children and helping them:

- learn from their mistakes (vs. pay for them)
- develop into individuals that want to do what's right for the right reasons (and do what's right even when no one is looking)

Positive Discipline and the Positive ChildCare Model provide numerous non-punitive tools and methods to deal with children's behaviour challenges in positive ways!