

Positively Disciplined: Teaching, Guiding and Protecting Your Child

Excerpt from *Parenting Corner* (Channing Bete Publishing Co.)

The term, “middle schoolers” refers to the tween years (10-13 years old)

Positive discipline is an ongoing process of helping your child accept limits and make good decisions. At its core, positive discipline is:

- **CLEAR**
Middle schoolers have many gifts, but reading minds isn't one of them. You've got to spell out the rules that matter most for your family, such as those related to health, safety, academics and respect for others. Then explain the consequences for not following them.
- **FIRM**
You need to follow through on consequences for them to have an effect. Ideally, Consequences should relate to the broken rule and be fair and age appropriate. Examples of logical consequences include losing a privilege, having plans cancelled or having to do extra chores. Natural consequences—such as dirty clothes left on the floor not getting laundered by you—can be effective, too. (Just don't use these when health or safety is at stake.)
- **KIND**
When your child misbehaves, it's normal to feel upset. But biting remarks and unfair punishments can hurt your child—and your relationship. Learning to respond in a calm, peaceful and open way takes practice. But it's worth the effort. Plus, you're more likely to learn the real reasons behind his or her behavior.
One of the best ways to nip misbehavior in the bud? Celebrate your child's good behavior with your praise and approval (not your wallet). “That was a generous decision!” “How respectful of you.” “Your thoughtfulness amazes me!” “I'm so proud of you for listening.” This approach can keep the good stuff coming.
- **ADAPTABLE**
As your child grows, limits and consequences must keep pace. Get your child's input and reach new decisions together. Family meetings are a good time to address concerns, such as when your child feels ready for more freedom or tires of a certain chore.