**8 Parenting Skills that Promote the Most Effective Discipline**

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Kids don’t come with a parenting manual and there’s no course that teaches the necessary skills to become a parent. And parenting requires a multitude of skills. No parent is proficient with all parenting skills all the time. Instead, it is a work in progress.

Depending on your child’s age and behavior, there will likely be times that some skills are easier to use than others. Sharpening those skills over time takes practice. Parenting books, classes and support groups can be excellent resources to help parents sharpen their skills.No matter which of the [five main types of discipline](http://discipline.about.com/od/typesofdiscipline/tp/5-Different-Types-Of-Discipline.htm) a parent uses, there are certain skills that are essential in promoting effective discipline.

**1. Recognize Safety Issues**

The most effective parents seem to be able to sniff out danger a mile away. They are well versed in internet safety, the latest safety equipment and they recognize a child predator when they see one. They find a balance between overprotecting a child and throwing the child to the wolves. They allow for [natural consequences](http://discipline.about.com/od/disciplinebyage/a/Natural-Consequences-A-Great-Way-To-Discipline-Older-Kids-And-Teens.htm) only when it is safe to do so and teach children skills to make healthy decisions.

**2. Provide a Positive Example**

Parents who say, “Do as I say, not as I do,” often find this isn’t very effective. Parents who yell when they’re angry tend to raise children who yell out of anger. However, parents who model how to handle anger by taking a break, tend to have children who do the same. Modeling appropriate behaviors is an essential parenting skill. Kids are watching all the time and they’ll learn far more from what they see than what they hear.

**3. Set Appropriate Limits**

It’s essential that parents can set appropriate limits for kids, even when a child protests. Effective parents can tolerate their child being angry with them and they don’t try to be their child’s friend. Instead, they focus on what is in the best interest of the child. Setting appropriate limits means the child has [clear rules](http://discipline.about.com/od/establishingrules/a/Establishing-House-Rules-For-Kids.htm) and the parent uses [developmentally appropriate discipline strategies.](http://discipline.about.com/od/disciplinebyage/a/Finding-Age-Appropriate-Discipline-Techniques.htm).

**4. Enforce Consequences Consistently**

Effective parents don’t just threaten consequences, they follow through with them. Consistency in consequences in a vital skill for parents. If a child only receives [negative consequence](http://discipline.about.com/od/disciplinebasics/a/Discipline-Kids-With-Positive-And-Negative-Consequences.htm) for his behavior half the time, the behavior isn’t likely to stop. It’s essential that kids know the consequences and that they know they can’t count on the consequences being consistent.

**5. Choose Battles Wisely**

Effective discipline requires that parents are able to recognize whether a battle is worth the fight. Sometimes behaviors just aren’t worth addressing if they are likely to lead to a [power struggle](http://discipline.about.com/od/decreasenegativebehaviors/a/How-To-Avoid-Power-Struggles-With-Children.htm). For example, if a six-year-old wants to wear her rain galoshes on a sunny day, allowing her to do so might make more sense than trying to convince her why her sneakers are a better choice if it will likely lead to a major meltdown.

**6. Manage Stress Effectively**

Parents who manage their stress effectively have much more success when disciplining a child. Stressed out parents are more likely to yell or be inconsistent with discipline. They are also more likely to use [punishment rather than discipline](http://discipline.about.com/od/typesofdiscipline/a/The-Difference-Between-Punishment-And-Discipline.htm). And when a parent is stressed out, it can lead to more behavioral problems from a child, which leads to more stress on the parent. Healthy stress management includes self-care and having support from friends and family.

**7. Provide Positive Attention**

Finding time to give kids daily [positive attention](http://discipline.about.com/od/disciplinebasics/a/Positive-Attention-Reduces-Behavioral-Problems.htm) can make a big difference in the child’s life. It makes all other discipline strategies much more effective. Finding time and energy to devote individual attention to each child can be difficult sometimes, especially for single parents or parents with multiple children.

**8. Establish Clear Expectations**

When kids don’t understand what is expected of them, it can be impossible for them to meet a parent’s expectations. The most effective parents are able to clearly tell kids what the expectations are in a way that a child can understand. An effective parent just doesn’t tell her ten-year-old to clean his room. Instead, she describes what a clean room looks like by saying, “Pick your clothes up off the floor, make your bed and vacuum the rug.”

<http://discipline.about.com/od/disciplinebasics/tp/8-Parenting-Skills-That-Promote-The-Most-Effective-Discipline.htm>