

50 Ways to Discipline Your Child by Brenda Metzler, MA

It is important to remember that children are people, too. They have their own feelings, thoughts and opinions. Children ARE immature. That is part of being a child and of growing up. As children grow, they mature. Our job is to guide them along the way. The most powerful way that we teach our children is by example. Be a good example.

Children who are disciplined will learn to get along with others, learn to control their own behavior (self-discipline), learn how to solve problems, learn to behave in agreeable ways, have healthy attitudes about themselves, and learn from their mistakes.

Discipline requires thought, planning and patience. We will not always be around to make sure our children are safe, and we want them to be able to make safe and healthy choices for themselves.

1. Treat them with love and respect
2. Begin at birth
3. Set safe boundaries (rules)
4. Be sure your children know the limits – tell them at their level of understanding
5. Get down to your child's physical level
6. Speak softly
7. Use simple, soothing words
8. Be respectful with your voice, with your body
9. Give yourself space and time to “cool off” when they push your buttons.
10. Use your words
11. Say what you mean
12. Mean what you say
13. Be consistent
14. Be lovingly firm
15. Be flexible
16. Consider the circumstances
17. Tell children what they CAN do
18. Offer positive alternatives to unacceptable behaviors
19. Be present
20. Know your child
21. Expect the best of your child
22. Recognize them, give them your attention, call them by name
23. Talk to your child when things are going well. When you have a good relationship, your child is more likely to respect your discipline.
24. When something seems “off” with your child, ask them about it
25. Use humor! “On *this* planet...”
26. Be real – apologize when you goof up
27. Teach your child how to manage powerful feelings
28. Model safe ways to manage powerful feelings
29. Give your child words for his or her feelings: “You sound sad.” “That hurt your feelings.” “I can see you are angry.”
30. Name your own powerful feelings
31. Avoid engaging children in battle
32. Consider your expectations

33. Are your expectations reasonable for this child? This situation? This age level?
34. Ask yourself, "In the scheme of life is this really important?"
35. Look for the cause of the behavior; maybe your child needs your attention.
36. Remove your child from a situation they aren't prepared to handle.
37. Anticipate your child's needs – of food, sleep, physical activity, mental engagement, emotional support
38. Encourage your child to think before acting
39. Guide them through consequences
40. Do the consequences fit the unacceptable behavior?
41. Allow natural consequences to occur
42. Address each situation without judging the child
43. Expect the best of your child!
44. Offer choices - "You may either sit on the chair or stand on the floor."
45. Respect your child's choice
46. Help your child understand between behaviors and consequences
47. Provide structure
48. Encourage your child - "You can do it!"
49. Let go of your own baggage from childhood
50. Ask for help when you need it