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childPSYCH News

A newsletter for professionals and parents

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Discipline!

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See us in...
Springfield,
Ipswich and
Toowoomba



Special points of interest:

- At *childpsych* psychologists who are registered teachers and/or Educational Psychologists are involved in the child's assessment
- To unsubscribe from this newsletter at any time, either email or call *childpsych*

Discipline!

The word "Discipline" means a variety of things to people. For some people it can refer to *how* you punish mis behaviour, whereas for other people it can refer to *self control*.

Lets first discuss the purpose of discipline when it comes to managing children and adolescent's mis behaviour since that is what most of us think of. Well consider this - "the purpose of parenting is to socialise the child". I remember reading that quote in a book on parenting strategies. So now that we can accept that our job as parents is to prepare our children for the "real world", we can start to understand the role of discipline,

But first - what makes someone ready for the real world? Well that depends on the society you live in I guess. For Australia, we want our children to become adults who: don't give up easily when the going gets tough, are kind to others, are warm and affectionate, respectful, on time, perform their job to the best of the ability and don't argue or disagree too much. How do we develop these behaviours? well by being warm and affectionate with our children, fair in our punishment of their mis behaviour and rewarding appropriate behaviour.

Now an important quality that seems to predict success in life is the ability to delay gratification or go without or "suffer". The ability to delay gratification is predictive of success in the world of work as well as the sporting arena. That's of course if you want to measure "success" in terms of work promotion and income etc Anyway, where does disci-



the purpose of parenting is to socialise the child

pline fit with this? Well when you have "rules" and there are consequences for breaking the rules, the child learns not to break the rules. The child learns self control! So discipline is about developing self control. You develop self control by being able to delay gratification. Makes sense doesn't it. But if discipline is an important aspect of developing self control, what types of discipline achieve this?

Well that is a good question. Research does not support harsh physical discipline as effective - certainly research suggests that in general greater use of physical discipline was associated with lower parental warmth but children with adequate self control. So very strict parents tended to be less affectionate and warm towards their children. These sorts of parents may develop children with good self control but possible not the warmest people. Of course a lack of discipline (we call this permissive parenting) but high affection may result in a person who can not "go without" and may over spend etc but may actually be a very likeable personable person. We may call this person spoil?

Now as regular readers of this newsletter have come to find, not all is so simple in psychology research. Parents of very challenging children (e.g. AD/HD) may resort to harsh physical discipline out of frustration.

Similarly, anxious parents seem to be somewhat stricter, presumably in an effort to control their child's behaviour more. Certainly it appears that the parent who does the most raising of children tended to provide almost equal warmth and discipline.

So what is effective discipline? Well an authoritative parenting style is considered the most appropriate. This style of parenting does not rely on harsh discipline but instead enforces consequences through timeout, reasoning and consequences. The authoritative parent is willing to admit they're wrong to their children but has consistent rules that need to be followed. The rules are designed to help the child become an appropriate adult. Rules that encourage manners, consideration for others, completing jobs or tasks they DON'T want to do, and so on.

Can you see how Time Out, not harsh physical discipline, can achieve the same outcome? Time out is where the child is removed for a period of time (usually 3 minutes of pure silence) and is only allowed back if they modify their behaviour. Time out teaches a child to reflect on their behaviour, bring their own behaviour under control, experience a consequence for failure to follow rules and teaches them delay of gratification. Of course it's a little more complex than all of this and if you want to learn more about encouraging the right behaviours in your child but also responding to the mis behaviours then make sure you see a child mental health professional.

Remember - the purpose of parenting is to socialise the child!

2 / 606 Sherwood Road
Sherwood Q 4075

Phone:
07 3716 0445
Fax:
07 3379 8965
Email:
admin@childpsych.net.au



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Encouraging your child's behaviour

Here are some tips for encouraging your child to do the right thing!

- ✓ Do spend time with your child individually, doing things he or she likes to do.
- ✓ Do talk to your child, ask questions, take an interest in his or her play, games, and friends.
- ✓ Do praise your child enthusiastically for accomplishments and appropriate behaviours.
- ✓ Do cuddle, touch, tickle, laugh, and have fun with your child often.
- ✓ Do encourage independence by using *ask*, *say*, *do* and allowing your child to do things to help you.
- ✓ Do listen and respond to your child when he or she asks for your help, information, advice, or opinion, or wants to tell you something.
- ✓ Do provide a good language model for your child (i.e., don't baby talk).



- ✓ Do provide lots of interesting and stimulating toys, games, or objects to encourage play, talking, and intellectual stimulation
- ✓ Do model behaviours yourself which you want to encourage in your child (e.g., helping others, begin a good listener, being cheerful)
- ✓ Do set limits to your child's behaviour
- ✓ Do praise your child enthusiastically for behaving appropriately.
- ✓ Do respond to misbehaviour immediately, consistently, and decisively.

Sleep

Sleep is paramount for children. Poor sleep can lead to problems such as hallucinations, impaired cognitive performance and depressed mood. Good sleeping behaviours for school aged children refer to such things as:

- ✓ a set bed time,
- ✓ no caffeine drinks (such as Coke) after 4pm or four hours before bed,
- ✓ daily exercise,
- ✓ a good diet,
- ✓ and engaging in relaxing activities before bed time.

It is important to make decisions about children's bed time based on their developmental needs.

Sleep Guide

1-4 Weeks Old: 15 ½ - 16 ½ hours per day
1-4 Months Old: 14 ½ - 15 ½ hours per day
4-12 Months Old: 14 - 15 hours per day
1-3 Years Old: 12 - 14 hours per day
3-6 Years Old: 10 ¾ - 12 hours per day
7-12 Years Old: 10 - 11 hours per day
12-18 Years Old: 8 ¼ - 9 ½ hours per day

- ✓ Do respond to misbehaviour by describing what the child has done wrong.
- ✓ Do respond to misbehaviour by telling the child what would have been more appropriate.
- ✓ Do back up your instructions or your reasonable requests by using natural or logical consequences, quiet time, or time out.
- ✓ Do remain calm when speaking to a child who is upset or has misbehaved.
- ✓ Do speak calmly but firmly to your child when he or she misbehaves.
- ✓ Do act quickly; don't threaten to act.
- ✓ Do deal with the problem yourself rather than threatening someone else's action.
- ✓ Do try to prevent problems by ensuring that your child has plenty of interesting and engaging things to do.
- ✓ Do discuss the rules with your child, and give him or her a chance to be involved in deciding on rules.



Source: R. Sanders & M. Dadds (1992). Behavioral family intervention.



childpsych is offering this evidence-based working memory training program.

The complete program includes:

- Initial interview
- Start-up session
- Five weeks of training with weekly Coach calls
- Wrap-up meeting
- Six month follow-up interview
- Access to the Cogmed Training Web
- Optional Cogmed Extension Training (12 months)

How long does it take?

The cogmed program consists of 25 training sessions of 30-40 minutes each, done over 5 weeks. It is the intensity of this training schedule that is critical to the program's success. The user/family sets the training schedule with the Cogmed Coach, with plenty of flexibility.

Autism Services

childpsych provides a specialist autism clinic focused on assessment and diagnosis and intervention services. Our autism interventions are delivered by psychologists accredited to work with children with autism spectrum disorders.

- ✓ Assessment and diagnosis of autism
- ✓ Management of children with autism to age 18 years
- ✓ Behavioural interventions, social skills, transition to school, treatment of other conditions such as anxiety, depression
- ✓ Special education development classes and remedial teaching classes

childpsych.net.au/autism-services.php