

Discipline without hurting

Strategies for younger children

With Babies:

- Never shake or toss a baby, even playfully. A baby's neck is weak and shaking can result in brain damage or death.
- Respond to your baby's crying. Babies cry to communicate their needs, such as for food, comfort, or a clean diaper.
- Develop a daily routine around feeding, sleeping, and play to help your baby feel safe and secure
- Encourage your baby to trust you. Show your love and affection by cuddling, talking, and singing.
- Remember that babies are too young to understand limits and rules.

With One and Two year olds:

- **Remind:** Young children have short memories. Gently remind them about the rules to help them learn.
- **Distract:** Give your child a toy or lead them to another activity.
- **Gentle touch and tantrums:** If your child begins to lose control move close and put your arm around the child. Gently hold your child with enough force to keep the child from getting hurt. However, if holding makes them more angry then let them go and remain calm.

With Three and Four year olds:

- **Redirect:** If your child is frustrated and unable to solve a problem redirect them to a different activity.
- **Consequences:** Let children experience the consequences of their actions if it safe to do so. For example, "if you cannot play with the blocks without throwing them, the blocks will be put away." Then follow through and put the blocks away even if the child continues to throw them. However, if the child is doing something that is unsafe, you can explain the consequences later, but remove your child from danger immediately.
- **Time-out:** Take your child to a safe quiet place where the child can calm down and regain control. Briefly explain why they are in time out but do not argue or discuss the situations with them. When the child feels ready to try again, bring them back to their activity. Be sure to praise your child's first acceptable behaviour after time out.

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Offer Choices

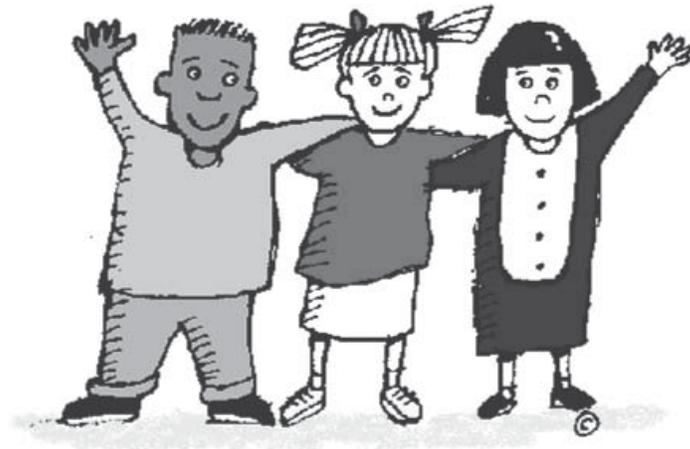
- Choices help children learn how to make decisions. Offer simple choices, but do not threaten.
- For example: "You can wash the dishes or dry them. You decide."

Teach problem-solving

- Help your child define the problem
- Ask "what would happen if you tried to...?"
- Try thinking of solutions together
- Chose the best option
- Try it out
- Talk about what worked and what you could try next time

Solve Problems Together

- As children approach the teen years, they still need clear limits but parents should be willing to negotiate
- When children start thinking for themselves, their talking back may anger you
- Keep communicating
- Listen and explain more with older children
- Talk to the parents of your child's friends about reasonable limits on clothing, curfew, and entertainment choices
- Work with your child to solve problems together



If you are concerned about a child in the community and believe they may be in need of protection, please call the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society at 519-252-1171