

The Discipline Dilemma

Let's face it: Even with the best of kids, the need for discipline can be unavoidable. Local moms on our Facebook page offer the tricks that work for them—and what they keep in mind when designing a discipline plan

It is very important to always be consistent and follow through with any consequences, no matter how hard it is. Otherwise, your credibility is shot! Also, take some time to listen and think about a consequence before threatening it. It makes kids sweat and gives you the advantage of having time to think everything through.

Liza Fredstedt, para-educator with Waunakee elementary schools and mother of two, ages 11 and 13.

I think that the most important things are to be present, be the parent and to set boundaries. Too many parents try to be their child's best friend. Love fiercely, but lead first.

Deb Johnson Nies, freelance writer, social media consultant and mother of an 11-year-old daughter.

Remember to respect your children and make sure they know that your love is unconditional. Children of all ages need clear and consistent expectations and they need to know that you will follow through with what you say. I believe strongly in admitting when you're wrong, especially as your children get older.

Laura Albrecht Hunt, staff development coordinator with the YMCA of Dane County and mother of three, ages 17, 14 and 12.

There is little about discipline that hasn't been said before. As parents we hear all the time about consistency, patience, follow through, etc. But the really tough part is knowing what kind of discipline to use, when to use it and then having the energy to put it all into practice.

Kelly Heasty, stay-at-home mother of two, ages 5 and 8.

Discipline is all about consistency. It's positive reinforcement and celebration for the good behaviors and also specific consequences based on the behavior you are trying to train them in. But when it comes to discipline, one size does not fit all.

Laura Nemetz, human resources professional and mother of a 21-month-old daughter.

Ask Doctor Mom

Making room for new little ones



By Kari Hegeman

Gearing up for a new addition to your family can be an exciting time. But if you're already the parent of small child, you may find yourself asking agonizing questions such as: How can I ever love another baby as much as my first born? Will baby number one get enough attention?

Small children are also often confused about what it means to have a new baby coming home. Although they accept of the notion of having a sibling, once the baby moves in, it can become a battle for attention. And for mom, juggling more than one child may turn you into a broken record of: "Sorry, honey, I don't have time" or "Maybe when I'm done with the baby" and "Aren't you old enough now to turn on the faucet by yourself?!" With a little creativity, however, life can be different.

Making sure to carve out time for your eldest is one way to help stave off resentment that can develop between your two little ones. I highly recommend scheduling "special time" with your toddler. Try to keep special time—which only needs to be about 15 to 20 minutes—around the same time every day, preferably not just before bed. This way, instead of saying "no" to all your child's requests, you can rephrase your answers into, "Dancing in tutus? Matchbox cars? What fun! Let's do that at our special time!"

When I had my second child, my first was just under 18 months, and I had a portable kitchen timer I would bring out and set in between us for our special time. While it clicked away, my eldest daughter had every last bit of my attention. Phone ringing? Dinner needs to be made? Somebody else's problem; I was busy. The result was finding a time to make my child feel special, and for me to relax and enjoy watching my little one grow.

Dr. Kari Hegeman is a pediatrician at Dean Clinic and the mother of six children, ages 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8.