

Positive Discipline Parenting Tools

52 cards to improve your
parenting skills



By Jane Nelsen and Adrian Garsia
Illustrations by Paula Gray

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3 Rs of Recovery

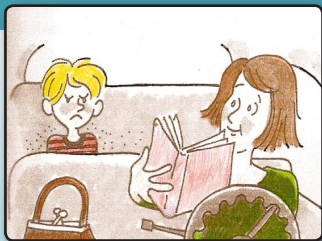


Making mistakes isn't as important as what we do about them.

Use these steps **after** you have had a chance to cool off.

- 1) **Recognize** the mistake with a feeling of responsibility instead of blame.
- 2) **Reconcile** by apologizing. Children are so forgiving.
- 3) **Resolve** the problem by working together on a respectful solution.

Act Without Words



At times the most effective thing to do is keep your mouth shut and act.

- 1) Let kids know in advance what you are going to do.
- 2) Check that they understand by asking: "What is your understanding of what I am going to do?"
- 3) Follow through by acting kindly and firmly without saying a word.

For example: Pull over if kids fight while you are driving. Read a book until they let you know they are ready.

Agreements



- 1) Have a discussion where each person gets to voice feelings and thoughts on an issue.
- 2) Brainstorm solutions and choose one everyone can agree to.
- 3) Agree on a specific time deadline.
- 4) If agreement is not followed avoid judgment and criticism. Use nonverbal signals or ask, "What was our agreement?"
- 5) If agreement still is not followed, start again at step 1.

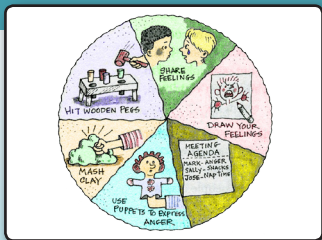
Allowances



Allowances can be a great way to teach children about money.

- 1) Avoid connecting allowances to chores (although children may choose to earn money from selected special jobs).
- 2) Allowance amount depends on your budget and what you expect children to do with the money.
- 3) Let children learn from their mistakes in spending their money. Show empathy and avoid rescuing.

Anger Wheel of Choice



- 1) Teach your children that feelings are always okay, but what they do is not always okay.
- 2) During a time when your child is feeling calm, show him or her the Anger Wheel of Choice and go over the respectful alternatives for expressing anger.
- 3) When your child is angry, validate feelings and then offer a choice, "What would help you now—some positive time-out or the wheel of choice?"

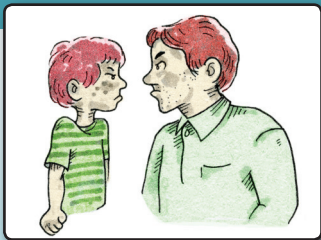
Avoid Pampering



Parents make a mistake when they pamper in the name of love.

- 1) Pampering creates weakness because children develop the belief that others should do everything for them.
- 2) One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is to allow them to develop the belief, "I am capable."
- 3) Children feel capable when they learn that they can survive the ups and downs of life.

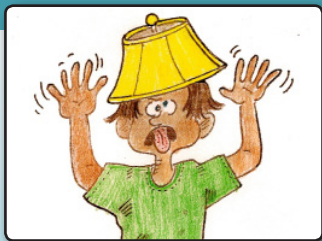
Back Talk



Don't back talk back. This creates a power struggle or a revenge cycle.

- 1) Validate feelings. "Sounds like you are really angry."
- 2) Take responsibility for your part. "I realize I talked disrespectfully to you by sounding bossy or critical."
- 3) Let's take some time to calm down until we can be respectful.

Break the Code



Use the **Mistaken Goal Chart** in any Positive Discipline book.

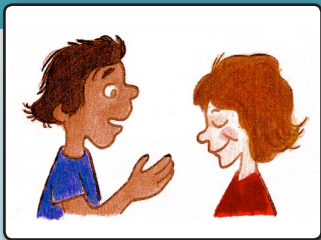
- 1) Choose a behavior challenge.
- 2) Identify the **feelings you have** and **how you react**.
- 3) Identify the child's reaction when you tell him or her to stop.
- 4) Use chart to identify what belief may be behind your child's behavior.
- 5) Try suggestions in the last column of the chart to encourage behavior change.

Closet Listening



- 1) During the week take time to sit quietly near your kids.
- 2) If they ask what you want, say "I just wanted to hang out with you for a few minutes."
- 3) If they talk, just listen without judging, defending, or explaining.

Compliments



**Compliments and appreciations
bring us closer together.**

Focus on accomplishments and helpfulness to others:

- 1) "I appreciate how quickly you get dressed and ready for school."
- 2) "I notice how kindly you cared for Anna when she felt sad, I bet it helped her feel better."
- 3) "Thank you for setting the table."

Connection Before Correction



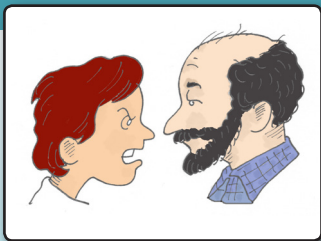
Create closeness and trust instead of distance and hostility by making sure the message of love gets through.

"I love you and the answer is, no"

"You are more important to me than your grades. What do your grades mean to you?"

"I love you and have faith that we can find a respectful solution."

Control Your Behavior



Example is the best teacher.

- 1) Do you expect your children to control their behavior when you don't control your own?
- 2) Create your own special time-out area and let your children know when you need to use it.
- 3) If you can't leave the scene, count to 10 or take deep breaths.
- 4) When you make mistakes, apologize to your children.

Curiosity Questions



Asking instead of telling invites children to think and choose.

- 1) "What do you need to do to be ready for school on time?"
- 2) "Oops! What do you need to do about the spilled milk?"
- 3) "How can you and your brother solve this problem?"
- 4) "What do you need to take if you don't want to be cold outside?"
- 5) "What is your plan for getting your homework done?"

Decide What You Will Do



Decide what you will do, instead of engaging in power struggles.

1) Plan what you will do and notify in advance:

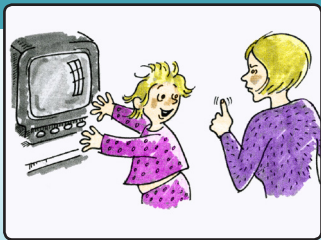
“When the table is set I will serve dinner.”

“I will help with homework on Tuesday and Thursday, but not last minute”

“When chores are done I will drive you to your friend’s house.”

2) Follow through on your plan with kindness and firmness.

Distract & Redirect



Instead of saying,
“**Don’t,**” redirect to a “**Do.**”

- 1) Remove your child from the TV knobs and redirect by saying, “You can play with the blocks.”
- 2) Distract by becoming the tickle monster.
- 3) Take your child by the hand and lead him or her to another activity.
- 4) Give your child a timer so he or she can tell you when it is time to leave the park.

Empower Your Kids



Share control with children so they can develop skills to have power over their own lives.

- 1) Teach life skills.
- 2) Focus on solutions together.
- 3) Have faith in your children
- 4) Let go (in small steps)
- 5) Increase self awareness by asking: "How do you feel? What do you think? How does this affect what you want in your life?"

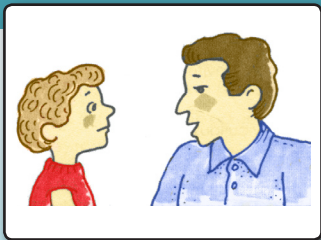
Encouragement



“A child needs encouragement like a plant needs water.” – Rudolf Dreikurs

- 1) A misbehaving child is a discouraged child. When children feel encouraged, misbehavior disappears.
- 2) Encourage by creating a connection before correction.
- 3) Every suggestion in this deck of Positive Discipline Tool Cards is designed to help children feel encouraged and to develop valuable social and life skills that will help them feel capable.

Eye to Eye



It isn't respectful (and doesn't work) to sit on the couch and yell at your child from across the room?

- 1) Stop whatever you are doing. Get up and get close enough to your child to see his or her eyes.
- 2) You'll notice that you speak more softly when you make the respectful effort to see your child's eyes.

Family Meetings



Children learn social and life skills during weekly family meetings.

Format for the Family Meeting:

- 1) Compliments and appreciations
- 2) Evaluation of past solutions
- 3) Agenda items—person can choose
 - a) Share feelings
 - b) Invite a discussion
 - c) Brainstorm for solutions
- 4) Calendar: events, meal planning
- 5) Fun activity and dessert

Follow Through



**If you say it, mean it,
and if you mean it, follow through.**

Kids know when you mean it and when you don't.

If you say: "I will read a story at 8:00 after pajamas are on and teeth are brushed," and your kids aren't ready by 8:00; **kindly** point out the time and put the kids to bed without reading.

Be encouraging by saying, "You can try again tomorrow."

Hugs



Children do better when they feel better—and so do you. Hugs help us feel better.

- 1) When your child is having a tantrum, try asking for a hug.
- 2) If your child says, "No," say, "I need a hug," again.
- 3) If your child still says no, say, "I need a hug; come find me when you are ready." (Then walk away.) You might be surprised at what happens.

Jobs



Children learn life skills, develop social interest and feel capable by helping out at home.

- 1) Brainstorm a family job list together.
- 2) Create fun ways to rotate jobs, such as a job wheel with a spinner, job charts, or a job jar for “fishing” out two chores for the week.
- 3) Take time for job training—do chores with them the first six years.
- 4) Discuss all problems at a family meeting and focus on solutions.

Kind AND Firm



It is the AND that brings kind AND firm together to avoid extremes.

Begin by validating feelings and/or showing understanding. Offer a choice when possible. Examples:

- 1) I know you don't want to brush your teeth, AND we can do it together.
- 2) You want to keep playing, AND it is time for bed. Do you want one story or two?
- 3) I love you, AND the answer is, "No."

Letting Go



Letting go does not mean abandoning your child. It means allowing your child to learn responsibility and to feel capable.

- 1) Take small steps in letting go.
- 2) Take time for training and then step back.
- 3) Have faith in your child to learn from his or her mistakes.
- 4) Get a life so your identity doesn't depend on managing your child's life.

Limited Choices



**Choices provide small steps
in shared power.**

- 1) It is time to leave. Would you like to hop like a bunny or clomp like an elephant to the car?
- 2) If your child doesn't want to leave, kindly and firmly say: "Staying is not a choice," and repeat the two choices.
- 3) It can be empowering to add, "You decide," after giving two choices.

Listen



Children will listen to you AFTER they feel listened to.

- 1) Notice how often you interrupt, explain, defend your position, lecture, or give a command when your child tries to talk to you.
- 2) Stop and just listen. It is okay to ask questions such as, "Can you give me an example? Is there anything else?"
- 3) When your child is finished, ask if he or she is willing to hear you.
- 4) After sharing, focus on a solution that works for both.

Logical Consequences



Too often logical consequences are poorly disguised punishments.

- 1) Use consequences rarely. Instead, focus on solutions.
- 2) When appropriate, follow the Four Rs of Logical Consequences:
 - 1) Related
 - 2) Respectful
 - 3) Reasonable
 - 4) Revealed in advance when possible

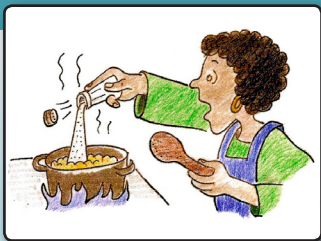
Mirror



Pointing out what you see, is often enough to motivate change.

- 1) "I notice a wet bath towel on your bed."
- 2) "I see art supplies on the dining table and it is almost dinnertime."
- 3) "I see your bike outside and its starting to rain."
- 4) Simply observing shows faith in their ability to figure out what needs to be done.

Mistakes



See mistakes as opportunities for learning.

- 1) Respond to mistakes with compassion and kindness instead of shame, blame, or lectures.
- 2) When appropriate, use curiosity questions to help your child "explore" the consequences of her mistakes.
- 3) During dinner time invite everyone to share a mistake they made during the day and what they learned from it.

Motivation



**Many mistakes are made
in the name of motivation**

- 1) Where did we ever get the crazy idea that children **DO** better when they **FEEL** worse? (Punishment.)
- 2) Children **DO** better when they **FEEL** better. (Encouragement)
- 3) Find solutions to problems **WITH** your child to increase motivation.

Natural Consequences



Children develop resiliency and capability by experiencing the natural consequences of their choices.

- 1) **Avoid lectures** or, "I told you so."
- 2) **Show empathy:** "You're soaking wet, that must be uncomfortable."
- 3) **Be comforting without rescuing:** "A warm shower might help."
- 4) **Validate feelings:** "Sounds like that was very embarrassing."

One Word



**Avoid lecturing and nagging.
Use one word as a kind reminder.**

- 1) "Towel." (for the towel left on the floor)
- 2) "Dog." (when the dog has not been fed)
- 3) "Dishes."
- 4) "Bedtime."
- 5) When agreements are made together in advance, one word is often all that needs to be said.

Pay Attention



Are your children getting the impression that they are not important?

- 1) Put down whatever you are doing and focus on your child as though he or she is more important than anything else you could do.
- 2) Don't forget to schedule special time. (See the Special Time card.)
- 3) Remember what Toni Morrison said: "Do your eyes light up when they walk into the room?"

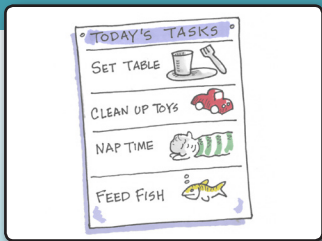
Positive Time-Out



People **do** better when they **feel** better. Positive time-out helps us cool off and feel better.

- 1) Create a time-out space **with** your children. Let them decide what it would look like and what is in it.
- 2) Let them give it a special name.
- 3) When they are upset ask, "Would it help to go to your _____ place?"
- 4) **Model using positive time-out by going to your own special place when you are upset.**

Practice



Practice is an important part of “taking time for training.”

- 1) Let kids take turns setting the timer to see how long it takes for them to do all the tasks on their bedtime routine chart (or anything else you want to teach).
- 2) Ask your children what ideas they have to improve their time.
- 3) Keep solving problems together and keep practicing.

Encouragement vs. Praise



Teach self-reliance instead of dependence on others.

Encouragement invites self-evaluation.

Praise invites children to become "approval junkies."

Examples:

Praise: "I am so proud of you. Here is your reward."

Encouragement: "You worked hard. You must be so proud of yourself."

Praise: "You are such a good girl."

Encouragement: "Thanks for helping."

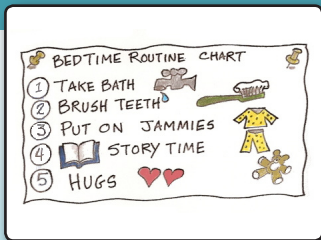
Problem Solving



Use daily challenges as opportunities to practice problem solving WITH your children.

- 1) **Brainstorm for solutions** during family meetings or with one child.
- 2) **Ask Curiosity Questions** to invite your child to explore solutions.
- 3) **For fights:** "You kids can figure it out. Come back with your plan."
- 4) **For chores:** Brainstorm what needs to be done and invite your kids to create a plan. Be willing to try their plan for a week.

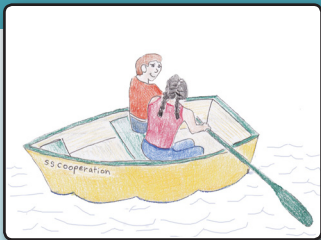
Routines



Help children create routine charts to encourage self-discipline.

- 1) Create routine charts **WITH** your child
- 2) Brainstorm tasks that need to be done (bedtime, morning, homework, etc.)
- 3) Take pictures of child doing each task.
- 4) Let the routine chart be the boss: "What is next on your routine chart?"
- 5) Do not take away from feelings of capability by adding rewards.

Put Kids In The Same Boat



Instead of taking sides when children fight, treat them the same.

- 1) **Give the same choice:** "Kids, would you like to go to the peace table or the wheel of choice?"
- 2) **Show Faith:** "Let me know when you have identified the problem and have ideas for solutions."
- 3) **Leave:** Fighting will diminish significantly when you stop taking sides-so long as you are having regular family meetings to teach problem-solving skills.

Limit Screen Time



Screen time is addictive and interferes with relationships.

- 1) For young children, be careful about using the TV as a babysitter.
- 2) Do not allow computers or TVs or cell phones in children's rooms.
- 3) Make agreements with children about how much TV, video games, texting and internet time is reasonable.
- 4) Brainstorm fun alternative activities, that bring family members together.

Sense of Humor



Humor can help parents and children lighten up.

- 1) Remember to laugh and have fun.
- 2) "Here comes the tickle monster to get kids who don't pick up toys."
- 3) When kids are fighting, gently tackle them and say, "Pig Pile."
- 4) Be sensitive to times when humor is not appropriate.

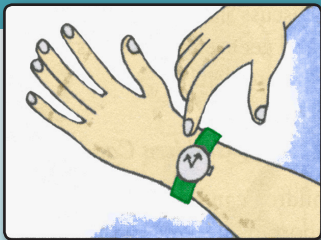
Show Faith



When we show faith in our children they develop courage and faith in themselves.

- 1) Instead of rescuing, lecturing, or fixing, say, "I have faith in you to handle this."
- 2) Children develop their problem-solving skills and disappointment muscles through experiences.
- 3) Validate feelings: "I know you are upset. I would be too. And, I have faith in you."

Silent Signals



Parents often talk too much. A silent signal could speak louder than words.

- 1) Smile and point to the shoes that need to be picked up.
- 2) Decide with your child on signals that would work better than words during a conflict or as a reminder of manners.
- 3) When you feel upset, try putting your hand on your heart to signal, "I love you." You'll both feel better.

Small Steps



Break tasks down to allow children to experience success.

Example – A preschooler struggles to write his or her name:

- 1) Model correct pencil grip.
- 2) Work on one letter at a time. You do one and then let your child do one.
- 3) Teach the skill but don't do the work for him or her.
- 4) Children give up the belief that they can't when they achieve small steps.

Focus On Solutions



**Instead of focusing on blame,
focus on solutions.**

- 1) Identify a problem.
- 2) Brainstorm for as many solutions as possible.
- 3) Pick one that works for everyone.
- 4) Try the solution for a week.
- 5) In a week, evaluate. If it didn't work start over.

Special Time



Schedule special time that is different from regular time.

- 1) Take the phone off the hook.
- 2) Take turns choosing an activity you both enjoy from a list you have brainstormed together.
- 3) **Age Guidelines:**
 - 2-6 years old: 10 min./day.
 - 7-12: at least 30 min./ week.
 - 13 and older: once a month something your teen can't resist.

Take Time for Training



Training is an important part of teaching children life skills.

Don't expect children to know what to do without step-by-step training. What do you mean by clean?

- 1) Kindly explain the task as you perform it, while your child watches.
- 2) Do the task together.
- 3) Have your child do it by herself while you supervise.
- 4) When she feels ready let her perform the task on her own.

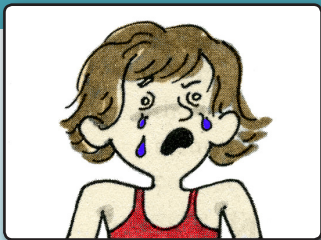
Understand the Brain



When people are upset, they access the fight/flight part of their brains.

- 1) Do not try to solve a problem when you or your child are upset.
- 2) Wait until after a cooling off period (positive time-out) when you can both access your rational brains.
- 3) Putting the problem on the family meeting agenda (or asking your child to) is another way to allow for a cooling off period.

Validate Feelings



- 1) Allow children to have their feelings so they can learn they are capable of dealing with them.
- 2) Don't fix, rescue, or try to talk children out of their feelings.
- 3) Validate their feelings: "I can see you are really (angry, upset, sad)."
- 4) Then keep your mouth shut and have faith in your children to work it through.

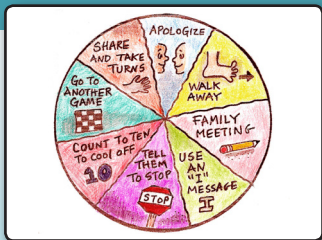
Teach Children What to Do



Instead of telling young children what **NOT** to do, teach them what they **CAN** do.

- 1) Instead of, "Don't hit," teach, "Touch nicely," and demonstrate.
- 2) After teaching, remind by asking, "How do you touch nicely?"
- 3) Teach about throwing the ball outside. Then remind by asking, "Where do you throw the ball?"
- 4) Instead of, "Don't touch the lamp," say, "You can play with the pans."

Wheel of Choice



Using the Wheel of Choice is one way to teach problem-solving.

- 1) **Brainstorm** (with your children) a list of possible solutions to everyday conflicts or problems.
- 2) On a pie shaped chart write one solution in each section and let children draw illustrations or symbols.
- 3) When there is a conflict, suggest the children use the wheel of choice to find a solution that will solve the problem.

Winning Cooperation



Children feel encouraged when you understand and respect their point of view.

- 1) Express understanding for the child's thoughts and feelings.
- 2) Show empathy without condoning.
- 3) Share a time when you have felt or behaved similarly.
- 4) Share your thoughts and feelings. (Children listen to you AFTER they feel listened to.)
- 5) Focus on solutions together.