



Discipline and the Working Parent

All children depend on their parents to set reasonable limits about their behavior. Testing these limits is a child's way of becoming independent. Your job is to set clear, consistent standards that keep your children safe while allowing them to grow.

Working parents face special challenges in disciplining their children. At the end of a long day, it may seem easier to let your child do whatever she wants than to insist that she help set the dinner table. But it's just as important for working parents to set reasonable standards for their children. Consistent limits will lead to better behavior on the part of your children and will help them feel more secure.

Discipline and the Caregiver

When it comes to consistency, working parents with young children have one more hurdle to cross: that their youngsters probably spend a good part of their day with a professional caregiver. Your job will be easier if you choose a caregiver whose disciplinary ideas and methods are similar to yours. Have a frank discussion about discipline when you're interviewing prospective caregivers. If the caregiver says that all children need a good spanking once in a while, or that anything goes as long as they don't break the furniture, you may want to keep looking. Discuss with the caregiver your house rules and methods of discipline.

Values and Fairness

- ✓ Take time to consider your values about parenting and priorities about discipline.
- ✓ Ask yourself which of your child's behaviors bother you and why. If the behavior doesn't violate your values, maybe it shouldn't be an issue at home or with a caregiver.
- ✓ Try to understand your child's capacity to comply with your requests and those of a caregiver.
- ✓ When you have a good handle on what your child



can do, set goals that are consistent with your child's capabilities and level of maturity.

- ✓ Keep in touch with the caregiver about your goals for your child.

Disciplining Your Child

- ✓ When your child breaks a rule set by you or a caregiver,

be consistent and prompt when enforcing the consequences.

- ✓ Discuss the consequences of your child's out-of-limits behavior rationally so you can act fairly and consistently.
- ✓ Tell your child that while you don't approve of his behavior, you still love and respect him.
- ✓ Talk about your approach to discipline with your caregiver.

Encouragement and Praise

- ✓ Use encouragement and praise when your children behave within the limits you set.
- ✓ Tell your children how proud you are of them.
- ✓ Be realistic and positive in your assessments.
- ✓ Find caregivers who are positive and you'll feel more assured that the discipline your child receives during the day is consistent with your values and expectations.