

Encouraging good behaviour

Most children will learn how to behave well if the environment in which they grow up in is nurturing and caring.

The idea that “punishment” has an important place in the rearing of children is misleading. Too often punishment is used to satisfy the need of adults to get back at the child. The child often cannot understand what they have done wrong. Frequently, children fail to learn from being punished.

Punishment can give rise to anger and resentment. These feelings do not encourage improved behaviour.

Parental disapproval of the behaviour, not the child, may help a child learn how to behave acceptably. Where the environment a child is raised in is a positive one, parents' approval and disapproval are powerful tools. A secure and well-loved child will usually want to please the people she/he loves.

A happy relationship between a parent and a child is the most important foundation on which to build acceptable behaviour.

Provide a positive environment

Children are more likely to grow up behaving well if they are:

- loved, valued and told how important they are
- shown how to behave well because the adults around them behave well
- not expected to behave in ways which are beyond their developmental capacities
- given clear rules
- supervised well and kept occupied with appropriate activities
- provided with predictable and sensible routines
- having their physical and emotional needs well attended to

Parents must be consistent about rules and expectations

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