

INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PARENTING

What is Positive Parenting?

Positive Parenting is not restricted to a method, a set of rules, or a style; it is a belief, a way of living. Children should be treated with respect, free from fear of violence and shame, and guided with loving encouragement. The very first step to become a positive parent is to adjust one's thinking, by improving your own knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills. To achieve this, parents must be willing to reflect on themselves and their role as parents, do their best to complete all the activities; and use the new information in their daily interactions with their children. Parents will learn that communication is a crucial way to ensure an ongoing relationship with their children.

Positive Parenting Manual

This manual allows us to begin thinking about how we can bring up a child without inflicting/causing physical harm. This method is known as positive parenting.

This manual focuses on specific tools such as:

- How to establish goals for you and your child
- How to spend quality time with your children
- How to express yourself and enable your child to express their feelings in a safe environment
- How to use praise and reward
- How to give instructions and establish household rules
- How to redirect and ignore negative behaviours
- How to use consequences and establish cool down times
- How to resolve conflicts

By repeatedly referring to this manual, you will gain a sound understanding of the different methods available to discipline your child.



**What positive parenting is:**

- Positive parenting is about long-term solutions that develop children's self-discipline.
- Positive parenting is clear communication of expectations, rules and limits.
- Positive parenting is about building a mutually respectful relationship with your children.
- Positive parenting is about teaching children life-long skills.
- Positive parenting is about increasing children's competence and confidence to handle challenging situations.
- Positive parenting is about teaching courtesy, non-violence, empathy, self-respect, human rights and respect for others.

What positive parenting is not:

- Positive parenting is not permissive parenting.
- Positive parenting is not letting children do whatever they want.
- Positive parenting is not about having no rules, limits or expectations.
- Positive parenting is not about short-term reactions or alternative punishments to slapping and hitting.



A common complaint among parents is that their children are not obedient.

"This child is very disobedient. S/he never listens to anything we say." "S/he always does what we ask her/him not to do. Not in the least bit obedient." Are statements like these made in your family? Do you feel that your children are disobedient?

In your opinion, what characteristics are typical of a child who is obedient? A child who is inclined to be disobedient?

List them separately.

Disobedient	Obedient

Compare your column on obedience with that of another parent's column on obedience. Have a discussion on this. You most probably will see both similarities and differences between the two lists.

Reflect on your own parenting style and consider how you contribute to this behavior.



The differences highlight that what we consider as obedience/disobedience is a relative factor. This just means that the way you think of it is different to the way someone else thinks about it.

Once you have a clear understanding of the key behaviours you want to see or change, try out the strategies below to address these behaviours and support your child to think and act independently.



1. Make a list of what is considered good and bad behaviour at home, the boundaries of these behaviours as well as the consequences of not adhering to the boundaries. Depending on the age of your child/ children, do this together with them. Display this list at home in a place where everyone can see.
2. Appreciate and praise the child every time s/he displays good behaviour. The love you show towards your child must be unconditional and positive.
3. Also note, we should disapprove and dislike the wrongful behaviour of the child, not the child himself.

At times, parenting can be difficult! So, it is important to keep in mind that these positive parenting techniques take time and patience to be successful. It cannot be achieved in one day. If they don't work today, remember to try again tomorrow. It is important to be consistent in your parenting approach and being consistent is the only way your child may be able to understand what you are trying to communicate.

References

National Parenting Taskforce, (2013), The Art of Parenting: Summary Guide, Parenting Guide_Summary Guide.pdf (sharepoint.com)

Parenting for Lifelong Health: Handbook for Adolescents

