

Parenting 25 series

Grandparenting



Department of Health

Online Version



1. People now always talk about 'positive parenting' in bringing up children. What exactly is that?

Positive parenting means:

- Building up a good relationship with the child by having closer communication with him. **Discipline would become easier if the child likes you.**
- Giving more attention and respect to the child. **Praising and encouraging** him.
- Having realistic expectations by **taking into account the child's developmental level and characteristics** (e.g. his abilities, interests and dislikes).
- Being consistent and firm in discipline. **Setting rules and following through.**
- Using **non-harmful ways** instead of spanking and shouting to manage misbehaviours.

2. Children ought to behave well. Why need to praise them? Will praise spoil them?

- Small children need adults to tell them what he should and should not do.
- If we do not tell the children what they have done well, they will not know and hence reduce the



Verbal praise

chance of doing that good behaviour again.

- Only those who have received little praise tend to be easily carried away by praise.
- Hence, give **praise and encouragement** to children when you catch them **being good**.



Tangible reward

3. My granddaughter is very naughty. I doubt whether sparing the rod can make her behave.

- Spanking or humiliating a child will not make her behave. On the contrary, it may **arouse** her **negative emotions** and **lower** her **self-esteem**. It may also **affect** her **relationship** with you.



- **Spanking or scolding** may stop a child from misbehaving but the **effect is short-lived**.
- To decrease her undesirable behaviour, your grandchild needs to learn the acceptable ways to behave and also your recognition for her desirable behaviour.
- The following strategies can be used to manage children's misbehaviour:

Not sharing at play:



Refusing to do homework:



Whining or attention seeking:



Fighting/not following instructions:



4. My grandson is only afraid of his parents but totally ignores my instructions. What should I do?

- Work together with the child's parents to carry out behaviour management **by rules instead of by people**. Make sure the child understands that he has to follow the family rules and not just his parents' words.
- Prepare a **behaviour chart** with the child. When he has achieved the target behaviour (e.g. finishing homework before watching TV), he will earn a stamp from his parents or you. A small reward can be given to him when he has certain amount of stamps.

Behaviour Chart							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
★	★	★	★	★	★		
	★	★		★	★		
					★		

5. My granddaughter is the darling of the family. She is still small and what's so wrong for us to give way to her and pamper her?

- The style of parenting has a far-reaching impact on a small child by affecting her thinking, emotion and behaviour as she grows up.
- **Satisfying** a child's **every request** and giving way to her will **turn her into a self-centred tyrant**, affect her interpersonal relationship and development.
- Loving a child does not mean satisfying all her requests. There are many ways to show your love to a child such as by kissing and hugging her, spending time and talking with her about her school life, her interests and hobbies.

6. My grandchild is becoming a little bully who scares everybody away. Is there anything I can do to stop him?

- **Consider seriously** whether the child's wants are reasonable:

Wants violating the principles of discipline:



Wants that adversely affect others:



- Cultivate good character in the child:

Remind the child to obey rules:



Develop a habit of sharing in the child:



Encourage the child to help others:



Teach the child to be polite:



- **Set a good example** and be a role model for the child.

7. My grandchild is still small. There's no need to hurry him to be independent.

- Children acquire certain ability when reaching a specific age. However, if we do not provide the chance for them to learn at the appropriate developmental level, they will lose the chance to explore and practise their skills and would then lag behind others. (Please refer to the Child Development series of leaflets)

- Young children can learn fast. Adults should **expose the child to new experience** and **encourage him to try new things** at this stage. He will also be proud of himself if he can achieve on his own.
- **Allow the child to try what he can.** Be prepared that he may make a mess. Observe and give verbal guidance. Give physical help only when he is unable to complete the task.



- **Instil a sense of responsibility** in the child and teach him not to rely on others for everything.
- Apart from enhancing self care, **encourage the child to take care of others** as well.



8. I have enough experience in teaching my grandchild. Why should I bother to listen to the child's mum and dad who often comment on my practices as old fashioned?

- The society is ever-changing. Practices adopted by the elder generation may be totally different from the current practices.
- Grandparents possess rich life experiences while their next generation are better in absorbing and mastering new ideas. Both have their own merits.
- No matter whose practices are used in the end, the child's interest should be put in the first place. Try to **reach an agreement** for the benefit of the child.
- If no agreement can be reached, you may like to **see what others around you say or do**. You may also seek advice from professionals, such as the healthcare staff of Maternal and Child Health Centre.

9. My son and daughter-in-law often argue with me on matters related to child discipline. How can I get around it?

- Arguments and quarrels are interactive processes. The angrier you are, the more agitated the other party will become. (On the contrary, if you **stay calm, the other party will tend to be calm.**)

- So stop and check on your own facial expression and tone of voice to see whether you are exactly as maddening and spiteful as the other party.
- Be calm and patient whenever there is a disagreement:

1) Take a deep breath. Let your body muscles relax and calm down.



2) Put yourself into the other person's shoes and try to understand why the other party says so.



3) Explain what you think and let the other party understand why you do so.



4) Discuss calmly and accommodate each other to reach an agreement.



- If you find yourself **getting out of control, stop the discussion** and walk away, say, to drink some water, and resume discussion only after both of you have calmed down.

10. The way my grandchildren are taught by their parents just doesn't work so I teach the children in my way. What is the problem with that?

- If the parents and the grandparents adopt completely different approaches in child discipline, the child will become confused.
- Some children may develop different tactics in front of their parents and grandparents. Such attitude will have a negative impact on cultivating virtues in the child.
- Hence, **consistency and taking a united front by all family members** are of utmost importance in child discipline.
- Each family should try to agree on rules and avoid inconsistencies:
 - * All family members have to **respect and comply with the rules**. Rules should not be changed according to one's wish.
 - * Be **consistent and follow through**. The child may be uncooperative or even throw tantrums at the beginning. Do not give in and be sure to persist even after making a few attempts.
 - * If there is disagreement, do not show it in front of the child. You can **discuss with the child's parents later to reach an agreement**.

11. I had an argument with my daughter-in-law. To my surprise, my son did not stand on my side. Where has his filial obedience gone?

- Your son might want to remain neutral rather than take side with you.
- Try to **think from your son's perspective**. What would your situation be if your spouse has an argument with your parents?
- Actually you have been someone's daughter-in-law as well. Try to recall how you wanted to get along with your mother-in-law when you were young. Perhaps you will then understand your daughter-in-law's thoughts and situation better.

TIPS

- ✓ Praise and encourage children when you catch them being good.
- ✓ Ignore attention-seeking behaviours and take away privileges for a short time from children when they misbehave.
- ✓ If you want children to obey, rules for them and child management agreement between adults are important.
- ✓ Love the children not by satisfying all their requests but by talking, spending fun time with them and allowing them to try what they can do.
- ✓ Try to get along with your grandchild's parents by taking their perspective as well as being calm and patient.



Family Health Service

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