



PARENT TIPS: SKILL-BUILDING APPROACHES TO DISCIPLINE

I think of discipline as the continual everyday process of helping a child learn self-discipline.
– Fred Rogers

Parenting is filled with many personal decisions. Each family has its own unique culture and values. There's no such thing as perfect parenting and there are no right answers! Discipline can be a particularly challenging issue and differ widely from family to family. There are ways we can build social and emotional skills when children make poor choices. There's much we can learn from one another if we share our ideas and strategies with an open mind and open heart. Sharing our failures and successes can provide invaluable support and help us feel like we are in this together!

TALK ABOUT IT

What does discipline mean to you and your family?

How do you teach social and emotional skills when children make poor choices?

Here are a few ideas to start:

- **Offer choices (within healthy limits) daily**
 - **Why?** By allowing children to make choices about their day, you help them gain a sense of independence, empowerment, as well as an understanding that their actions lead to consequences. By creating opportunities for a child to exercise their free will, while also limiting them to two to three safe options to choose from, they learn that they have the agency to create positive outcomes for themselves.
- **Approach discipline with curiosity**
 - **Why?** By asking questions and reflecting together on choices, you can create a real-life example for your child of how to resolve conflict, communicate effectively, think critically, as well as regulate your own emotions in a situation that you might find frustrating. You can do this by getting answers to the following questions:
 - Why are you choosing this particular behavior?
 - How do you think your choice is making others feel?
 - What other choice might you make in the future?
- **Facilitate a culture of reflection**
 - Reserve a quiet space in your home.
 - Share feedback and feelings with others regularly.
 - Use family meetings to communicate and solve problems.
 - Create a safe space with child-friendly resources.
 - Child-sized tables and chairs
 - Journals and paper
 - Pencils, paint or crayons
 - Snacks and water with utensils at their eye-level and within reach



- **Allow your children to experience natural consequences**
 - Provide opportunities for your child to build resilience by allowing them to experience moments of failure.
 - Support your child with healthy ways to respond to disappointment.
 - When your child causes harm, discuss ways in which they can repair harm whether its a broken toy or hurt feelings.

PARENT TIPS: SKILL-BUILDING DISCIPLINE SCENARIO

SCENARIO

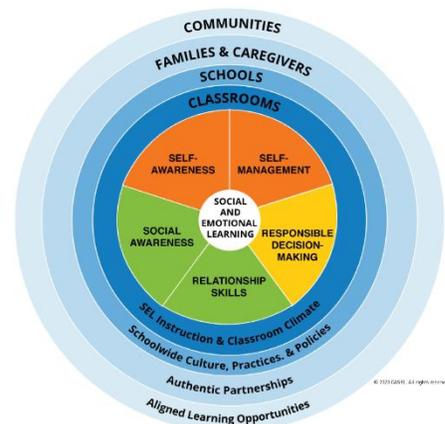
It's time to get ready for school in the morning. Though you have a consistent morning routine, your child is playing in his room when he is supposed to be getting dressed and ready for the day. After calls to his room to get dressed, you go in only to find him continuing to play. You're frustrated and now running late.

First, YOU are not alone if this has happened to you! This scenario or a similar version happens to most parents at some point. There's NO one way to respond!

TALK ABOUT IT!

Build your parenting social and emotional intelligence collaboratively by sharing thoughts and ideas. Before sharing how you might respond in this situation, discuss your thoughts on the following questions:

- How would you feel in this situation? How do you believe your child is feeling? How are your goals in the morning the same? How are they different?
- What social and emotional skill(s) do you have that you can promote in your child?
- What social and emotional skill(s) do you have that you can promote in yourself?
- How might you respond to your feelings if you acted on impulse or quickly reacted to your child?
- Using social and emotional skills to think about your responses, in what ways might you react to this situation that models and builds skills?



Here are some additional ideas:

APPROACH DISCIPLINE WITH CURIOSITY

- Are you wanting more time to play?
- Are you tired or wanting a break?

OFFER AUTHENTIC CHOICES (WITHIN HEALTHY LIMITS) DAILY

- We do need to get you ready for school, but would you like to pick out your own big kid outfit to wear?

PTA

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

FACILITATE A CULTURE OF REFLECTION

- What can you look forward to doing at school today? Are you looking forward to seeing your friend?
- After school, how can we be sure you have time to play in your room?

ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO EXPERIENCE NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

- For young children, they do not feel the natural consequences of being late for school like adults do. So, their natural consequences for getting ready late instead might result in not getting to spend time in the morning on fun or connecting activities they enjoy because they've already spent that time.
- For older students, there are direct school consequences they'll feel for being late and marked tardy.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS INVOLVED

- **Responsible decision-making** – Making choices in a reflective way and projecting ahead to the impacts of the decision on ourselves and others.
- **Self-management** – Our ability to manage our emotions and set and attain goals that are aligned to meeting our core needs and desires.
- **Social awareness** – Empathizing with others' thoughts and feelings and how they may be impacted by our choices.

NEXT STEPS...

Want to learn more about how to co-create a family morning routine in which each family member takes responsibility for their roles? Check out this video short on [A Smooth Morning Routine](#)