

ARE DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT THE SAME THING? AN EXPLANATION AND SELF-TEST

Some people think discipline is the same as punishment. They are not the same.

What is punishment?

Punishment includes the following ways of dealing with misbehavior:

Verbal punishment – yelling, threatening, name-calling, and put-downs.

Physical punishment – spanking, pinching, twisting arms, pulling ears, etc.

Taking away favorite things.

Time-Out.

Logical Consequences. This can overlap with taking away favorite things. In this punishment the consequence relates directly to the misbehavior; for example taking a bike away for a set time when the child oversteps boundaries when riding the bike or cutting off access to video games if siblings are fighting over them.

What's wrong with punishments?

Some punishments like time-out, taking away favorite things and logical consequences can be used effectively when used sparingly and appropriately. The problem with punishments is that they can lead to embarrassment, anger, humiliation, fearfulness, anxiety, and alienation from the caregiver. Spanking can lead to physical injury and having children taken away by protective services agencies. Verbal punishment can easily become abusive and lead to mental and physical health problems. Punishments are typically less effective than other forms of discipline. They do not teach children how to change what they do as discipline should do.

What is discipline?

1. Discipline is helping a child develop self-control by teaching, guiding, and explaining about what was wrong with the child's behavior and what to do instead.
2. It involves setting limits and correcting misbehavior quickly and respectfully like using verbal re-direction or even a raised eyebrow.
3. It means being consistent and firm but also kind and fair.

4. It is about providing a trusting and loving atmosphere, teaching children to make good choices and being a good model for them.
5. For infants and toddlers, it means supervision and being alert to early signs of trouble, distracting them or removing them from situations, redirecting their behavior and safety-proofing their environment.
6. Discipline can also involve “restitution”. For example, if a child does something that violates the rights of a sibling, he or she should be told, “Since you purposely did xxx to your sister, you need to apologize and do something nice for her to make up for what you did. Tonight you should do her household chore in addition to your own.”
7. Reward is a more effective motivator than punishment and the most effective technique on this page! Children want to please parents and a simple “Good job!”, a sincere thanks, and “I really appreciate that” help to motivate children. It can also mean using a sticker/reward chart to recognize efforts to correct a problem.

Go on to the self-test.

Discipline? Or Punishment? SELF TEST

After each item put D (discipline) P (punishment) E (either, depending on how it's used)

1. Setting limits
2. Giving choices
3. Praise
4. Being a good role model for children
5. Hugs and smiles
6. Natural consequences
7. Loss of privilege
8. Problem solving together
9. Expressing parental disappointment
10. Redirection
11. Clear and open communication
12. Establishing a few family rules
13. Consistency
14. Structuring the environment
15. Noticing good behavior
16. Time-Out

17. Distracting the child
18. Yelling
19. Spanking
20. Teaching a child behavior we want to see

How did you do?

If you put D for 1,2,3,4,5,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,17, and 20 - Good for you!

If you put P for 18 and 19 – Good for you!

If you put E for 6, 7, 9, 16 – You are terrific!