

Positive Discipline

There will be times when it seems impossible to get your child to behave. Here are some ideas to help ease frustration and avoid conflict.

- Know your child's abilities and limitations. When they misbehave, it might be because they can't do what you're asking.
- If a child breaks a rule, control your anger. Take time to cool down.
 - Substitute a safe activity.
 - Distract a 1-2 year old.
 - Remind a 2-5 year old of the rule.
 - Remove a privilege.
 - Choose a suitable consequence.
 - Enforce a time-out...one minute per year of age.
- Once you make a rule or promise, stick to it.
- Children learn to do what works. If you use a bribe to stop bad behavior, your child will probably behave badly again.
- Set basic rules and limits – explain reasons for the rules. Be consistent with discipline so children know what is expected.
- If you can figure out why your child is misbehaving you are closer to solving the problem. Let your child know that you understand. For example, "I know you're feeling sad that your friend is leaving, but you still have to pick up your toys."
- Offer choices when possible. This lets you set limits and still allows your child some independence. Try saying, "Would you like to pick up your toys by yourself, or should I help you?"
- Your child is more likely to do what you want if you make it fun. For example, "Let's have a race and see who can put their coat on first."
- If you know certain things always cause trouble, plan ahead, talk to your child about what behavior is acceptable, and what will happen if they don't obey.
- When your child follows the rules offer encouragement and praise. It can be as simple as saying, "Thank you for coming right away," and hug your child.
- Teach self-control by example. Children learn positive behaviors and values by watching you. Be the kind of person you want your child to become.



The Oakland County Health Division will not deny participation in its programs based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability. State and federal eligibility requirements apply for certain programs.