

# Alternatives to Physical Punishment

Spanking or hitting a child for unwanted behavior may keep you from learning why he or she misbehaved in the first place.

What physical punishment may do instead is teach your child to use violence instead of his or her words when angry.

So what is a parent or caregiver supposed to do when a child's behavior must be corrected?

Simply talking and explaining instead of acting can teach your child to connect his or her feelings with words.



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## Here are loving and respectful approaches to use to handle your child's misbehavior:

- \* **Listen.** Have your child explain why he or she misbehaved. You may discover an unmet need is the cause of his or her actions or lack of them.
- \* **Give Choices.** Let your child weigh the undesired behavior against the consequence.
- \* **Breathe.** Just inhaling and exhaling deeply can calm you down and maybe your child as well.
- \* **Give your child time** to correct the behavior before discipline is needed.
- \* **Whisper.** Lowering your voice requires self-control on your part and will get a child's attention.
- \* **Validate** your child's feelings. Let your child know that you can relate to his or her feelings but not the behavior.
- \* **Reward and praise** your child when your expectations and rules are met. Such positive reinforcement can be more effective in achieving desired behavior compared to constant punishments.

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**The goal of disciplining your child is to teach appropriate behavior and enforce consequences when actions do not meet your expectations. It's worth exploring what works best to avoid hitting your child.**

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