



Week of February 6, 2017
For Immediate Release

Discipline is Different for Everyone

Lori Hayungs, Human Sciences Specialist, Family Life

We know this to be true. Parenting is not a 'one size fits all' kind of journey. Understanding that each child is unique becomes important even as we consider guidance and discipline. Guidance and discipline strategies will change as children grow and they will also be unique to each particular child. We won't have just one strategy that we use from start to finish. We will, however, select strategies that grow as our child grows and that match their temperament and personality.

The first step then is selecting a discipline strategy that is appropriate for the age of the child. Appropriate toddler age strategies include redirecting and ignoring. Examples of appropriate strategies for preschoolers include natural consequences or time-in. Consider this more effective version of time-out called 'time-in' – essentially it is cuddle time or positive quiet time to get the child's needs met and ensure emotional regulation for both parent and child.

The second step is then selecting the strategy that meets each child's particular temperament and personality. Some children will respond quickly to a particular strategy while others may have a limited response. You may even need to select different strategies for siblings due to their different temperaments.

The third step can actually be considered 'one size fits all'. Consistency. Consistently applying your strategy over and over, at home, at grandma's and at the store is a huge piece to guidance and discipline success. This means that your strategy needs to be able to be implemented in all places. We don't select one strategy for grandma's house and a different one for the store. This is confusing to children and they may become unsure of exactly what your expectations are.

Here are some links to great, free resources with additional suggestions on age-appropriate strategies:

- Disciplining Your Preschooler - Understanding Children:
<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5007>
- Disciplining Your Toddler - Understanding Children:
<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5008>
- Parenting Young Teens - Parenting in Stepfamilies:
<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5047>

Remember, guidance and discipline is a balance between being loving and kind while at the same time being firm and consistent.

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Lori Hayungs, Human Sciences Specialist, Family Life
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
712-737-4230 or lhayungs@iastate.edu