

# preschool



**TOPIC**  
**DISCIPLINE**

**Faith at**  
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# preschool



## Disciplining Young Children

### Practice #1: Establish Your Authority

Children need a clear answer to the question, “Who is the boss?” God has delegated oversight of your child’s welfare and development to you, placing you in a position of authority over them. Parents need to model clarity and consistency. Say what you mean, mean what you say and act upon it. Parents are commanded to train their children even when it is inconvenient to do so (Colossians 3:20-21).

### Practice #2: Discipline Rather Than Punish

Punishment is negative, making someone pay for what they’ve done. Discipline is positive – training toward a better future. Like touching a hot stove, we learn from the consequences of our actions. Discipline in childhood helps children avoid “learning the hard way” later in life.

What about spanking? Scripture teaches that “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him” (Proverbs 22:15, 13:24 and 29:15). Administering “the rod” apart from biblical principles, however, can cause more harm than good.

God holds parents accountable for how they use the authority He has given them. Parents should never discipline children out of embarrassment, frustration or anger. Accidentally spilling the milk or waking the baby is not an occasion for stern discipline.

Discipline should be used in a way that leads the child to repentance and restores the relationship with God, mom, dad and others (Proverbs 23:14 and Romans 3:22-24).

### Practice #3: Lovingly Instruct

Starting in the preschool years, discipline and instruction should be a package deal (Ephesians 6:4). We often make the mistake of allowing our desire for changed behavior to replace our desire for a changed heart. After a temper tantrum, explain that God wants us to obey and talk about the difference between self-control and out of control. Loving instruction after discipline helps train your child to think like a follower of Christ rather than merely behave in order to avoid punishment.

