



Children See  
Children Learn

## Ready-to-use Workshop

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Facilitator Handbook for  
Parent Workshop on Child Discipline



*best start  
meilleur départ*

[www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca](http://www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca)

by/par health **nexus** santé

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# Introduction

The goal of this ready-to-use workshop is to reduce the prevalence of physical and emotional punishment of children from birth to age 6. It has been developed for service providers who work with parents of young children. It provides suggestions to deliver a workshop of approximately 1 to 1.5 hours on the topic of child discipline. This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the website [www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca](http://www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca).

The website contains eight short video clips. Four of these videos share positive discipline methods and comments from experts and are organized by the age of the child:

1-year old, 2-year old, 3-year old, 4-5 year old. The other four videos offer tips from parents who have children aged 1, 2, 3 and 4-5. The videos can be used as part of a group workshop for parents or on a one-on-one basis, through home visits or in clinical settings.

Please note this workshop is designed for the general population. It is not designed for parents experiencing major difficulties or who have children with identified developmental or behavioural issues. In such cases, it is best to direct parents to more comprehensive or specialized services such as a health care provider, child development/behaviour specialist or counseling program.

The website [www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca](http://www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca) contains additional information and links to other related websites. Facilitators may find the information on these websites useful in preparing for a parent workshop.

Prior to presenting a workshop, facilitators are encouraged to:

- View the videos.
- Review the links provided on the website and at the end of this guide.
- Prepare the audiovisual system to visit the websites.  
For example, have a computer, high-speed internet, projector, speakers, screen, etc.
- Have a flipchart, markers and sticky notes available.
- Set up the room to facilitate group discussions (i.e., chairs in a horseshoe or circle).
- Have a list of resources available that direct parents to further information, including local parenting programs.
- Have participant workshop evaluation forms available, if required (see page 13).

## Assessing the Participants' Needs and Interests

When facilitating adult groups, it is important to make sure their needs are met and their experiences are valued. It may be best if the workshop is promoted for participants with children of similar ages, so that only the relevant videos are shown and discussions are relevant to all parents. It would be too long and repetitive to have all eight videos shown in one session.

At the beginning of the workshop, it may be helpful to ask the participants what they hope to learn about child discipline and write their comments on a flipchart. You can focus on these topics in your discussions. If you don't discuss a topic mentioned by a parent, refer the parent to the list of additional resources.

## Setting the Tone

Parenting is difficult and it is important to normalize the challenges that parents encounter. Give the parents an opportunity to discuss their challenges and they will quickly realize that other parents have similar challenges. They will also see that learning to parent is a life-long process.

Try to model parenting skills such as “thinking about options” and “problem-solving” during group discussions. This builds on the parents' strengths and helps them see how they can anticipate and respond to their children's needs.

Parents who think their children are doing things on purpose to bother or manipulate them are more likely to respond in anger or with heavy-handed restrictions and too much control. By emphasizing the links between behaviour and child development, the parents will better understand the child's behaviour. They will also learn that there are developmentally appropriate parent responses.

In some cases, it may be necessary to help parents reframe some of the comments they make about their children. For example, if a parent says: “My child is spoiled”, you can reframe it by saying “You feel your child needs a lot of attention. That is very typical for children that age.”

It is best if parents can focus on the workshop without having young children to care for at the same time. If that is not possible, encourage the parents to look at the videos again on their own time (at [www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca](http://www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca)) and share them with their partners.

## Suggested Agenda for Group Sessions

The following agenda is suggested for a parent workshop of approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.

- Introduction of presenter and participants. (5-10 minutes)
- Introduction to positive discipline. See page 4. (10-15 minutes)
- Video segments and discussion. See page 6. (30-45 minutes)
- Conclusion and evaluation. See pages 11 and 12. (5-10 minutes)

## Introduction of Presenter and Participants

Participants will be more comfortable if they are introduced to the other participants. You can do the introductions in a variety of ways. Start by introducing yourself and then ask the participants to introduce themselves. Here are some options:

- Have participants say their name and the names and ages of their children.
- Have participants say their name and describe one great moment they had with their child(ren).
- Have participants say their name and one positive character trait they see in their child(ren).
- Have participants say their name and one positive character trait they see in themselves as a parent.



## Introduction to Positive Discipline

### Activity: My hopes...

This activity may help get the group thinking of how their daily interactions with their children shape the way they interact with other people.



- Using sticky notes, ask each parent to write down the personal characteristics they hope their child will have when they are grown up. These characteristics should focus on **the type of person they hope the child will be** (responsible, independent, loving, etc.) and not on careers or material assets (be rich, be a doctor, etc.).
- Ask parents to work in pairs to discuss these characteristics. Ask them to write one characteristic per sticky note (with no duplicates).
- Ask each pair to post their sticky notes on a flipchart.
- The facilitator can group the characteristics as they are read back to the full group.
- The facilitator highlights the similarities in parents' hopes for their children and opens a discussion. In our daily interactions with children:
  - Are we helping them develop independence, problem-solving skills, empathy, etc.?
  - Or are we, too often, acting in a way that is not the way we want them to interact with others? (Can use elements of the information in the following section, *What is positive discipline?*)
- Thank the participants for their comments.

## What is positive discipline?

Provide a general description of positive discipline to parents. They need to realize that positive discipline is not about letting children do whatever they want.

- Positive discipline helps children understand what is important through strategies that are appropriate to their development levels.
- It is best to guide children in such a way that they understand the impact of their actions and become able to solve problems for themselves.
- It is important for parents to ensure they are calm themselves before dealing with a conflict or difficult situation. This will help children calm down and learn to self-regulate. (For additional information on self-regulation, see *Additional Information for Facilitators* on page 15.)
- Punishment can physically or emotionally hurt a child. Physical punishment includes spanks, slaps, swats, pinches, etc. Emotional punishment includes humiliation, isolation, rejection, threats, etc.
- Although punishment may stop the unwanted behaviour, it does not help children understand how their behaviour affects others or why it is dangerous.
- Physical and emotional punishments teach the child that it is okay to solve problems with violence. They also can damage the relationship between the parent and the child.



## Video Segments and Discussions

There are 8 videos on the *Children See. Children Learn.* website ([www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca](http://www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca)). We encourage you to preview these prior to presenting them to parents.

Focus on the videos relevant to the parents in your workshop. For example, for parents of toddlers, show the 2-year old *Ideas in Action* video and, after a discussion with the parents, show the video *Tips from Parents for 2-year olds*.

The following pages summarize the key messages in the videos and suggest questions for discussion.

### A note on time-outs

As children, many parents have experienced time-outs, and have been encouraged to use them as an alternative to physical punishment with their children. Isolating a young child does not correspond to what we now know about attachment and may be harmful to the parent-child relationship. Here are some reasons why time-outs are not supported in this resource:

- There can be many reasons for a child's behaviour. Many times, what parents view as 'misbehaviour' is a developmentally appropriate response to the situation.
- Young children need to learn to self-regulate and parents can help them do that if they stay calm and discuss the situation instead of losing their temper.
- The capacity to calm oneself develops gradually and is learned with the help of a parent (this is called "co-regulation").
- Young children do not yet have the capacity to understand the implications of their actions on themselves or on others.
- Children who are punished may simply learn not to get caught the next time, instead of understanding the impact of their behaviour.
- If children are punished by their parents for their mistakes, they may learn that they should not go to their parents when they are in trouble.
- Difficult situations with young children are a great way to help them learn how to problem-solve. Parents can do that much better with a conversation than by isolating the child.

There may be instances where it is necessary to remove a child from a situation for a short time if the child risks hurting another child or themselves. This should not be carried out as punishment, but should be a means of helping the child to calm down through a process of co-regulation with the parent.



# 1 Year Old



Ideas in Action – 1 Year Old (6:55)



Tips from Parents of 1 Year Olds (4:08)

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Key messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respond to your baby's cries.</li><li>• Provide the nutrition and sleep needed for health.</li><li>• Set the environment so that it is safe to explore.</li><li>• Distract your child away from danger.</li><li>• Use the word "Stop" and avoid saying "No".</li><li>• Explain why certain things are dangerous.</li><li>• Be consistent.</li><li>• Provide warmth and cuddles.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Discussion</b>   | <p><b><i>What are some of the needs of a 1 year old?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: physical and verbal affection, comfort, food, sleep, safe and interesting environment to explore, etc.</p> <p>Help participants make the link between the children's developmental needs and typical behaviours at this age.</p> <p><b><i>Why is physical or emotional punishment harmful at this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: child may be hurt, child will fear the adult, child will not want to explore and learn, etc.</p> <p><b><i>What are some examples of actions parents can take to minimize conflicts with children this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include some of the key messages from above. If some elements are missed, include them in the discussion.</p> |

# 2 Year Old



Ideas in Action – 2 Year Old (11:39)



Tips from Parents of 2 Year Olds (5:51)

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Key messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remember that toddlers need to develop their independence.</li><li>• Show your child how to solve problems calmly.</li><li>• Provide age-appropriate suggestions.</li><li>• Help your child learn to make decisions.</li><li>• Acknowledge positive behaviour.</li><li>• Use natural consequences when appropriate.</li><li>• Redirect towards acceptable activities.</li><li>• Maintain routines.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Discussion</b>   | <p><b><i>What are some of the needs of a 2 year old?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: independence, security and reassurance, safe and stimulating environments, routines, understanding feelings, beginning to regulate emotions, verbal interactions, etc.</p> <p>Help participants make the link between the children's developmental needs and typical behaviours at this age.</p> <p><b><i>Why is physical or emotional punishment harmful at this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: child may be hurt, child will fear the adult, child may become aggressive towards other children, child may not understand how to make choices and understand the impact of their behaviour, child may imitate parents' behaviour, etc.</p> <p><b><i>What are some examples of actions parents can take to minimize conflicts with children this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include some of the key messages from above. If some elements are missed, include them in the discussion.</p> |

# 3 Year Old



Ideas in Action – 3 Year Old (10:30)



Tips from Parents of 3 Year Olds (4:34)

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Key messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to your child.</li><li>• Teach your child words that express feelings.</li><li>• Explain to your child how things work.</li><li>• Be available when your child needs you.</li><li>• Do not make fun of your child.</li><li>• Do not shame your child.</li><li>• Do not use sarcasm.</li><li>• Plan transitions and explain them.</li><li>• Try to see the situation from your child's point of view.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Discussion</b>   | <p><b><i>What are some of the needs of a 3 year old?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: reassurance when they are afraid, understanding and naming their feelings, help in understanding others and the world around them, time to figure things out and problem-solve, help in learning to regulate emotions, daily routines, support to expand language skills, etc.</p> <p>Help participants make the link between the children's developmental needs and typical behaviours at this age.</p> <p><b><i>Why is physical or emotional punishment harmful at this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: child may be hurt, child will fear the adult, child may be aggressive towards other children, child may not understand the impact of the behaviour, child may hold back feelings and emotions, child may not understand what else they could have done, child may not learn to problem-solve without aggression, etc.</p> <p><b><i>What are some examples of actions parents can take to minimize conflicts with children this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include some of the key messages from above. If some elements are missed, include them in the discussion.</p> |

# 4-5 Year Old



Ideas in Action – 4-5 Year Old (12:50)



Tips from Parents of 4-5 Year Olds (3:48)

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Key messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take the time to answer your child's questions.</li><li>• Help your child understand the impact of their actions on others.</li><li>• Explain the reasons for rules.</li><li>• Play imagination games and talk about the feelings of the characters.</li><li>• Read books and explain the moral of the stories.</li><li>• Help your child make links between stories and real life.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Discussion</b>   | <p><b><i>What are some of the needs of 4 - 5 year olds?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: having their questions answered to understand the world around them, time with parent, time with peers, successes to build confidence, help to understand other people's feelings and needs, help to expand their language skills, etc.</p> <p>Help participants make the link between the children's developmental needs and typical behaviours at this age.</p> <p><b><i>Why is physical or emotional punishment harmful at this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include: child may be hurt, child will fear the adult, child may be aggressive towards other children, child may have difficulty making friends, child may not understand the impact of their behaviour, child may withdraw, child may not learn to problem-solve without aggression, child may develop low self-esteem, child may not seek your help when there is a problem, etc.</p> <p><b><i>What are some examples of actions parents can take to minimize conflicts with children this age?</i></b></p> <p>Answers will likely include some of the key messages from above. If some elements are missed, include them in the discussion.</p> |

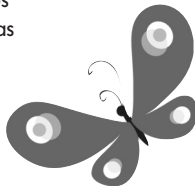
# Conclusion

Summarize the key messages of the workshop:

- When dealing with a difficult situation with a young child, the parent needs to be calm or take a moment to calm down. The parent will be a good role model and will help the child calm down.
- It is the role of the parent to try to understand why the child is behaving that way. In many cases, the child is behaving in a way that corresponds to the level of development. It is important to listen to the child's point of view and acknowledge their feelings and needs.
- Parents also need to understand their own reactions. Sometimes, parents will jump to conclusions. Parents need to understand their triggers and be aware of their own feelings and needs.
- The parent can help the child problem-solve the situation and explain why some behaviours are not acceptable.
- In many cases, planning ahead can help reduce conflict: ensuring the child is not hungry or tired, anticipating challenges and preparing the child for it, announcing transition ahead of time, establishing routines, etc.
- Physical and emotional punishment are not effective ways to discipline children.

Make sure you have a list of local resources for the parents to address specific needs that may arise from the discussion. This may be social services, EarlyON child and family centres, parenting programs, public and community health services, recreation services, libraries, childcare services, support groups, mental health counseling, etc.

Encourage parents to share the information in the videos with other people who provide care to their child, such as the other parent, extended family, friends, neighbors, child educators, etc. Depending on the parent's access to technology, share the website with them ([www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca](http://www.ChildrenSeeChildrenLearn.ca)).



## Evaluation

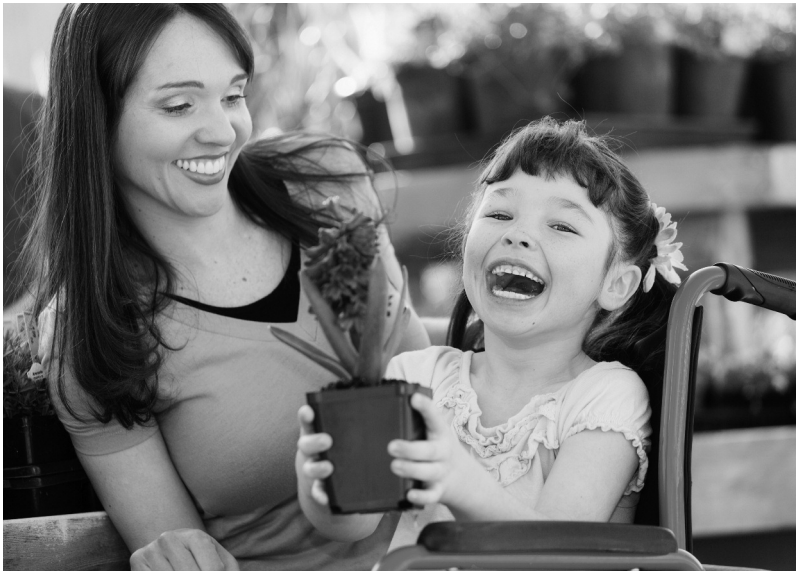
Evaluations can measure the short and long-term impact of the parent workshop.

You can measure the participants' immediate responses formally or informally.

One informal method is simply to ask for their comments and responses after taking part in the training session. One formal method is to have them fill out an evaluation form. There is a sample evaluation in the form of an action plan on the next page.

It may also be very useful to follow up, three to six months after the session, to see if there have been any changes in the parents' behaviour and if they have noted a positive impact on their children. This means you will need to collect the participants' contact information and their written permission to contact them. These are the kinds of questions you could ask them in the follow up:

- Do you remember taking part in the session?
- Can you summarize some of the key messages of the session?
- Did you make any changes after this session? If so, what are you doing differently? If not, why not?



# Action Plan for Participants

Please take a few minutes to think of your action plan.

What are the three most interesting points you learned on positive discipline?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

Starting tomorrow, what will you do to support positive discipline?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who can you share this information with?

\_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how would you rate the session?

☐ Poor

☐ Fair

☐ Good

☐ Excellent

Do you have other comments?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Adaptations for One-on-One Sessions

You may want to choose to show some of the videos to a parent on a one-on-one basis. Here are some suggestions for adapting the information in this guide for use during home or clinic visits.

- Try to engage the parent with questions such as:
  - What are some of the challenging moments you have with your child?
  - Can you think of some of the reasons why your child is behaving that way?
  - Do you think the way you were raised influences the way you parent your child?
  - Have you noticed some things that help prevent or solve conflicts?
- Show the video of the *Ideas in Action* for the relevant age of the child.
- At the end of the video, try to relate the information to the parent with questions such as:
  - Did this video give you any ideas for things you may want to try?
  - Do you feel you need more suggestions on dealing with conflicts without punishing your child?
  - Do you have any questions on this topic?
- Show the video of *Tips from Parents* for the relevant age of the child. At the end of the video, ask them:
  - Can some of these suggestions help you?
  - Do you want to problem-solve some of the difficult situations you experience with your child? Then help them work through a typical situation.
- Most of the discussion suggestions provided in the section “Video Segments and Activities” of this guide may be used to engage the parent. You may want to word them in such a way that it does not appear to be a test of their parenting knowledge but rather a conversation where you are also sharing your ideas on the topic.
- As with group programs, conclude the discussion by summarizing the key messages, asking the parent what they may do differently, providing local resources and encouraging the parents to share the videos with others who care for their child (see page 11).
- Thank the parent for discussing the issues and, if necessary, schedule another appointment for a follow-up.



## Additional Information for Facilitators

If you want to learn more about child discipline, we encourage you to consult the following resources:

**Be the Best Parent You Can Be: Why Positive Discipline Works** A pamphlet from the Child Welfare League of Canada available in many languages.  
<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/be-best-parent-you-can-be-why-positive-discipline-works>

**Corporal Punishment** A research-based article from the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development on the prevalence and outcomes of corporal punishment in the international context. [www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/textes-experts/en/456/corporal-punishment.pdf](http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/textes-experts/en/456/corporal-punishment.pdf)

**Eyes on Discipline – How Much is Enough?** A pamphlet from the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. Offers general information on effective discipline techniques. [www.child-encyclopedia.com/pages/PDF/DisciplineANGmcP.pdf](http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/pages/PDF/DisciplineANGmcP.pdf)

**Frequently Asked Questions about Time-Out** A booklet from Best Start on appropriate ways to guide children's behaviour.  
<https://resources.beststart.org/product/k70e-frequently-asked-question-about-time-outs-booklet>

**Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting** A book by Save the Children and Dr. Joan Durrant explaining what positive discipline is and how to apply it with children 0-18. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/positive-discipline-everyday-parenting-pdep-fourth-edition>

**Positive Discipline is in Your Hands** A resource for parents and caregivers of infant to teens. Developed by the Positive Discipline Coalition of Durham Region.  
<https://www.durham.ca/en/regional-government/departments.aspx>

**Self-Regulation: Calm, Alert, and Learning** An article from Canada Education explaining self-regulation. <https://www.edcan.ca/articles/self-regulation-calm-alert-and-learning>

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|                            |   |
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