



**POSITIVE
DISCIPLINE
ASSOCIATION**

DEVELOPING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

What is Positive Discipline?

"We have received amazing comments from the teachers who have been to the Positive Discipline seminar. It has been credited with essentially eliminating the 'Principal Referrals' and allowing the teachers to handle some of the large class sizes we have this year because the kids do their own problem solving."

Big Springs, Elementary School
Garland, TX

Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse? Children do better when they feel better."

Jane Nelsen

"I believe we have a different environment in our school when it comes to our interaction with each other. There are problems, (Christmas is coming you know) but the percentage of negative interaction is going down. I am not dealing with conflicts in the office in the same quantity."

School principal - after 3 months of Positive Discipline in the Classroom in her school

Positive Discipline is a program designed to teach young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. Based on the best selling Positive Discipline books by Dr. Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, Cheryl Erwin, Kate Ortolano, Mary Hughes, Mike Brock, Lisa Larson and others, it teaches important social and life skills in a manner that is deeply respectful and encouraging for both children and adults (including parents, teachers, childcare providers, youth workers, and others).

Recent research tells us that children are "hardwired" from birth to connect with others, and that children who feel a sense of connection to their community, family, and school are less likely to misbehave. To be successful, contributing members of their community, children must learn necessary social and life skills. Positive Discipline is based on the understanding that discipline must be taught and that discipline teaches.

Jane Nelsen gives the following criteria for "effective discipline that teaches":

FIVE CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

Effective discipline...

1. **Helps children feel a sense of connection.** (Belonging and significance)
2. **Is mutually respectful and encouraging.** (Kind and firm at the same time.)
3. **Is effective long - term.** (Considers what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about himself and his world – and what to do in the future to survive or to thrive.)
4. **Teaches important social and life skills .** (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.)
5. **Invites children to discover how capable they are.** (Encourages the constructive use of personal power and autonomy.)

The Positive Discipline Parenting and Classroom Management models are aimed at developing mutually respectful relationships. Positive Discipline teaches adults to employ kindness and firmness at the same time, and is neither punitive nor permissive. The tools and concepts of Positive Discipline include:

- **Mutual respect.** Adults model firmness by respecting themselves and the needs of the situation, and kindness by respecting the needs of the child.
- **Identifying the belief behind the behavior.** Effective discipline recognizes the reasons kids do what they do and works to change those beliefs, rather than merely attempting to change behavior.
- **Effective communication and problem solving skills.**
- **Discipline that teaches** (and is neither permissive nor punitive).
- **Focusing on solutions instead of punishment.**
- **Encouragement (instead of praise).** Encouragement notices effort and improvement, not just success, and builds long-term self-esteem and empowerment..

"Parents and teachers can no longer function as bosses, but they must acquire the skill of being democratic leaders."

Rudolf Dreikurs in Social Equality the Challenge of Today

"Democracy in the classroom is not just a frill or an isolated social studies unit, but an educational necessity."

Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels and Arthur Hyde in Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools 2nd Ed. 1998

"My children are becoming more aware of their capabilities and my confidence in them."

R. Swetz, parent

"I have not seen a child yet that hasn't improved because of Positive Discipline"

Margaret Wilson, 4th grade.

"The best motivation for doing a job well is the satisfaction of doing it."

Rudolf Dreikurs in Social Equality the Challenge of Today

Unique characteristics of the Positive Discipline Model also include:

- Teaching adults and students through experiential activities. Creating opportunity to practice new skills and to have fun learning by doing.
- Classroom discipline programs and parent education programs that are consistent. Parents, teachers, and childcare providers can work together to provide a secure, consistent environment for children.
- Inexpensive training and ongoing support so members of communities can teach each other Positive Discipline skills..
- Certified trainers across the country who can work with schools and communities.

"The more we learn, the more enjoyment we get out of being parents. Thank you!"

Parent

A HISTORY OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

The Positive Discipline Parenting and Classroom Management Model is based on the work of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs.¹ Dr. Adler first introduced the idea of parenting education to United States audiences in the 1920s. He advocated treating children respectfully, but also argued that spoiling and pampering children was not encouraging to them and resulted in social and behavioral problems. The classroom techniques, which were initially introduced in Vienna in the early 1920s, were brought to the United States by Dr. Dreikurs in the late 1930s. Dreikurs and Adler refer to the kind and firm approach to teaching and parenting as "democratic."

In the 1980's, Lynn Lott and Jane Nelsen attended a workshop facilitated by John Taylor.² Lynn began training interns to teach experientially and wrote (with the help of her interns) the first Teaching Parenting Manual. Jane was the director of Project ACCEPT (Adlerian Counseling Concepts for Encouraging Parents and Teachers), a federally funded project that had received exemplary status while in its developmental phase. Jane wrote and self-published *Positive Discipline* in 1981. It was published by Ballantine in 1987. In 1988, Jane and Lynn decided to collaborate on the book which is now titled, *Positive Discipline for Teenagers*, and began to teach parenting and classroom management skills experientially. Lynn and Jane also wrote *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* and developed a manual filled with experiential activities for teachers and their students.

In the years since, Positive Discipline series has grown to include titles that address different age groups, family settings, and special situations. Positive Discipline is taught to schools, parents, and parent educators by trained Certified Positive Discipline Associates. Community members, parents, and teachers are encouraged to become trained facilitators and to share the concepts of Positive Discipline with their own groups.

Positive Discipline parent education classes are taught across the country, and Positive Discipline is successfully used as the classroom management model in private, religious, and public elementary schools. A demonstration school program is currently being developed.

I've taught school for 15 years. In the past the teacher was the judge, jury, and executioner. Now children solve their own problems so we have more time.

Mary DiNatale, 3rd grade teacher

"Positive Discipline is one of the few practical, effective classes I've taken since entering the teaching field. PD has opened so many options for dealing with student needs. I feel like I have more "real" tools to actually help kids be successful and help themselves."

Teacher

"My oldest child is starting to volunteer her thoughts and opinions. We love the changes!"

Parent

¹Alfred Adler (1870 - 1937) was a Viennese psychiatrist who immigrated to the United States. Though a contemporary of Freud, he promoted a substantially different view of human behavior. Adler believed that behavior is not driven by events in the past, but moves toward a goal of belonging and significance that is influenced by each individual's decisions about themselves, others, and the world. Rudolf Dreikurs (1897 - 1972), also a Viennese psychiatrist, was the director of one of the child guidance centers in Vienna that used Adler's methods with families and classrooms. He immigrated to the United States to avoid Nazi persecution in 1937, earlier in his career than Adler. Dreikurs was one of the first people to recognize the benefits of groups in therapy. He was a tireless advocate for relationships based on mutual respect, both at home and at school. His well known books include Children the Challenge, Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom, The Psychology of the Classroom.

²John Taylor lives and works in Oregon. He is author of Person to Person: Awareness Techniques for Counselors, Group Leaders, and Parent Educators. (1984) R & E Publishers, Saratoga, CA.

THE EVIDENCE FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Formal evaluation comparing Positive Discipline Schools with schools using other discipline programs is just beginning. However, studies of implementation of Positive Discipline techniques have shown that Positive Discipline tools do produce significant results. A study of school-wide implementation of classroom meetings in a lower-income Sacramento elementary school over a four-year period showed that suspensions decreased (from 64 annually to 4 annually), vandalism decreased (from 24 episodes to 2) and teachers reported improvement in classroom atmosphere, behavior, attitudes and academic performance. (Platt, 1979) A study of parent and teacher education programs directed at parents and teachers of students with "maladaptive" behavior that implemented Positive Discipline tools showed a statistically significant improvement in the behavior of students in the program schools when compared to control schools. (Nelsen, 1979) Smaller studies examining the impacts of specific Positive Discipline tools have also shown positive results. (Browning, 2000; Potter, 1999; Esquivel) Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that a student's perception of being part of the school community (being "connected" to school) decreases the incidence of socially risky behavior (such as emotional distress and suicidal thoughts / attempts, cigarette, alcohol and marijuana use; violent behavior) and increases academic performance. (Resnick et al, 1997; Battistich, 1999; Goodenow, 1993) There is also significant evidence that teaching younger students social skills has a protective effect that lasts into adolescence. Students that have been taught social skills are more likely to succeed in school and less likely to engage in problem behaviors. (Kellam et al, 1998; Battistich, 1999)

Although specific studies of the Positive Discipline parenting program are in the early stages, programs similar to Positive Discipline have been studied and shown to be effective in changing parent behavior. In a study of Adlerian parent education classes for parents of teens, Stanley (1978) found that parents did more problem solving with their teens and were less autocratic in decision making. Positive Discipline teaches parents the skills to be both kind and firm at the same time. Numerous studies show that teens who perceive their parents as both kind (responsive) and firm (demanding) are at lower risk for smoking, use of marijuana, use of alcohol, or being violent, and have a later onset of sexual activity. (Aquilino, 2001; Baumrind, 1991; Jackson et al, 1998; Simons, Morton et al, 2001) Other studies have correlated the teen's perception of parenting style (kind and firm versus autocratic or permissive) with improved academic performance. (Cohen, 1997; Deslandes, 1997; Dornbusch et al, 1987; Lam, 1997).

To learn more about Positive Discipline



POSITIVE
DISCIPLINE
ASSOCIATION

- POSITIVE DISCIPLINE ASSOCIATES
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- ARTICLES
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Visit us online at www.posdis.org

or call toll-free 1-866-POS-DISC (1-866-767-4372)

What is The Positive Discipline Association and what does it offer?

* Mission

The Positive Discipline Association is dedicated to promoting and encouraging the ongoing development of social and life skills and respectful relationships in families, schools, businesses and community systems.

* Services

The Positive Discipline Association, exists to strengthen families, schools, and communities. It provides training for trainers who educate parents (including foster parents and house parents for residential settings), teachers, administrators and other helping professionals. It provides training materials and follow-up services. All the work is based upon Adlerian/Dreikursian principles for issues relating to parenting, guidance, discipline, relationships, communication skills, and team building. Specific target groups for workshops or trainings include, but are not limited to:

- Parents, grandparents, foster parents and other family caregivers
- Families
- Parent educators
- Teachers and school administrators for preschool through grade 12
- Child-care providers
- Therapists, counselors, social workers
- Community organizations
- Communities of faith
- Corporate trainers

Literature review conducted by
Jody McVittie, M.D.

For more extensive research
visit online at:

<http://www.posdis.org/page7.html>

CHART

The Significant Seven Perceptions and Skills

1. Perceptions of personal capabilities. "I am capable."
2. Perceptions of significance in primary relationships. "I contribute in meaningful ways and I am genuinely needed."
3. Perceptions of personal power of influence over life. "I can influence what happens to me."
4. Intrapersonal skills. The ability to understand emotions, to use that understanding to develop self-discipline and self-control, and to learn from experience.
5. Interpersonal skills. The ability to work with others through communicating, cooperating, negotiating, sharing, empathizing, and listening.
6. Systemic skills. The ability to respond to the limits and consequences of everyday life with responsibility, adaptability, flexibility, and integrity.
7. Judgmental skills. The ability to use wisdom and to evaluate situations according to appropriate values.

Positive Discipline

GUIDELINES

From the book *Positive Discipline*, by Jane Nelsen.

Misbehaving children are “discouraged children” who have mistaken ideas on how to achieve their *primary goal*—to belong. Their mistaken ideas lead them to misbehavior. We cannot be effective unless we address the mistaken beliefs rather than just the misbehavior.

Use *encouragement* to help children feel “belonging” so the motivation for misbehaving will be eliminated. Celebrate each step in the direction of improvement rather than focusing on mistakes.

A great way to help children feel encouraged is to *spend special time* “being with them.” Many teachers have noticed a dramatic change in a “problem child” after spending five minutes simply sharing what they both like to do for fun.

When tucking children into bed, ask them to *share with you* their “saddest time” during the day and their “happiest time” during the day. Then *you share with them*. You will be surprised what you learn.

Have *family meetings* or *class meetings* to solve problems with cooperation and mutual respect. This is the key to creating a loving, respectful atmosphere while helping children develop self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and problem-solving skills.

Give children *meaningful jobs*. In the name of expediency, many parents and teachers do things that children could do for themselves and one another. *Children feel belonging when they know they can make a real contribution.*

Decide together what jobs need to be done. Put them all in a jar and let each child draw out a few each week; that way no one is stuck with the same jobs all the time. Teachers can invite children to help them make class rules and list them on a chart titled, “We decided.” Children have ownership, motivation, and enthusiasm when they are included in the decisions.

Take time for training. Make sure children understand what “clean the kitchen” means to you. To them it may mean simply putting the dishes in the sink. Parents and teachers may ask, “What is your understanding of what is expected?”

Teach and model mutual respect. One way is to be *kind and firm at the same time*—kind to show respect for the child, and firm to show respect for yourself and “the needs of the situation.” This is difficult during conflict, so use the next guideline whenever you can.

Proper *timing* will improve your effectiveness tenfold. It does not “work” to deal with a problem at the time of conflict—emotions get in the way. Teach children about *cooling-off periods*. You (or the children) can go to a separate room and do something to make yourself feel better—and then work on the problem with mutual respect.

Get rid of the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first you have to make them feel worse. Do you feel like doing better when you feel humiliated? This suggests a whole new look at “time out.”

Use Positive Time Out. Let your children help you design a pleasant area (cushions, books, music, stuffed animals) that will help them feel better. Remember that children do better when they feel better. Then you can ask your children, when they are upset, “Do you think it would help you to take some positive time out?”

Punishment may “work” if all you are interested in is stopping misbehavior for “the moment.” Sometimes we must *beware of what works* when the long-range results are negative—resentment, rebellion, revenge, or retreat.

Teach children that *mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn!* A great way to teach children that mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn is to model this yourself by using the Three Rs of Recovery after you have made a mistake:

- (1) *Recognize your mistake.*
- (2) *Reconcile: Be willing to say “I’m sorry, I didn’t like the way I handled that.”*
- (3) *Resolve: Focus on solutions rather than blame.* (#3 is effective only if you do #1 & #2 first.)

Focus on *solutions* instead of *consequences*. Many parents and teachers try to disguise punishment by calling it a logical consequence. Get children involved in finding solutions that are:

- (1) *Related*
- (2) *Respectful*
- (3) *Reasonable*
- (4) *Helpful*

Make sure the message of love and respect gets through. Start with “I care about you. I am concerned about this situation. Will you work with me on a solution?”

Have fun!
Bring joy into homes and classrooms.

VISIT US ONLINE AT www.positivediscipline.com

THESE GUIDELINES CAN BE VIEWED OR DOWNLOADED AT
www.empoweringpeople.com/guidelines.html

Montessori and Positive Discipline

Montessori: Discipline must come through liberty. . . We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. He is an individual annihilated, not disciplined.

Dreikurs and Adler: All people have equal rights to dignity and respect—including children.

Montessori: The first aim of the prepared is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent from the adult.

Dreikurs: Take time for training and encouragement.

Montessori: Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement, the image of human dignity which is derived from a sense of independence.

Nelsen and Glenn: In addition to the primary goal of belonging and significance, children thrive when they feel capable. All Positive Discipline methods help children feel a sense of belonging, significance, and capability.

Montessori . . . education must be understood as a help to the unfolding of the child's inborn psychic powers. This means we cannot use the orthodox means of teaching which depends on talk.

Nelsen: Stop telling and start asking curiosity questions that "draw forth" from the child instead of trying to "stuff in"—which goes in one ear and out the other.

Montessori: We must help the child to liberate himself from his defects without making him feel his weakness.

Nelsen: Mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn.

Montessori: He who is served is limited in his independence. No one can be free unless he is independent.

Dreikurs: Never do anything for a child that a child can do for himself.

Montessori: The child can only develop by means of experience in his environment.

Nelsen: Provide guidance and have faith in your children to learn and grow from mistakes.