

Parenting Revolution

Toddler Edition

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Discipline

ACTIVITY SHEET



Some parents resist discipline for fear of dampening their child's spirit. Yet, children need firm boundaries and loving discipline in order to feel safe and secure. The word 'discipline' can be controversial – often confused with 'punishment'. However, discipline and punishment are not the same thing. Punishment is focussed on providing an undesirable consequence for a negative behaviour; whereas discipline is focused on guiding, teaching, and providing course-correction where needed. Punishment tends to evoke fear; but discipline (when done well) evokes respect. This final session of the Parenting Revolution examines the most effective ways to guide, correct and encourage your toddler.



PROGRAM DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

This session is designed to help you:

- (a) understand the real meaning and importance of discipline
- (b) learn timeless principles to govern your parenting by
- (c) engage effective course-correction when your little one veers off track

Defining the Rules

Even more effective than making a list of rules you'd like your toddler to adhere to, is to identify the core values you'd like your toddler live by. Values are the qualities and characteristic you consider most important. They may be expressed as behaviours, but they are governed by ethics and morals. For example, learning to "share toys with others" is to live by the values of kindness and generosity.



Consider the list of behaviours that most parents would like their toddler to display. Can you identify the corresponding value?

01. Coming when called	<i>Reliable (trustworthy, dependable)</i>
02. Washing hands before eating	<i>Hygiene (looking after health)</i>
03. Saying 'please' and 'thank you'	
04. Offering the bigger cookie to a friend	
05. Listening to and obeying instructions	
06. Serving/helping others	
07. Quiet inside voices	
08. Bedtime prayer - Thankful for the day	
09. Trying your best, even if difficult	
10. Saying sorry after making a mistake	

HINT: 01 = Reliable; 02 = Hygiene; 03 = Manners; 04 = Generous; 05 = Honour; 06 Kindness; 07 = Considerate; 08 = Grateful; 09 = Excellence; 10 = Responsible

**Behaviour is what you 'do'.
Core values are who you 'become'.**

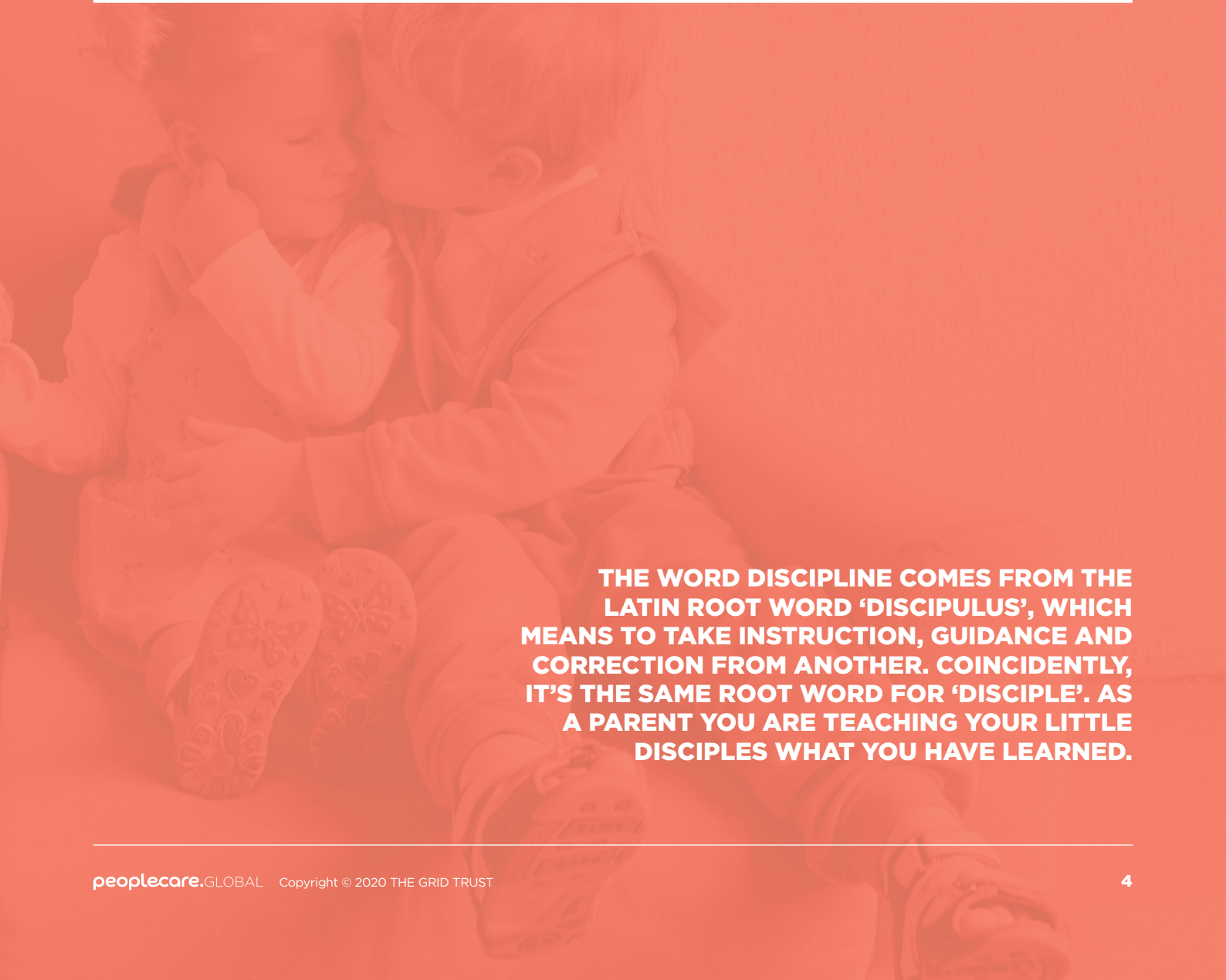


What are the three of most important values you'd like to pass on to your toddler?

01.	02.	03.
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What specific behaviours would best reflect the core values you've identified above?

01.	
02.	
03.	



THE WORD DISCIPLINE COMES FROM THE LATIN ROOT WORD 'DISCIPULUS', WHICH MEANS TO TAKE INSTRUCTION, GUIDANCE AND CORRECTION FROM ANOTHER. COINCIDENTLY, IT'S THE SAME ROOT WORD FOR 'DISCIPLE'. AS A PARENT YOU ARE TEACHING YOUR LITTLE DISCIPLES WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.

Correction Versus Redirection

Instilling core values and encouraging corresponding behaviours is a process that takes time. Sometimes your toddler will get it right; often they will get it wrong. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, your toddler will likely step out of the bounds of 'desired behaviour' multiple times per day. Rather than correcting every minor infringement, consider reminding, retelling or redirecting them. While roadblocks may stop unwanted behaviour, the goal of course correction is to put your child back on track (headed towards their desired behavioural destination).

Consider the following ways to help keep your child 'on track':

SELECTIVE IGNORING

When you selectively ignore attention seeking behaviours, you can effectively prevent them from continuing. If your toddler is unable to elicit a reaction, they eventually get bored of trying and re-orient their behaviour.

NOTE: Serious behaviours (such as hurting others) should not be ignored.

DISTRACTION

If your toddler seems set on creating mayhem, is getting cranky or has become emotionally invested in doing the wrong thing, do or say something interesting or funny to shift their attention and arrest their behaviour.

NOTE: Distraction tends not to work when your child is very upset

REDIRECTING

Redirection helps replace undesirable behaviours with more desirable ones. Instead of telling your toddler what they should not do, redirect them towards what they can or should do. The more fun the activity, the easier it is to redirect them.

NOTE: Redirecting is especially useful following selective ignoring or distraction



For each scenario below, identify ways to selectively ignore, distract or redirect your toddler:

01.

Your toddler is playing with their food and taking their time to eat:

EXAMPLE IDEA: Redirect your toddlers' attention by asking them to feed you. Take turns in having a bite ("one for mummy/daddy, one for you") until all the food is gone.

02.

Pretending to play drums, your toddler is loudly banging their spoon on the table:

EXAMPLE IDEA: Join in the fun and create your own band. Introduce new instruments (plastic plates and rubber spatula) that create less noise and won't scratch or dent the table.

03.

Your toddler has been put down for their midday nap but is calling out.

EXAMPLE IDEA: Selectively ignore their attempt to gain your attention behaviour by doing the vacuuming, playing some relaxing music or making a phone call.

04.


Your toddler is becoming frustrated while waiting for their turn on the swing:

EXAMPLE IDEA: Take out some snacks to munch on, play a game of 'hide and go seek' or go on a treasure hunt while waiting for the swing to become free.

05.

While in the store, your toddler sees something they want (but cannot have):

EXAMPLE IDEA: Distract your child by saying "oh wow, look... your favourite, mangoes!" Walk quickly into the adjacent fruit and vegetable aisle and ask, "how many do you think we should get?"

A photograph of a toddler in a bright yellow hoodie and blue boots with red and white stripes, holding the hand of an adult in a grey sweater and blue jeans. They are standing on a large, dark log in a wooded area. The background is softly blurred, showing tree trunks and foliage.

APART FROM A BRIEF SECOND ROUND AT PUBERTY, YOUR TODDLER HAS MORE BRAIN DEVELOPMENT GOING ON THAN THEY WILL AT ANY OTHER STAGE IN THEIR LIFE. THIS IS NOT ONLY WHEN NEURAL WIRING IS SHAPED, BUT ALSO WHEN ETHICS AND MORALS START TO BE MOULDED. RIGHT NOW, YOUR TODDLER IS MORE PRIMED FOR LEARNING THAN THEY EVER WILL BE. SO...

**what do
you want
to teach
them?**

Positive Reinforcement

When your toddler behaves in appropriate and desirable ways, positive reinforcement (reward) may be warranted. You can incentivise behaviour intrinsically (e.g. time, attention and verbal praise) and extrinsically (e.g. tangible treats and prizes). While both are effective, combining the two is most powerful (e.g., giving a prize with verbal encouragement). Beyond achieving behavioural compliance, positive reinforcement serves to guide your toddler towards positive values - developing character, identity and self-esteem along the way.

Negative Reinforcement

When your toddler behaves in inappropriate and undesirable ways, negative reinforcement (penalty) may be warranted. Correction and guidance serve to discourage specific behaviours from being replicated in the future. Negative reinforcement can range in application from ending an activity and being placed in 'time out' through to being reprimanded and experiencing the loss of privileges. The logical consequences of an action can also serve to naturally discourage or extinguish certain behaviours.



'Time Out' followed by 'Time In'

'Time out' involves removing your toddler from the state of play for a set period of time. Despite being one of the most widely used behaviour modification strategies, it's not without its shortcomings. Therefore, when using this strategy, give careful consideration to the following guidelines:

01 CHOOSE A LOCATION

Pre-establish a designated time-out area which is free from any positive stimuli or distraction (e.g., a mat, step or chair to sit on) in a nearby location where your child can still see you. Avoid using places that have positive associations (i.e. bedroom, backyard or playroom).

02 SPECIFY A TIME

Be sure to specify the length of time your toddler must remain seated in the designated area. As a general guide, apply 1 minute for every year of age (e.g. 3 years old = 3 minutes). Don't send your child to time out for too long.

03 SET A TIMER

Because toddlers have a limited understanding of time, set a timer (i.e. iPad countdown or egg timer). This stops your child from asking "can I get off now?" If your child tries to leave the designated area before their time is up, re-start the timer (or add an extra minute).

04 LEARN THE LESSON

After the time is up, have a teaching moment with your toddler. Ask your toddler about what they did wrong, and what they could do differently next time (keep any chat age appropriate - toddlers don't have the attention span or cognitive ability to process lengthy lectures).

05 FINISH WITH TIME IN

Be sure to follow 'time out' with a little 'time in' (an intentional bid for connection with your child - which marks the end of the consequence). 'Time in' can be a story, game, cuddles, tickles, a high five, a song or a shared activity. Time in is likely to lift everyone's mood.

Connecting the Dots

To help your toddler connect their behaviour with consequences, consider the following guidelines:

INTERVENE RIGHT AWAY

The longer the period between behaviour and correction, the less likely your toddler will be able to connect cause with effect.

DON'T DELAY GRATIFICATION

For positive reinforcement to be most effective, incentives/rewards should be given shortly after the display of desired behaviours.

BE SUCCINCT AND CONCISE

The longer your intervention or correction drags on, the less effective it becomes. Make consequences brief and to the point.

AVOID LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

Toddlers do not have the cognitive capacity to process consequences that drag on (lasting hours or days).

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Toddlers don't have the attention span nor the rational thinking skills to process lengthy verbal reprimands. Long lectures are futile.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

The more complicated the consequence, the less impacting becomes. Be sure consequences are developmentally appropriate.

Be Consistent.

If you communicate expectations, make a rule or establish consequence, make sure you follow through! If you say, do it. Not just sometimes, EVERY TIME! If you fail to consistently follow through, your toddler will learn to push the boundaries and ignore your instructions.

Q. When it comes to consistency and follow through, I commit to:

Be Calm.

Discipline is all about guiding and teaching. Your toddler doesn't just learn from what you say, but by watching what you do. The way you manage your own frustrations will set an example for your child. If necessary, create your own 'time out' space to keep a level head.

Q. When it comes to managing my emotions and modelling well, I commit to:

Be Prepared.

Planning in advance helps you to remain cool, calm and collected in the heat of the moment. Before any high-risk situation, sit down with your toddler in advance and communicate your expectations (rules and consequences) in simple, clear and easy to understand ways.

Q. When it comes to our family game-plan, I commit to:

Be Fair.

As the saying goes, 'don't let the punishment outweigh the crime'. Because your toddler is at the very start of their moral development, keep your expectations realistic, the rules simple and the consequences time limited. Always follow up with reconciliation ('time in').

Q. When it comes to guiding, teaching and correcting in a fair manner, I commit to: