

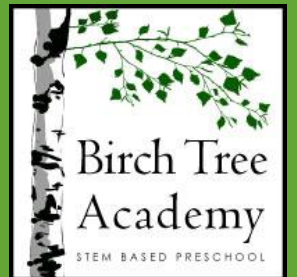
# Positive Discipline



Birch Tree Academy Parent Education

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[www.BirchTreeAcademy.com](http://www.BirchTreeAcademy.com)



# Agenda

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- Why Discipline is Important
- Why Children misbehave
- Positive Discipline and Setting Boundaries
- Discipline by Age
- Consequences
- Consistency
- Tips!



# Why is Discipline Important?

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“DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME.”

# What is Discipline?

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- Teaching your children responsible behavior and self-control.
- With appropriate and consistent discipline, your child will learn:
  - Their actions have consequences
  - To take responsibility for themselves and their actions

# How Discipline Works

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- When applied appropriately, **discipline rewards the child for appropriate behavior and discourages inappropriate behavior**, using fair and positive means
- Effective and positive discipline is about teaching and guiding children
  - Not just forcing them to obey.

# What if There is No Discipline?

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- It is damaging for a child to lack boundaries
- Without discipline, children can be deficient in important life skills including the following:
  - They will not know what is appropriate behavior.
  - They will lack self-control.
  - They will be more likely to engage in negative behaviors that are harmful and even potentially dangerous
  - They will be deficient in social skills such as empathy, patience, and knowing how to share.
- It makes life unpredictable for children
  - They don't know when to stop

# With Discipline

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- Children who have firm boundaries and loving guidance will benefit
  - Suffer less anxiety. Kids don't want to be in charge and have to know that adults taking care of them will set and follow certain rules
  - They are more responsible and enjoy "being good" and helping others at home, at school, and in the world at large.
  - They have more self-control and are more self-sufficient.
  - They know that they are accountable for their mistakes or misbehavior
  - More likely to make good choices because they want to, not because they fear punishment.
- They have a clear understanding of the line between right and wrong



# A Few Things to Remember

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- Let go of self-imposed or societal pressure
- Every child is different
- Do what works for your family
- You are your child's most important role model. **Behave how you want them to behave!**





# Why Children Misbehave

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# Children Misbehave Because...

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- Too young to know that their actions are wrong
- Frustrated, angry or upset and don't know how to express their feelings
- Stressed by major changes such as family breakup, a new sibling or starting school
- Not getting attention (even when they do behave appropriately)
- Feel you have been unfair and want to punish you
- Want more independence and feel constricted



# Positive Discipline

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# What is Positive Discipline?

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- Positive discipline is a method where parents clearly communicate
  - What behaviors are appropriate
  - What behaviors are inappropriate
  - What are the rewards for good behavior
  - What are the consequences for bad behavior

# How it Works

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- Parents set appropriate boundaries for behavior
- Boundaries are clearly (and age appropriately) communicated to the child
- Positive behavior is **consistently** praised and rewarded
- Negative behavior **consistently** faces established consequences

# Setting Boundaries

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- Boundaries communicate acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.
- No Boundaries → Chaos
- Kids need to know where the limits are and that someone cares to enforce them
- There is safety and freedom within boundaries.

# Setting Boundaries (Cont.)

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- Make sure they are age-appropriate
- Kid should be told what the right thing to do is, not just the wrong thing
  - For example, instead of saying "Don't jump on the couch," try "Please sit and put your feet on the floor."
- Be on the same page as your partner
- Pick your battles



A close-up photograph of a young girl with long, wavy blonde hair. She has a yellow ribbon bow in her hair. Her face is decorated with colorful face paint, including yellow, pink, and purple. She is looking upwards and to the right with a joyful expression, showing her teeth. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

# Discipline by Age

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# Infants

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- Babies learn by watching what you do
  - Set examples of behavior you expect
- Use positive language to guide your baby
  - Say, "Time to sit," rather than, "Don't stand."
- Save the word, "no," for the most important issues, like safety.
- Limit the need to say "no" by putting dangerous or tempting objects out of reach.

# Infant – Example

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- Problem: Your child throws food at meals times

## Step 1: Set Boundary

Tell the child: “When you throw food, it makes a mess. Your food needs to stay on your plate/tray”

## STEP 2: Divert Attention

Give them a special spoon to eat with. Teach them to say ‘all done’ and take the tray/plate away

## Step 3: Boundary Reminder

If they continue, pick up the plate and say, “No throwing food or dinner will be over”, then put it back down.

## Step 4: Enforce Boundary

If that doesn't work, say, “You must not be hungry”, take the plate away and end the meal.

# Toddler

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- Your child is starting to recognize what's allowed and what isn't
- They may test some rules to see how you react
- Start introducing them natural consequences
- Praise and give attention to behaviors you like—ignore those you want to discourage.
  - Redirect to a different activity when needed
- Tantrums can become more common as your child struggles to master new skills and situations
  - Anticipate tantrum triggers, like being tired or hungry, and help head them off with well-timed naps and meals.
- Try short time-outs if needed.

# Toddler – Example

- Problem: When you go to the beach, your child throws sand at other kids

## Step 1: Set Boundary

Tell the child: “When you throw sand, it can get other’s eyes. If you continue, we will have to leave.”

## STEP 2: Divert Attention

Give them a ball and encourage them to throw it instead of sand. Play catch. Bring shovels and buckets and encourage them to play with sand.

## Step 3: Boundary Reminder

If they continue, take them somewhere else for a minute as a time-out. Tell them, “We’re going to take a break. Let me know when you’re ready to go back and play nicely”

## Step 4: Enforce Boundary

If that doesn’t work, pack up and leave. Tell them, “If you’re not able to play safely here, we need to go home.”

# Preschool

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- Allow your child to make choices among acceptable alternatives, redirecting and setting sensible limits.
- Teach your child to treat others as he or she wants to be treated.
- Explain that it's OK to feel mad sometimes, but not to hurt someone or break things
  - Teach them how to deal with angry feelings in positive ways, like talking about it.
- To resolve conflicts, use time-outs or remove the source of conflict.
- Begin assigning age-appropriate chores, like putting their toys away
  - Give simple, step-by-step directions
  - Reward them with praise.
- Reinforce natural consequences of their actions

# Preschool – Example

- Problem: When you go to a restaurant, your child won't stay in their seat

## Step 1: Set Boundary

Tell the child: “Going out to eat is a privilege. There are servers with heavy trays walking around. If they run into you, they could drop something and hurt you. You need to stay in your seat or we will have to leave.”

## STEP 2: Divert Attention

Bring small, appropriate games, crayons or blocks for them to play while waiting for food or for after they're done. Play 'I spy', memory games or Pictionary

## Step 3: Boundary Reminder

If they continue, take them outside for a minute as a time-out. Tell them, “We're taking a break. When you are ready to stay in your seat, we can go back.”

## Step 4: Enforce Boundary

If that doesn't work, take your food to go and leave. Tell them “If you can't be safe at a restaurant, we have to leave.”



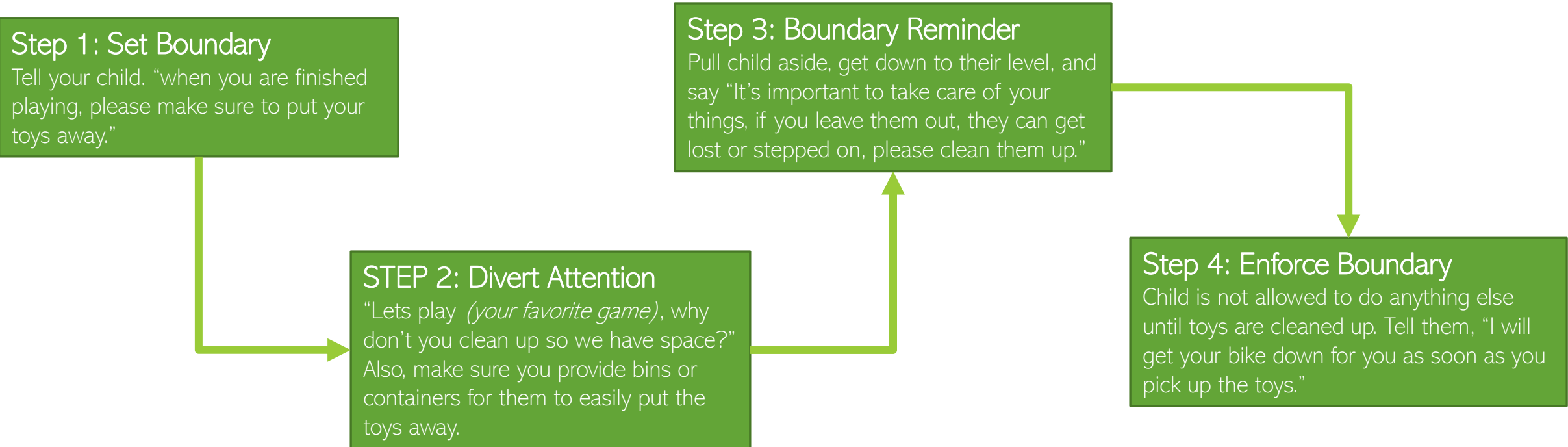
# Kindergarten +


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- Your child should have a sense of right and wrong
  - Talk about the choices they have in difficult situations
  - What are the good and bad options, and what are the consequences of each
- Talk about family expectations and reasonable consequences for not following family rules.
- Provide a balance of privileges and responsibility
  - Give children more privileges when they follow rules and show good behavior.
- Continue to teach and model patience, concern and respect for others.

# Kindergarten – Example

- Problem: Your child won't pick up toys and leaves them all over the floor



A young child with blonde hair, wearing a green jacket and dark pants, is captured mid-jump in a puddle. Water is splashing around the child, creating a dynamic and playful scene. The background is a natural outdoor setting with large rocks and trees.

# Consequences

IF YOU JUMP IN A PUDDLE, YOU MIGHT GET WET

# Overview

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- Teaching your child about discipline means teaching them that their actions have consequences
  - There are good and bad consequences
- Sometimes their actions lead to consequences on their own
- Sometimes you have to provide a consequence so that the child learns to avoid destructive or dangerous behaviors
- Ideally, consequences should immediately follow, and be directly related to the behavior.

# Attention

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- The most powerful tool for effective discipline is attention: reinforce good behaviors and discourage bad choices
- Remember, what children want most of all is their parent's attention
  - How you dispense it sends clear messages
- Give positive attention when your child does something well— withhold it when they misbehave.

# Praise

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- Don't underestimate the positive effect that your praise can have
  - Discipline is not just about punishment, but also about recognizing good behavior.
- Saying "I'm proud of you for sharing your toys" is usually more effective than punishing a child who didn't share.
- **Be specific when giving praise** rather than just saying "Good job!"
  - Make it clear which behaviors you liked
  - The more attention we give to a behavior, the more likely it is to continue.

# Natural Consequences

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- Your child does something wrong, and you let the child experience the result of that behavior
  - There's no need for you to "lecture."
- If a child deliberately breaks a toy, they no longer have that toy to play with
  - The child can't blame you for what happened
  - Important: Don't buy them a new one
- Natural consequences can work well when children don't seem to "hear" your warnings about the potential outcome of their behavior.
- Be sure that any consequence they might experience isn't dangerous



# Creating Consequences

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- Sometimes there isn't a logical or natural consequence for a bad behavior and you must create one
- The consequence for unacceptable behavior may be taking away a privilege.
- This works best if the privilege is:
  - Related to the behavior or issue
  - Taken away as soon as possible after the inappropriate behavior (especially for young children)
- **If you must make threats, make sure you are willing carry them out and they are proportionate to the behavior**
  - Empty threats show our frustration as parents and are not a positive way to encourage the behavior we want in children.

# Time Outs

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- Time-outs are effective because
  - They remove the child from the situation that led to the bad behavior
  - They keep the child from receiving attention that may inadvertently reinforce inappropriate behavior.
- They must be used unemotionally and consistently

# Time Outs – How To

## Pick a Location

Be sure the time-out place does not have built-in rewards  
The television should not be on during time-out  
Ideally a place they can sit

## Let Them Know Why

Let the child know why they are going on time out.  
Connect the behavior with the time-out  
A simple phrase, such as “You are not allowed to hit your sister. You’re taking a time out,” is enough.

## Timing

1 minute per year of the child’s age, to a maximum of 5 min.  
Use a timer—when it beeps, they are done

## Move On

After time-out is over, it is over.  
Don’t discuss the unwanted behavior. Welcome your child back and move on

## No Talking

During the time out, there is almost no communication with the child  
Avoid using time-out for teaching or preaching  
Do not engage in conversations



# Consistency

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# Consistency is Critical

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- Consistency is a key learning tool for your child, because when something is consistent, he can rehearse it and incorporate it inside of himself until it becomes a part of him.
- Children understand the world through consistency. When kids are able to predict how their days will go, they feel more secure and in turn, are more relaxed and make better choices
- Empty threats undermine your authority as a parent and make it more likely that kids will test limits.
- Kids can find change or inconsistencies confusing and may test limits or boundaries to see how far they can go with different adults.

# Tips

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- Any technique will fail if you don't follow through or enforce consequences consistently.
- Don't break your discipline rules by giving in during public exhibitions of bad behavior, such as a child throwing a tantrum while shopping
  - It's your child, what others think is not important
- If you give in to the child's demands, the tantrums will continue.
- Try to keep your goals and your techniques consistent over time
  - If more than one adult is responsible for the child's discipline, be sure you agree about the approaches you will use.



# Good Luck!

Birch Tree Academy is a STEM based bilingual preschool with heart. We're located in the greater Seattle area. Learn more at [www.BirchTreeAcademy.com](http://www.BirchTreeAcademy.com).

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