

# PUNISHMENT vs. DISCIPLINE

*How they differ and why it's important.*

## PUNISHMENT

Purpose: Make someone suffer  
for breaking the rules

Focuses on past behavior

Teaches what "not " to do

Uses the emotional part of the brain  
to create fear of the consequence

More often results in short term change

## DISCIPLINE

Purpose: Teach how to make  
a better choice next time

Focuses on future behavior

Teaches what "to" do

Uses the thinking part of the brain  
to learn new behavior

More often results in lasting change



***Punishment doesn't work  
as well as Discipline. In fact,  
Discipline builds longer  
lasting change over time.***



## PUNISHMENT...

- Results in worse not better grades
- Increases behavior problems
- Decreases child's ability to get along well with others
- Increases aggressive feelings and behavior like anger or hitting
- Reduces self-control

## DISCIPLINE...

- Helps children learn from their mistakes
- Teaches children decision making and self-control
- Helps children understand the consequences of their actions
- Helps children feel understood
- Strengthens the parent - child relationship



## Three "Rs" of Discipline

REASONABLE

RELATED  
to the problem

RESULTING  
from the behavior or action

*The difference is not always “What” is done, but “How” it is done.*

## PUNISHMENT

Yelling at your child for not putting away their toy when you asked.

Grounding your child for a month because they received a bad grade in math.

Biting your child back when they bite you in anger or frustration.

Becoming angry and lashing out at your child when they don't go up to bed immediately after you tell them



## DISCIPLINE

Telling your child that they cannot play with their toy until after dinner because they didn't put it away when you asked.

Telling your child they need to focus on math and, therefore, will not be allowed to do other things until their math grade improves. Then ask your child what kind of assistance would help them with math and brainstorm with them. (e.g. going over problems with them, talking with the teacher, removing distractions)

Telling your child that they hurt you and putting them in another part of the room where they can't touch you until they calm down. Remind them that biting hurts and hurting is not ok.

Having a regular bedtime, creating a relaxing bedtime routine (for example, put on pjs, brush teeth, 2 stories, 1 song and a kiss), preparing your child to begin getting ready for bed in five minutes, telling your child there is not enough time for one of the books or the song, when they did not start their bedtime routine when asked.