



## 7 Myths about Discipline

1. **Punishment will stop children from misbehaving in the future.** *You can* sometimes bully or threaten children into following directions, but punishment does not improve behavior in the long run. Mild consequences may be used from time to time as needed, but consequences are not what inspires cooperation in children.
2. **More reminders help children behavior better.** Nagging doesn't really improve behavior. You have tried it. It doesn't work in the long run. It actually cues children that you are responsible for their behavior, not them.
3. **Telling your child why a behavior is wrong will help that child remember not to do that behavior in the future.** Lecturing and explaining are tempting, but rarely really improve behavior in the long run. You have probably already noticed this.
4. **Lots of praise spoils children. There are different kinds of praise.** "Fluffy praise" is when you tell your child they are "wonderful," "smart," "good," "terrific," etc. That doesn't really help much and can cause your child to be dependent on praise from others. In contrast "praise that works" inspires children to give you the same positive behavior again the future. Children long for our attention, for a connection with us and when we use the "praise that works" for the behaviors we want, we get more of those behaviors.
5. **Once a child shows you that they can do something once or twice, that means they are always able to do it in the future.** We all progress with two steps forward and one step back. The same is true for children. Just because your five year old got herself dressed on her own today, does not mean she can do it again tomorrow. Respect the way children, as well as adults, grow and develop.
6. **Since my other child cooperates easily, this child should be able to do the same thing.** Birth order, temperament, gender, personality, parent-child "chemistry" and lots of other factors influence children's ability to cooperate. Children thrive when parents are able to recognize and accept children's unique traits and needs.
7. **When my child whines, cries or tantrums to get their way, they are just being manipulative.** When parents reward these kinds of behaviors by giving children what they want, even just sometimes, children are more likely to repeat these unwanted behaviors. Rewarding negative behaviors from time to time can keep them going forever. Do your best to consistently ignore behaviors you don't want children to repeat. Sighing, rolling your eyes, and comments of any kind are all attention and reinforce behaviors.

