THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS ABOUT CHILD DISCIPLINE

The goal of discipline is to raise children who want to do right, take pride in being good and who can eventually reason about and control their own behavior.

- More than anything, children want the attention and approval of their parents.
- Praise can be more motivating than criticism. Catch your child doing something right or behaving well and let her know you noticed and that her behavior pleases you. She will be more likely to repeat that good behavior.
- Children often learn more from what we do than what we try to teach them. If they hear yelling and swearing, they will yell and swear. If they see hitting, they will hit. If they see disrespectful behavior, they will be disrespectful. If they see cheating, lying and stealing, they will cheat and lie and steal.
- Rules and consequences for breaking rules should be discussed up front and should always be enforced. A child who knows his parent will sometimes let him get away with breaking the rules will keep trying to do so, knowing eventually the parent will “give in.”
- Younger children simply need rules and consequences. Older children also need to know the reasons behind the rules. Experience with reasoning will help them figure right from wrong when they find themselves facing a new situation for which they don’t know “the rules.” Reasons also provide additional motivation to follow rules.
- When a child misbehaves, label the behavior, tell him what you want him to do instead and give only one reminder (not two, three or more) before administering discipline.
- Name calling or put-downs can cause life-long damage. If a child constantly hears she is stupid, lazy, no good or has the devil in her, she may eventually believe there is no use trying to be anything else.
- Beating or threatening to hurt or publicly shame a child is abuse of adult power and authority. It also isn’t very effective in the long run. Never confuse a child’s fear of a parent’s authority for respect.
- Children must be taught values that guide good behavior so they can figure right from wrong for themselves. Honesty, promise keeping, respect for the property and rights of others, compassion, kindness & generosity are a few examples.

A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT SPANKING

What does spanking accomplish?

- It may create fear, anger, embarrassment or a desire to strike back.
- It teaches that violence is the way to solve problems.
- It confuses children who are being taught that hitting is not right.
- It risks causing unintended injury.
- It makes the parent look out of control. Spanking is upsetting for the child and for others who hear or see the spanking.