Positive Parenting of Infants

Infants

Peel Children's Aid believes that no infant should be spanked, shaken or scolded.

At this stage of their development, shaking or spanking a baby can do serious damage. Even tossing a baby playfully can cause damage. A baby's neck is weak and shaking can result in brain damage or death.
Babies cannot understand consequences for their behaviour at this stage of development. Discipline is not appropriate at this stage of a child's development.

Babies are too young to understand limits and rules.

Building relationships

Before you can work on discipline issues with your child, you have to build a relationship of love and trust.

Infancy is the best time to build a relationship with your baby.
Encourage your baby to trust you. Show your love and affection. Cuddle, talk and sing to your baby.

Developing a routine

Daily routines help babies (and children of all ages) feel safe and secure.

Daily routines such as feeding, sleeping and playing help calm the child.

A crying baby

Respond to your babies crying. Babies cry to communicate their needs such as food, comfort or a clean diaper.

If you can't diagnose the reason for the child's crying, you may feel frustrated and even angry. Even the best of parents can feel they are losing control when a baby cries excessively.

It's important to maintain your control. If you feel your anger building, place the baby somewhere safe such as their crib. Close the door for a few minutes and relax. Perhaps make a tea. Then in a few minutes you will feel calmer and ready to console your crying infant.

The planning stage

Use this time to think about your discipline goals when the child is older.

The purpose of discipline is to teach children about the rules and values of our society and to help them become self-disciplined so that they are happy, responsible adults.
Think about the types of discipline techniques you will use and learn more about them, such as Time-Outs.

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Think about how you will use positive reinforcement and positive language to encourage your children and how to avoid using words that hurt the child's self-esteem.

Knowing yourself and your hot buttons

It's tough to keep your cool all of the time.

Even the most well-meaning parents can feel overwhelmed, frustrated and angry at times.

Good parenting starts with maintaining control over your own feelings.

Take time to recognize the times or situations that push your hot buttons.

Identify the high stress situations and look for ways to ease the pressure.

Learn to recognize your anger early.

Talk to yourself. Find a phrase that will help you regain self control.

Give yourself a time out and take a few minutes to clear your mind and think clearly.

Get help. This isn't always easy. It's difficult to admit we need help with our emotions and/or parenting skills. But asking for support does not mean you're a bad parent. It means you love your child and want to give him or her the best upbringing you can.

Resources for parents

Being a parent is the most important job you will do. Some parents like to meet other parents, learn new skills, keep up to date on the latest parenting advice and some need assistance.

To find out more about the resources available to you, contact your local health unit or ask your doctor about groups and resources in your area. Or call the Parents Help Line at 1-888-603-9100 or Peel Children's Aid.

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