

From the Desk of the School Social Worker...

Expressing Love Through Discipline

Disciplining your children is an expression of love, correction, and protection. These should be the motives behind your methods. Discipline teaches your children that all behaviors have consequences...good behaviors result in positive consequences and poor behaviors result in negative consequences. Discipline corrects bad attitudes, smart mouths, and willful defiance. Discipline protects your children from harm (ex. "Don't touch...its hot!" or "Don't text and drive").

Discipline and boundaries are not set to impose limits on your children for the sake it. Rather, these boundaries let them know you love them and are trying to help them avoid consequences they really don't want in life, such as pain, guilt, regret, hardships, and broken relationships. Discipline guides your children in good decision making and sets them up for a life of successful outcomes.

To ensure that your children know if and when they are going in the right direction, you must establish guiding boundaries for them and provide rewards or consequences along the way. Encourage them not to step out of bounds as these markers provide safety. Discuss the rationale behind the boundaries as an expression of love, if needed. Share some of your own personal life lessons, if appropriate. If only we had listened to our parents!

Oh the teenage years! If your teen has long crossed the boundaries and bad habits have formed, continue to look for opportunities to reel him or her back into safety. Your children can't pull out of nose dives by themselves. Their decision making has become skewed in pursuit of the course they have chosen. This teen may be experiencing a lot of those negative feelings as a result of going down the wrong path. In actuality, he or she would like to return to the peace and happiness that existed before the mess began, but doesn't know how...too many steps out of bounds. Let your teen know you still love him or her and provide forgiveness when necessary. When the teen wants to change his or her ways and get back on the right course, be sensitive. Trust may have to be reestablished, but allow your teen to feel a fresh start with the confidence that he or she can make better decisions in the future.