



Positive Discipline

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Montessori and Discipline...in her own words

- o Discipline cannot be imposed
 - o Discipline is reached always by indirect means
- o Work
 - o Intense attention and perseverance to the same exercise
- o Stillness
 - o Child = disorderly; teach various degrees of immobility leading to silence
- o Development of Self Discipline
 - o Following a path of abstract concepts
- o Will Power
 - o Mental and practical repetition
- o Obedience
 - o Very complex (see next page)

Obedience

- o 3 Periods
 - o First Period: the child does not obey. It is exactly as if she were psychically deaf and out of hearing of commands
 - o Second Period: the child would like to obey. He looks as though he understood the command and would like to respond to it, but cannot, -or a least he doesn't always succeed in doing it. It is not "quick to mind" and the child show no pleasure when he does obey.
 - o Third Period: the child obeys at once, with enthusiasm. As he becomes more and more perfect in the exercises, he is proud that he knows how to obey.

How do we accomplish this?

- o RESPECT
- o Children are valuable in their own right just because they are who they are. They deserve to be respected as independent individuals and for exactly who they are at any given age and stage of development. They deserve the opportunity to learn at their own pace and in a way that fits their learning style.
- o It is the adults' privilege and responsibility to help the children grow intellectually, physically, and emotionally so that they may discover who they are, recognize their own greatness, and see how they can contribute to themselves, each other, and the world.

Practically speaking, how do we accomplish this?

- o Speak gently in a way that allows a child to feel safe and respected
- o Walk across the room rather than yell to a child
- o Get down on the child's eye-level
- o Be patient
- o Re-direct, as necessary
- o Ask (what is happening) and listen (to the problem)
- o Try to figure out why the child may be expressing concern, anger, frustration, etc. – knowing the child will help clarify the situation
- o Positive communication and discipline will serve the children well. When carried out with the purpose of helping the child develop as fully as possible, a sense of peace and calm will prevail.

Communication

- o Think about how you would like to be spoken to:
 - o “I have a great new lesson to show you” or “This is what you need to do now”
 - o “Oh, I see you forgot to put this away. Would you do it or would you like me to help you?” or “Well you can’t go outside until you put it away”
- o Remember: The child is new to the world and we are here to help him navigate.

Communication...(continued)

- o Try to be consistent without being illogical, rigid, or irrelevant.
- o Be objective, not personal, in your instructions.
 - o “Books go in this bookcase” rather than “I want you to keep your books in the bookcase.”
- o Be positive, not negative.
 - o “Use the tricycle, it is just your size” rather than “You are too small to ride the bicycle.”
- o Give a reason rather than flat authority.
 - o “Hang up your coat before someone steps on it and gets it dirty” rather than “Hang it up.”
- o Give a solution to a problem rather than mere prohibitions.
 - o “Please move to this side of the table, John, so that Mary will be able to see” rather than “Don’t stand in Mary’s way, John.”
- o Be specific. Give concrete information using concrete names and commands.
 - o “If you hold the card by its edge, it will stay clean” rather than “Don’t mess up the cards.”
- o Match objects and actions to your words.
 - o “Trays (pause and show) are held in the middle (pause and show) near your waist (pause and show)” rather than “Do it this way.”

Communication...(continued)

- o Give awareness of consequences.
 - o “Hitting hurts Peter” rather than “Don’t hit.”
- o Recognize the validity of emotions when you limit destructive actions.
 - o “I know you are angry, but you may not hurt Mary” rather than “Why did you hit Mary?”
 - o “I know you are afraid, but you must have the scratch cleaned” rather than “You are such a big girl and that little scratch doesn’t hurt.”
 - o “I know you don’t want to wear your shoes, but you must protect your feet” rather than “You don’t want to hurt your feet do you?”
- o Use a simple and scrupulously courteous manner to children and other adults.
 - o “Good morning, John, I am glad to see you (hand offered and withdrawn if not taken)” rather than “Can you say good morning to me, John, and shake my hand?”
 - o “Thank you, Aunt Jane, for remembering Susan’s birthday” rather than “What do you say to Aunt Jane, Susan?”
- o Do not give a child a choice when you care which choice he makes. Only use the words “Would you like to...” when you are willing to have him say “No.” Otherwise, say “Please do this.”
- o Give one verbal instruction at a time to a child. Young children have a hard time following a sequence of commands.

Guidelines for Implementing Alternatives to Discipline

1. Avoid expiatory sanctions/punishments
 - o Suffering may lead the child not to do the act again, or it may lead the child resent or even hate the perpetrator of the suffering. It may negate self-esteem.
2. Encourage children's ownership of logical consequences
 - o Make sure the children agree that a problem exists and what the opinion is on what to do about the problem with an emphasis on preventing future occurrences.
3. When a suggested consequence is too severe, ask the wrongdoer to say how he or she feels and support this feeling.
 - o This will help avoid resentment of the wrongdoer of the punishment.
4. Verbalize the cause-effect relationship when natural consequences occur
 - o Example: Water spilling on a painting ruins the painting and hence the painting needs to be thrown out.

Guidelines for Implementing Alternatives to Discipline

5. Selectively allow natural consequences to occur
 - o Natural relation between action and consequence (i.e. leaving a cap off a marker)
6. Offer opportunities for restitution
 - o Restitution helps a child regain dignity and self-respect after a misdeed as well as repair the rift in the social bond between the mis-doer and the victim
7. When exclusion is invoked, open the way to reinstatement
 - o Offer a way the child can rejoin the group and/or activity
8. When children exclude others, help the excluded child find a way to reenter play and improve peer relations
 - o Help find a role for the child
9. Avoid indefinite consequences
 - o A consequence should be clear and definite so the child knows what to do to avoid it in the future and what to do to reinstate himself when it is invoked

Peace Education

- o Peace education is an ongoing process. [Adults] need to be aware of the levels of development and have reasonable expectations from children. Lessons of grace and courtesy are the foundations of a peaceful co-existence. When children and adults are respectful and cordial to one another, peace will prevail in a classroom or school. Parent education must include the Montessori values of mutual respect, tolerance, celebration of differences, and nonviolence. – Chandra Fernando
- o Peace is a practical principle of human civilization and social organization that is based on the very nature of man. Peace does not enslave him; rather, it exalts him. It does not humiliate him, but rather makes him conscious of his own power over the universe because it is based on man's nature. It is a constant, a universal principle that applies to all human beings. This principle must be our guide in building a science of peace and educating men for peace. – Maria Montessori, Education and Peace

Steps to Peace

- o Knowledge
 - o Self awareness
 - o Culture, race, gender
 - o Non-violence
 - o Human rights
 - o Justice and the use of power
 - o Poverty and economy
 - o Theories of conflict and conflict resolution
- o Skills
 - o Active listening
 - o Positive communication
 - o Cooperation
 - o Empathy and compassion
 - o Patience and self control
 - o Mediation and negotiation
 - o Critical thinking and problem solving
 - o Leadership
 - o Vision
- o Attitudes
 - o Self respect
 - o Tolerance
 - o Respect for human dignity
 - o Sensitivity to cultural differences
 - o Caring
 - o Social responsibility
 - o Global awareness

Conflict Resolution

- o Define the problem. Focus on the problem and not the person.
- o Find common ground and outcomes that would benefit both parties.
- o Brainstorm possible solutions.
- o Pick a solution or a combination of solutions and try them out.
- o Affirm both parties.

Things to Avoid during Conflict Resolution

- o Name calling
- o Ignoring or not listening to the other party
- o Using sarcasm
- o Making excuses
- o Showing disrespect or sneering
- o Bringing up the past
- o Pushing or hitting

References

- o Maria Montessori – Education and Peace
- o Chandra Fernando (2012 AMS Living Legacy Recipient) – Northern Virginia Montessori Institute lecture notes
- o 2015-16 The Springs, A Montessori School Faculty Handbook