

**Dear Parent/Caretaker,**

Today, your child participated in lesson 12 of the *Voices for Safety* program. This lesson was focused on discipline. The children learned about different methods of discipline that are sometimes used in families when children misbehave or break the rules. Examples include time outs, loss of privileges such as TV or toys, and some families may use spankings. The purpose of discipline is to get a child's attention so that he or she stops misbehaving. Discipline is very important to children as it helps them to manage their own behavior and leads to better school adjustment. Discipline, however, should never leave a mark like a bruise or a lasting hurt on a child's body.

Even though most people do not agree with spanking, many parents and caregivers use it. Some people may spank because they lack a positive alternative or because they are not aware of the negative consequences of spanking or yelling. Research has shown that spanking is more likely to lead to later behavior problems such as cheating, lying, bullying, fighting in school and at home, and lack of remorse. Positive discipline strategies have been shown to lead to better focus, respect, self-worth, and self-control in children. Here are some tips for using positive discipline strategies.

- Establish family rules: e.g., no hitting and getting to bed on time (young children need 10 to 12 hours of sleep including nap time).
- Use praise for positive behavior and ignore minor negative behaviors.
- Model the type of behavior you want your children to develop.
- Try to understand the meaning behind the behavior – what is going on for the child emotionally/physically?
- Time out– let the child sit quietly away from toys and attention – about one minute for each year of age.
- Redirect – offer a positive behavior to replace misbehavior or distract the child.
- Try use reasoning to point out how the child's behavior makes others feel.
- Show understanding for the child's developmental ability for control.
- Spend quality time each day focused on your child and doing something your child enjoys.

Discipline works best when it is consistent from moms, dads, grandparents, and all caregivers of the child. If discipline is a challenge, ask your child's teacher or pediatrician for ideas and support. Positive discipline strategies take time and may not be as immediately effective as spanking or yelling; however, it is the best long-term investment you can make in your child!

**For more information please visit [voicesforsafety.com](http://voicesforsafety.com), email [info@voicesforsafety.com](mailto:info@voicesforsafety.com), or talk with your Head Start teacher.**