

## Are You a Permissive Parent?

**Children need limits, boundaries and discipline. Otherwise, a child's bad behavior causes problems at home and in public. Parents must provide this crucial discipline.**

Permissive parents set no or few limits for their children. They may:

1. Feel guilt for time spent away from their child.
2. Have a hard time seeing their child unhappy.
3. Lack the energy and knowledge to provide daily discipline.
4. Ignore bad behavior, and hope it will get better.



Experts tell us that children of permissive parents have behavior problems. Most lack good manners and empathy. They have trouble managing their emotions. Many lack self-confidence. They may develop long-term problems forming relationships.

Take a close look at how you discipline your child. Are you a permissive parent? Do you:

- Beg your child to behave? “Please, please, stop hitting your brother.”
- Strike a bargain? “If you quit throwing your food, I will give you a cookie.”
- Reward negative behavior or give in to cries, whines or tantrums?
- Fear losing your child's love if you are too strict?

- Protect your child from frustration and anger?

If your child has bad behavior because you have a permissive style of parenting, you must change your behavior.

- Set limits. A limit is not a punishment. It is a necessary part of life.
- Learn his age-appropriate behavior. Know what he can do and understand.
- Ignore tantrums. Recognize your child's feelings and give her a time-out to calm down.
- Create a *quiet* place for out-of-control times. Include his favorite book or stuffed animal in the space.
- Ignore whining. Tell your child to talk in a normal voice if she wants something.
- Find solutions to problems before they arise. Heading off a problem is a more effective tool than a focus on punishments.
- Redirect your child's behavior when possible. Distract your child with a new activity or toy.
- Give your child choices he can handle. “Do you want a bath before or after a story?”

Use these tips to prevent behavior problems. Toddlers find security in a home or day care that cares enough to set and enforce rules.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital*



**Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.**  
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
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