

What is Positive Discipline?

Positive Discipline is a program created by Dr. Jane Nelson and Lynn Lott. The following information comes directly from their website: [www. positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com).

“Positive Discipline is a program based on the work of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs and is designed to teach young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. It teaches important social and life skills in a manner that is deeply respectful and encouraging for both children and adults (including parents, teachers, childcare providers, youth workers, and others).

Recent research tells us that children are ‘hardwired’ from birth to connect with others, and that children who feel a sense of connection to their community, family, and school are less likely to misbehave. Children must learn necessary social and life skills in order to be successful, contributing members of their community. Positive Discipline is based on the understanding that discipline must be taught and that discipline teaches.”

Jane Nelson gives the following criteria for "effective discipline that teaches":

FIVE CRITERIA FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

- Helps children feel a sense of **connection**. (Belonging and significance)
- Is mutually **respectful** and **encouraging**. (Kind and firm at the same time.)
- Is **effective** long-term. (Considers what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about himself and his world – and about what to do in the future to survive or to thrive.)
- Teaches important **social and life skills**. (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as skills that help the child contribute to the home, school or larger community.)
- Invites children to **discover how capable** they are. (Encourages the constructive use of personal power and autonomy.)

The tools and concepts of Positive Discipline include:

- **Mutual respect**. Adults model firmness by respecting themselves and the needs of the situation, and kindness by respecting the needs of the child.
- **Identifying the belief behind the behavior**. Effective discipline recognizes the reasons kids do what they do and works to change those beliefs, rather than merely attempting to change behavior.
- **Effective communication** and problem solving skills.
- **Discipline that teaches** (and is neither permissive nor punitive).
- **Focusing on solutions** instead of punishment.
- **Encouragement** (instead of praise). Encouragement notices effort and improvement, not just success, and builds long-term self-esteem and empowerment.