POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

“There are no bad kids, just bad behavior.” Your child is growing and learning about the world and will need to learn what is acceptable behavior at home, school, and in the community. Reinforcing positive behavior helps your child feel good about his/her choices and strive to repeat them. Positive parenting helps reduce power struggles, form stronger relationships, build character and self-esteem, and helps your child learn to self-regulate.

BABIES: Birth-12 Months
- Your baby’s job is to learn about the world.
- Your job is to comfort, teach and guide.
- Baby-proof your home: create a safe space with safe and developmentally appropriate toys.
- Establish consistent routines.
- Respond to your baby’s needs.
- Build a positive relationship: read, sing, and talk to your baby every day.
- If your baby is doing something you don’t want him/her to do: use a nurturing touch, simple words or gestures to redirect.
- If your baby is playing with something he/she shouldn’t, substitute the object with a safe toy.

TODDLER: 1-2 Years
- Create a safe space to play with developmentally appropriate toys for your toddler.
- Establish a routine: consistent naps and bedtimes, regular healthy meals and snacks, and time to run, jump, and play every day.
- Let your child know you are pleased when he/she behaves well. Be specific in your praise.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Try to understand and validate your toddler’s emotions and experiences.
- Offer alternatives and choices: “Would you like to wear your red shirt or your blue shirt?”

PRESCHOOL: 3-5 Years
- Provide consistent structure and routines.
- Set clear limits and communicate those limits.
- Plan ahead: talk about possible situations before they arise and how you expect your preschooler to behave.
- Give specific praise: “You picked up your toys when I asked you; that makes me happy!”
- Give choices: “Would you like to take your bath before or after your dinner?”
- Use natural and logical consequences: if your child refuses to put his/her bike in the garage after being asked, the bike is taken a way for a set amount of time.

SCHOOL AGE: 6-12 Years
- Spend quality time with your child every day away from screens.
- Set clear and consistent expectations and revisit them regularly.
- Help your child problem-solve: discuss what could be done differently next time.
- Involve your child in decisions when appropriate.
- Be the parent, not friend: supervise, set limits and follow through.
- Be a positive role model: make wise decisions, show empathy, and model positive ways to deal with anger and disappointment.