

## Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Effective Discipline for Preteens 10 to 12

**Page 1** – none.

**Page 2** – none.

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- Children should be able to respect the parent/caregiver's authority. Harsh discipline such as verbal abuse, shouting, name-calling makes it difficult for the child to have respect.
- Effective discipline is about teaching and guiding children, not just forcing them to obey.
- Discipline is usually most effective when it is used as a means for helping the child learn appropriate behavior and self control. The goal is for the child to learn selfdiscipline which gives the child a sense of empowerment and improves their self-esteem. Children need to know that the caregiver is caring and also in control. This gives them a sense of security and trust. The discipline needs to be age appropriate which requires understanding where the child is developmentally.

**Page 4** – Each child is an individual and may develop earlier or later than others.

- **Entering puberty:** The many physical, hormonal and emotional changes the child is going through can affect their behaviors and place additional stress on both the child and caregiver. Understanding these changes and helping the child understand them can help you and the child avoid conflict.
- **Example:** If you understand the child is entering puberty and is having mood swings and becoming more impulsive, take this as a learning opportunity to talk with the child about these changes and how they can affect mood and behaviors.
- **Moving toward independence:** - In their attempts to separate from parents and move toward independence, they begin to want more privacy and can become withdrawn from parents and caregivers. They begin to confide more in their peers. This doesn't mean they don't need you or want your help – even if they don't express it.
- **Impulsive behavior** may increase and the preteen may test limits more often.
- **Highly sensitive to criticism:** The physical and emotional changes they are going through and their need to fit in and be accepted by peers often increase their sensitivity to criticism.
- **Concrete thinking:** The 10-12 year old tends to think in black & white. Things are either "totally awesome and amazing!", or "unbelievably gross and horrible!"

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- Even though it may not seem like it at times, children actually want discipline from you. Clear rules and consequences provides an important structure that helps the child feel safe, secure and in control.
- Avoid yelling since this can teach your child that it is all right to yell if you get mad.
- If things are escalating too much, take a break until you regain your composure.
- Make sure the child understands that you are unhappy with their behavior, but still love and accept them.
- Offer positive reinforcement of desirable behavior and avoid stating it in negative terms. For example: It's better to say "I appreciate your cleaning up your room," rather than, "Well, you finally got around to cleaning up your room."
- Reward good behaviors, but do not offer bribes. A reward is something your child receives after he has done something, but a bribe is given beforehand, to try and persuade the child to do what you want. This puts the child in the power position and lessons your authority.

- The child depends on caring adults to provide them with role models for appropriate behavior. If you yell and speak to others in a disrespectful way when you are angry, this teaches them to do the same.

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- **Rules provide stability** – Having parents who set firm boundaries is actually reassuring to kids even though they will probably not express it. Setting rules and consequences lets them know you care about them and are interested in their welfare. They need you to set limits they can't set for themselves.
- **Age appropriate rules:** Don't demand a 12 year old to be in bed by 8:30pm on the weekend. This is unrealistic and you'll be setting yourself up for conflict and setting the child up to disobey the rule.
- **Age appropriate consequences:** Time out is for younger children under the age of 10. Natural and logical consequences have more impact and are more effective for children 10 and older. (This will be covered on the next slides)
- **Have your child participate:** Having them help set rules and consequences gives them a sense of control and greatly reduces the number of arguments you'll have.
- The child cannot then claim that punishments or expectations are unfair if they help set them. Parents can then take on the role of calmly enforcing the pre-arranged consequences.
- **Be consistent:** It is normal for the 10-12 year old to test limits. If you are inconsistent with what the limits are, then you will be encouraging the behavior you are trying to extinguish.
- Make sure you set limits and consequences that you are going to enforce. Kids need to know that you mean what you say.

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- If consequences cannot be completed quickly, they lose impact, and the child loses incentive. It's important to give children lots of opportunities to demonstrate appropriate behavior so that they can learn. Giving them opportunities also lets them know you trust and have confidence in them. This helps build self-esteem.
- **For example:** Your child comes home late from an activity. If you say, "You have to stay home for the next 2 weeks," it loses its impact after a couple of days, and the child has no incentive to try to maintain appropriate behaviors.
- It's better to say, "You came home very late after we agreed on a time, so tomorrow you will have to stay home. After that, we'll try it again." This way the child has an opportunity to try again right away.
- **Establish trust:** An important part of your relationship. Trust has to be earned by both of you.
- **Natural and logical consequences:** Experiencing the consequences of their choices teaches self-discipline.

**Page 8 – Example of natural consequence:** The child is supposed to do their own laundry.

They don't do it. They have no clean clothes to wear to school. (not imposed by the parent, because the child and parent have a prior understanding that the child takes care of their own clothes)

**Page 9 – Example of logical consequence:** The child is late coming home from a friend's house.

Consequence: The next day they must come straight home from school and are not allowed to visit friends. (imposed by the parent). When the child is very clear on the rules and consequences, and has participated in setting them, the parent or caregiver can calmly impose the consequence without becoming angry or upset. They can remind the child that they have made a choice. They choose to break the rule and suffer the consequence. Next time they can make a better choice.

**Page 10** – Discipline for any type of aggressive behaviors, such as hitting and pushing, should be swift with consequences that are very firm and have great impact. It is recommended not to use physical punishment on an aggressive child (*Pediatric Advisor 2006.2: Discipline Basics*). This will only teach more aggressive behaviors and reinforce the behavior you want them to stop. Withholding privileges is usually very effective. The privileges withheld should be significant to the child – something they really want to have or do.

**Page 11** – It helps if the caregiver and the parents can support each other regarding the child’s discipline and coordinate discipline methods. Collaboration and consistency are effective approaches to effective discipline. Parents and caregivers should advise each other of their discipline methods and discuss what seems to work best. Keep each other informed of discipline issues at home, at school and in other activities or situations. Report positive behavior. Tell each other about all the positive things the child says or does.

**Page 12** –

- **Changes: Child’s role in the home**
  - Different routines
  - Increase in responsibilities
  - Financial stressors
  - Change in residence and/or school
- **Moods & behaviors:**
  - Increased irritability
  - Feelings of anxiety and sadness
  - Increase in problem behaviors occur when the child does not or cannot verbally state their fears and anxiety
  - Withdrawing from family and friends
  - Loss of appetite, sleep disturbance
  - Decline in grades
- **Preparing your child:**
  - Give as many details as possible
  - Encourage them to talk, but don’t pressure them
  - Listen without being judgmental
  - Encourage them to connect with peers and stay involved in outside activities
  - Keep teachers and school counselors informed
  - Develop plans for staying in touch with the deployed parent

**Page 13** – Knowing when to seek help is a sign of strength. It also demonstrates responsibility and caring.

**Page 14** – none.

**Page 15** – none.

**Page 16** – none.

**Page 17** – none.

**Page 18** – none.