

# April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

## Brief Discipline Tips for Parents

### Crawling babies and toddlers

- Prevent discipline problems by childproofing.
- Distract and redirect a baby who's heading for trouble, or simply remove the child from the situation.
- Don't call out across the room; instead go to the child with a brief, simple message, such as "That's not for playing with - here's a toy."

### Young children

- Prepare the child for transitions. ("In 10 minutes, it will be time to go.")
- Be clear and concrete. ("Be a good boy" is too abstract.)
- Avoid inflexible demands and unrealistic consequences such as "Pick up every single toy right now or I'll throw them all out!"

### Older children

- Enlist the children's help in rule-making.
- Give choices, not rigid orders. (They have to do their jobs to do but would they rather do them before or after dinner?) This gives the children some control.
- Help children learn from their mistakes. After a tantrum or blow-up, when you are both calm, talk about the incident and talk about how it might have been handled better. If the child deliberately misbehaves, remove a privilege related to the misbehavior.

### Adolescents

- Be open to change. Rules that fit your family a few years ago may be obsolete now. Let your adolescents help rewrite the rules.
- Use conflict resolution and problem-solving skills. Work with your adolescent to find solutions that satisfy both of you.
- Listen with respect and empathy but be firm if you are convinced a teenager is about to do something dangerous.
- Teenagers will argue, oppose and defy; however, they still need your guidance and protection.

