



You Can't Make Me!: Encouraging Self-discipline and Self-control in Children Learning about Learning ~ March 1, 2019 ~ Dr. Katherine Koonce

Why is self-control and self-discipline so important?

Defining Self-Control

Ability to stop and think before acting

Ability to remain goal-oriented in the face of temptation

Ability to delay gratification and wait for what want more

What the research says . . .

The Truth about self-discipline:

Proverbs 10:4

Proverbs 29:11

Proverbs 25:16

The tongue is tough to tame. James 1:26

Love requires self-discipline 1 Cor 13:4-5

It's a fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23

Where do I start???

- Start with habits/routines/schedules at home and be as consistent as possible.
- Encourage responsibility from very young for:
 - their behavior
 - their fun
 - their schoolwork
 - their chores
 - their emotions
 - their relationships
- Teach them to wait. Help them lengthen their attention spans.
- Tell them what you want them to do and let them figure out how to do it (be available but not in charge).
-
- Three truths adapted from *Parenting with Love and Logic*:
 - TRUTH #1: Teaching a child to be self-controlled is a great gift to that child.
 - TRUTH #2: You can't teach a child to be self-controlled by talking to them.
 - TRUTH #3: It's pay me now or pay me later.
-
- The importance of self-control to social skills and relationships.
 - Listening – knowing when and how to interrupt
 - Controlling Emotions - especially anger
 - Waiting your turn
 - Responding appropriately to correction
-
-

- Childhood activities that promote self-control:
 - Playing team sports*
 - Martial arts
 - Daily chores
 - Music lessons
 - Saving money
 - Taking care of a pet
- Others? _____
- Relationship. Relationship. Relationship.
- Spend easy time together just building relationship and shared experience. Remember, that “rules without relationship breed rebellion.”
- Children learn self-control (emotional regulation) from our modeling.
 - Empathetic and loving limits give kids practice in self-discipline – when they want to stay connected with you, they are more likely to make a good choice.
 - Punishments do not increase self-discipline as well as consistent consequences do.
-
- Upstairs Brain and Downstairs Brain and “Flipping your lid”
-
- Top Ten Tips for Bringing Out the Best in a Strong-Willed Child:
 1. Value my ability to see the world from a unique perspective.
 - *Find ways to appreciate and make the most of my strengths, even when I annoy you.*
 2. Remember, we need compelling problems to solve, not just chores to do.
 - *Don't be the “big boss.” I'll respect your authority more when you tell me the point.*
 3. Ask for my input; keep me in the information loop.
 - *Give me some ownership in the process and the outcome.*
 4. Protect our relationship – you won't get much from me without one.
 - *Respect and value who I am, and I'll cooperate with you most of the time.*
 5. Smile at me more often.
 - *Keep your sense of humor and try to smile, even when you don't like me.*
 6. Don't let me push you around, but don't push me around either.
 - *Don't be afraid to stand up to me; just don't run over me.*
 7. Speak to me respectfully, but firmly.
 - *Use your voice wisely; it's a powerful resource.*
 8. Choose your battles – don't sweat the small stuff.
 - *Decide what's really worth it.*
 9. Give me some control over my own life and circumstances.
 - *Allow me to share control without surrendering your authority.*
 10. Remind me how much you love me.
 - *Find subtle ways to keep reminding me your love will always be there.*
-
- Important to Remember:
 1. Self-control increases over time with practice – have realistic expectations.
 2. The brain changes according to environment and experience – has nothing to do with intelligence.

3. But a child who never has the opportunity to make a poor choice will also never have the opportunity to develop self-control.

•