

Dear Parents:

Being a parent is the most important job you will ever have! Parenting will affect not only your child, but also you as a person. Parenting comes with many rewards and challenges. You have the opportunity to influence the type of person your child becomes, receive many smiles and hugs and kisses, laugh often, play, and watch your child grow and develop. You also often will wonder if you said and did the right thing, or could have done things better.

Parents love their children and want the best for them. However, children don't come with directions and don't always respond or behave the way you want them to. Sometimes, just when you think you have figured things out, your child moves into a new stage of development and what worked before doesn't work anymore. The new stage brings you new joys and challenges.

*Positive Discipline: A Guide for Parents* gives you information and tools to help with common parenting experiences you may have from the time your child is an infant through the early grade school years.

The strategies in this booklet promote positive development in children and positive parent-child relationships. We do not recommend spanking. Spanking does not promote positive development

and can lead to other problems. Children who are guided by methods other than spanking generally have better mental health, feel better about themselves, and are less stressed. Good health is what we are trying to achieve. There are many strategies other than spanking that promote positive development, and help a child learn self-control, what is expected, and how to behave appropriately.

There are many other resources in your community and neighborhood to help you with positive discipline—your child’s doctor and teacher, the public health nurse, the Cooperative Extension office, and the early childhood and family educator through the public school to name a few.

Parenting is a learned experience. People get their ideas on how to parent from how they were raised, books, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, television, workshops, doctors and other family professionals, friends, and family members. As a parent, your job is to sift through this information and find strategies and supports that will work best for you and your child. The goal is to become the best parent you can be.

Enjoy parenthood!