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**Make the Connection: Start Disciplining with Love**

**By Nicole Brekelbaum**

**Make the Connection: Start Disciplining with Love by Nicole Brekelbaum**

How to stay connected with kids while setting limits.

To discipline is to teach. When we discipline we teach our children to have self-control, to be considerate of others, and to feel secure. A home with no discipline is a recipe for chaos. Parents become exhausted and easily stressed. Children feel out of control, oftentimes exhibiting unacceptable social behavior without any real consequences. As parents we owe it to our family to maintain order. We discipline our kids as a means of setting limits and restoring a state of equilibrium in the home. But how do we effectively discipline? The first step to discipline involves saying "NO". This can be difficult for some parents at first since a verbal "NO" is usually encountered by whining, anger or sobbing from a child. But who said disciplining was an easy task? It is difficult as it involves an array of emotions, but doable since we are mature adults powered by love for our kids. Through our love for our children we are inspired to be positive role models and to discipline with love.

When we discipline with love we go a step further. We want our kids to understand the consequences of their behavior. We say "NO" but we also help to redirect our children's inappropriate behaviors. We offer alternatives and present opportunities for good behavior. For example, John is preparing lunch in the kitchen for his four year old son, Mark. As he glances out in the living room, he sees Mark tearing sheets of newspaper and spewing it all over the carpet. He says "NO" to his son in a serious tone and suggests that he helps him set the table for lunch. Mark reluctantly responds and helps his father. With patience and love, John has helped redirect his son's behavior. Mark can understand through his father's approach that his actions were inappropriate.

When we discipline with love, we only discipline when it is absolutely necessary. We learn to choose our battles wisely. This is important since children often feel the urge to stop trying when parents constantly criticize their every move. We can help our children improve their behaviors by presenting fewer rules for them to follow. Younger children (birth to 2 years) in particular need to start with only one or two rules. Older children can possibly handle more, but how much a child can handle is solely dependent on the child's personality and his developmental stage. The key is to help boost your child's self-confidence by giving him opportunities to achieve a bit of early success.

## Make the Connection: Start Disciplining with Love

Disciplining with love usually incorporates some level of understanding. We need to understand the developmental milestones in each stage of our child's life. When we compare his actions to the actions of the average child in his age group then we can better understand if his behavior is appropriate or not. For instance, a seven month old banging on a glass table may receive a different parental feedback versus an eight year old doing the same action. What we deem appropriate for our young children, we can also deem inappropriate for our older children. At times it is also easy for us to confuse self-exploration with aggression and misbehavior.

Disciplining with love helps us to bond with our children by giving them the security that they need. By being consistent with our rules and consequences, we are showing our children that we are responsible, credible parents. Consistency is a difficult part of discipline since it is the area most tested

by our children. Being consistent also takes a lot of patience and perseverance. Our emotions can sometimes get in the way of consistency and we let things slide when we are happy but we always reprimand when we feel miserable.

When we discipline with love we try to stay connected to our kids. We focus on the behavior and not the character of the child. We try to change the bad behavior without making the child himself feel like he is bad. We aim to explain the cause and effect of a situation before resorting to time-out and seclusion. We try to understand the reason for the behavior. Is the behavior caused by a need for attention? Is the child displaying some behavior seen at daycare or at school? Is the child being bullied on the playground? As parents we are our child's best advocate. Taking a loving approach to discipline helps strengthen the communication bond between you and your child. It assures the child that in times of need you will be there.

Nicole Brekelbaum is the director at

– A home-based learning center for

aspiring youth located in Pflugerville, Texas. She has been providing childcare in her home since her career switch from working engineer to childcare director and mom.

### **Making the Connection**

**By Rosalyn Bronstein**

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Making the Connection

Have you ever had the experience of meeting someone, and after a few minutes of conversation, settled into the feeling of having known that person all your life? This sort of incident – an immediately strong emotional connection – is quite rare. It's happened to me on two occasions, and in both cases, resulted in long-term friendships.

## Make the Connection: Start Disciplining with Love

Why is there an instant connection with some people and not others? It seems that it is easier to relate to people who are open to wanting to get to know another. There is a certain chemistry that simply happens when individuals are tuned into each other. Both experience it simultaneously.

There is also a school of thought that says we are destined to have certain people in our lives. Perhaps that's why some interactions don't seem to make a lot of sense. When we try to force relationships that shouldn't happen, the end result is usually trouble.

No where has this been more obvious than on the new "reality television" shows. It is not realistic to place people in an artificial environment and expect them to instantly bond on an intimate level. These programs may have found such a large audience because the premise of what they are doing is so peculiar.

People learn to relate on different levels. There are times when relationships are formed without even seeing the other person. Pen pals and telephone conversations, while not usually an instant connection, can quickly develop into so much more. Physical components don't get in the way, and true personalities can emerge.

On the other hand, many attractions start out as purely physical. In order to endure, they must transcend beyond this level, because images change as we age. Special friendships go beyond the superficial to the essence of the people we are.

Rosalyn Bronstein, for more than 20 years an author and consultant, has been an advisor to numerous multinational corporations and international organizations. Understanding the value of maintaining relationships, [www.ntouchnrat.com](http://www.ntouchnrat.com) was created. It's a unique and secure way to never lose touch again with the people who have brought meaning to you life without having to use e-mail.

### Making the Connection

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