



# Positive Parenting

## Facilitator Guide

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## Positive Parenting

### Facilitator Note:

*The following two symbols are used as indicators:*

 (computer) indicates it is time to advance the slide on the associated PowerPoint;

 (hand) indicates there is an exercise associated with the content.

*Essential class content is noted in **bold**.*

*All class handouts are available for download on the [YRRP website](http://www.yellowribbon.mil/cms/event-handout) at [www.yellowribbon.mil/cms/event-handout](http://www.yellowribbon.mil/cms/event-handout). Unless otherwise specified as online only in the Materials section below, all handouts should be printed for distribution to class participants.*

### Class Description:

This class describes the importance of positive parenting and explains positive parenting and discipline techniques. Diverse developmental needs that are important to various age groups will be discussed, and the participant will be able to take the skills learned and apply them to his or her parenting.

### Stage:

Pre-deployment, During deployment, Post-deployment

### DoDI:

1342.28 DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP)

The content of this class has been developed for the Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State has reviewed the class and is responsible for content management.

### Audience:

YRRP attendees

### Time:

45 minutes

## Equipment:

- Projector
- Laptop

## Materials:

- Facilitator Guide
- Core Material Checklist
- PowerPoint Presentation
  1. Positive Parenting
  2. Objectives
  3. What Is Positive Parenting?
  4. Components of Positive Parenting
  5. Temperament
  6. Child Development and Parenting
  7. Positive Parenting Practices
  8. Discipline vs. Punishment
  9. Discipline vs. Punishment Scenarios
  10. Review of Objectives
  11. Positive Parenting
- Handouts
  1. Parenting Styles Self-Reflection
  2. Managing Challenging Behaviors
  3. Parenting Practices

## Exercises:

1. Parenting Styles Self-Reflection
2. Managing Challenging Behaviors
3. Parenting Practices
4. Discipline vs. Punishment

## Objectives:

After completing this class, participants will be able to do the following:

1. Define positive parenting.
2. Identify positive parenting practices.
3. Identify the difference between punishment and discipline.

## Introduction

### SHOW Slide 1: Positive Parenting

#### Facilitator Note:

*Introduce yourself as the facilitator. State your name, military experience or affiliation, and perhaps one additional brief bit of relevant personal information that establishes your credibility (i.e., your professional training or experience).*

*Please limit your personal introduction to no more than 2 minutes to maximize the time attendees are able to engage with course content, practice skills, and participate in self-reflection activities.*

Parenting is a demanding 24/7 job, which is often complicated by life stressors, such as a deployment. **Even the most seasoned parents can find parenting challenging and can benefit from parenting education and support** (Devall, 2004; Haine et al., 2006; Knox et al., 2013; Salari et al., 2014). Your style of parenting and your parenting behaviors are impacted by many factors, including your child's disposition, your beliefs and values, and what your family is dealing with at a given time. **Deployment can be emotionally challenging for the entire military family, and it can be especially confusing and stressful for children** (Devoe & Ross, 2012; Lester et al., 2010). Everyone's reactions to deployment are different, and children are no exception. What can you do to help your children prepare for, and then cope with, the deployment of a loved one? **As with medical and mental health check-ups, even the best parents may benefit from a parenting skills check-up.** If over the course of this class you feel like your parenting approach may benefit from some major changes, identify what is feasible for you during this transition, as major changes in parenting may not be feasible during times of stress and separation. **Remember that even small changes can make great impact!**

### EXERCISE 1: Parenting Styles Self-Reflection

#### Facilitator Note:

*Handout 1 will be used. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to reflect on their own parenting styles. Participants will work alone to complete the handout. This should take approximately 5 minutes.*

Let's start with a brief self-reflection activity. Please find **Handout 1: Parenting Styles Self-Reflection**. I want you to reflect on your parenting style by thinking about or

circling responses to each statement. Your responses will not be shared unless you choose to share. We will come back to this handout later in the presentation.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

*PAUSE for responses. GIVE participants about 5 minutes to complete the handout.*

## SHOW Slide 2: Objectives

After completing this class, participants will be able to do the following:

1. **Define positive parenting.**
2. **Identify positive parenting practices.**
3. **Identify the difference between punishment and discipline.**

How many of you have experienced multiple deployments?

*PAUSE for a show of hands.*

These people may be a resource for those of you who are experiencing your first deployment.

As you know, parenting experiences can be different based on the age of each child and other factors, which can make being a parent very challenging! Knowing common behaviors and parenting strategies for the different age groups can help you improve your parenting. That is the focus of what we will be discussing today.

## Positive Parenting

### SHOW Slide 3: What Is Positive Parenting?

There are many different perspectives on how to parent. You may shake your head at the parenting techniques of others and have your own opinions about how you would handle the same situation with your child. One goal of parenting is to help your children become successful, productive, and confident members of society with high morals and values. Positive parenting may help you accomplish that goal (Sanders, 1999).

**“Positive parenting is the continual relationship of a parent(s) and a child or children that includes caring, teaching, leading, communicating, and providing for the needs of a child consistently and unconditionally”** (Seay et al., 2014, p. 207).

Some positive parenting strategies include the following: **praising good behavior** (Leijten et al., 2016); **setting clear and developmentally appropriate rules**; **taking**

time to listen; caregivers working as a team; using positive discipline; being patient; being involved; and establishing consistent routines.

Children sometimes imitate parents' behaviors (Bandura et al., 1963). Therefore, **it is important to examine your own behaviors and attitudes because your children may be copying you now or in the future.**

## SHOW Slide 4: Components of Positive Parenting

Facilitator Note:

*Handout 1 will be reviewed.*

**Positive parenting promotes the understanding and use of positive discipline techniques, an authoritative parenting style, and awareness of the stages of child development.** Positive parenting also includes understanding the difference between punishment and discipline. This difference is important for parents who want to have positive relationships with their children (Amato & Fowler, 2002). We will talk more about punishment and discipline later.

The image on the slide shows you the four main parenting styles.

*The following information is on the slide in the PPT:*

- **Authoritarian: Focus on obedience, punishment over discipline**
- **Authoritative: Create positive relationship, enforce rules**
- **Permissive: Don't enforce rules, "kids will be kids"**
- **Uninvolved: Provide little guidance, nurturing, or attention**

**Being authoritative means providing structure and control in conjunction with warmth, understanding, and love. Authoritative parents have clear rules or expectations that are developmentally appropriate for each child (Ginsburg et al., 2009; Steinberg et al., 1989). Rules also have appropriate natural and logical consequences (Rasmussen, 2014; Sanders, 1999). Natural consequences occur as the result of a behavior, such as when you touch a hot stove and get burned. Whereas, logical consequences are intentional and planned. An example of a logical consequence is parents taking away privileges when their child lies or talks back.**

Let's look back at the **Handout 1: Parenting Styles Self-Reflection** and talk about where agreement and disagreement on these statements may fall in terms of parenting styles.

Consider the following items:

- #2: “When it comes to rules, it’s ‘my way or the highway’” would be an example of an authoritarian style of parenting.
- #5: “I explain the reasons behind my rules” is an example of the authoritative style parenting.
- #6: “I set rules but rarely enforce them” is an example of the permissive style parenting.
- #9: “I rarely know where my child is or whom she or he is with” is an example of the uninvolved style of parenting and, depending on the situation, may also be an example of the permissive style of parenting.

**You may find that you have certain predispositions toward certain style(s) of parenting. With practice and motivation, we can all make strides to be more authoritative in parenting style.**

Positive parenting also includes being aware of developmentally appropriate milestones and understanding that a child’s needs for parenting and discipline differ with age. **By developmental milestones, we mean the skills that children generally achieve in a specific age range** (e.g., walking by age 1, writing their full name by age 5, growing to approximate adult height during high school). **By understanding specific developmental milestones, parents can be flexible and learn skills to effectively parent and impose discipline based on the needs of their children.**

Before we talk about developmental milestones, let’s talk a bit about temperament.

### SHOW Slide 5: Temperament

I’d like to share a few scenarios with you and ask you to think about whether this sounds like your child or not.

Scenarios:

1. Although Tom liked other children, he prefers to be alone or with just one or two other children. Too much noise or activity makes him feel overwhelmed.
2. Sarah is outgoing and enjoys meeting new people. When she is out at a store, she talks to other shoppers without hesitation. She races into the classroom to see her classmates, whether it is the first day of school or the last.
3. John is happy being alone or with a group. He follows directions easily and doesn’t often get upset.

At its core, **temperament is about how reactive a child is and how well he or she can regulate emotion** (Rothbart & Bates, 2006). Three general temperament types have been identified: easy, slow-to-warm-up, and active (Thomas & Chess, 1984). **Each type has its own strengths, and one is not superior to another. Perhaps more importantly, keep in mind that your child may not seem to fit well in any of**

**these types, which is entirely possible. These temperament types should not be used to label children and should never be used to demean a child. All children, no matter what their temperament may be, benefit from involved parents who notice and respond promptly and appropriately to their different needs (Belsky et al., 1991; Roggman et al., 2009; Wyman et al., 1999).**

We bring up temperament as a way to think about **how to respond to a child's unique needs, a goal that is one part of the broader concept of *goodness of fit*** (Chess & Thomas, 2012; Thomas & Chess, 1984). Let's look at some examples and discuss whether they reflect a good or a bad fit. **Please note that while temperament represents a tendency to respond to situations in a certain way, temperament is not destiny. Children can adjust and develop coping strategies over time, and parents can help them along this journey.**

- A child who is easily distracted is asked to do homework in a noisy room. This is an example of a poor fit. Instead, the child may need a quiet room to complete his or her homework. If a quiet room is not an option, after school programs, libraries, or other alternatives that allow the child to focus on his or her work may be options.
- **A child who is slow to wake up in the morning is awakened last-minute and expected to get ready in a hurry. This is an example of a poor fit. Instead, the child may need an extra half hour to get ready.**
- A child who cannot get out of the house without a tantrum over what to wear is not allowed to choose his or her clothes. This is an example of a poor fit. Instead, the child may need to be allowed to choose outfits even if they are not quite as coordinated as the parents would like.
- **A child who needs time to adapt to any changes or transitions is given warnings and a timed countdown before transitions. This is an example of a good fit. Not giving this child countdowns is likely to create more trouble for the parent due to a likely increase in tantrums.**

**Understand that a *goodness of fit* does not imply creating a perfect, stress- and conflict-free home environment** (Chess & Thomas, 2012; Thomas & Chess, 1984). **Rather, it is about helping parents avoid excessive or unnecessary stress and conflict due to a temperament-environment mismatch or a *poorness of fit*.** Remember, a child's reactions are driven in large part by how playful the parent is.

Let's look at a few more scenarios and potential outcomes:

1. Recall Tom from above. He likes other children but prefers to be alone or with just one or two other children. Too much noise or activity makes him feel overwhelmed. While Tom's mother would like Tom to be around more children (based on her own upbringing), she recognizes Tom's need and only invites one or two kids over for play dates. She also does her best to make sure that there

are some low-activity times during the visits.

2. Recall Sarah from above. She is outgoing and enjoys meeting new people. When she is out at a store, she talks to other shoppers without hesitation. She races into the classroom to see her classmates, whether it is the first day of school or the last. While Sarah's mother worries about *stranger danger* and would like Sarah to be more cautious, she ensures that Sarah has opportunities to engage in group settings (e.g., dance classes, YMCA, sports teams) so that Sarah can safely interact with others.

These examples illustrate the balance we discussed earlier. Helping your child achieve *goodness of fit* may require both accepting and working with his or her unique temperament style and providing him or her with patient and gentle support in adapting to the types of situations that present challenges.

It is important to identify strategies that work for your family that balance warmth with control.

Now that we've talked about the importance of *goodness of fit* and your child's temperament, let's transition to developmental needs of different ages.

## Child Development and Parenting

 SHOW Slide 6: Child Development and Parenting

 **EXERCISE 2: Managing Challenging Behaviors**

Facilitator Note:

*Handout 2 will be used. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to reflect on challenging child behaviors. Participants will work alone to complete the handout and then share their responses. This should take approximately 8 minutes.*

There are several age groups that are recognized by scholars: 0-2, 3-5, 6-12, 13-18.

Without getting into the nuances of development, the basic take away is that **children grow in their ability for abstract thought, emotion regulation, and perspective taking, but they need to feel loved and cared for from their parents regardless of their age.**

As such, parenting should be developmentally appropriate. You have different expectations for a 2-year-old and a 12-year-old, right? **You can encourage each child**

**to have a voice in the family rules and consequences.** For example, a **4-year-old** may be able to help decide what the consequence should be if he or she does not **clean his or her room** (e.g., no television or story time), and a teenager can help decide the consequence of missing a curfew. This parent-child partnership is important for all age groups (Steinberg et al., 1989). We are going to review some ideas about parenting for each developmental age group in the following slides.

Let's take a look at some scenarios in **Handout 2: Managing Challenging Behaviors**. Please find the scenario that fits with the age range of your child(ren). Once you have completed the applicable section(s) of your handout, discuss your responses with someone seated beside you.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

*PAUSE for responses. STOP this exercise after approximately 8 minutes.*

Could a couple of volunteers share their responses?

*PAUSE for responses.*

Next, we will go through some parenting practices that you may already be using or will be able to use.

## Positive Parenting Practices

 **SHOW Slide 7: Positive Parenting Practices**

 **EXERCISE 3: Parenting Practices**

Facilitator Note:

*Handout 3 will be used. The purpose of this exercise is for participants to discuss positive parenting practices. This should take approximately 10 minutes.*

**Positive parenting practices** revolve around the following four pillars: **Establish routines and family rituals; model positive behavior; set a positive tone and open lines of communication; and deliver consistent disciplinary action.** Let's look a bit more in depth into each of the pillars, and pull out **Handout 3: Parenting Practices** for some additional self-reflection.

1. Establish routines and family rituals.

Example routines can include chores, weekly activities, healthy eating, and regular exercise.

**It is important to establish routines in order to promote consistency and give families a sense of normalcy**, which is important for children's emotional health. Routines also encourage children to practice the roles and behaviors expected of them.

Example rituals can include special events, celebrations, and vacations.

**It is important to establish rituals in order to allow children to feel they belong.** Feelings of belonging promote positive behavior. Rituals also help children understand expectations.

## 2. Model positive behavior.

Examples of modeling positive behavior can include establishing a sense of fairness; making time for fun; giving back to your community; and holding the door for someone.

**It is important to model positive behavior because children watch parents for cues on how to function in the world** [e.g., a toddler often repeats a swear word when a parent curses in traffic, teenagers may try smoking if they have seen their parents smoking]. Modeling positive behavior also helps prepare your child to be an empathetic and secure member of society. It is not helpful or effective to use the directive, "do as I say, not as I do."

## 3. Set a positive tone and open lines of communication.

**Open communication is important because it creates intimate bonds with your children, promotes disclosure and trust, and clarifies rules and expectations.**

How do you set a positive tone and encourage open communication? Some examples include the following: encourage family bonds of intimacy, get to know your family members for who they are as individuals, assist your children in forming good relationships with their siblings and other family members, and encourage children to have a voice in family rules and consequences.

## 4. Deliver consistent disciplinary action.

**It is important to be consistent because following through with promises or disciplinary action, while enforcing household rules, ensures the child knows what is expected of him or her.** In addition, consistency promotes a trusting environment.

Some examples of inconsistent discipline include promising to take the child to a movie

for good behavior and then deciding not to follow through once the good behavior has been achieved or giving in to a child when the child is throwing a tantrum rather than sticking to the original rules and consequences.

**Remember that parenting can be difficult, and parents make mistakes and occasionally are unable to meet the needs of their children. This does not mean you are a bad parent! Remember that striving to deliver discipline is the goal, but it may not always be feasible or realistic. Keep trying to do your very best for your children!**

At times, you may become overwhelmed, overwrought, and get angry with and yell at your children. Instead of resorting to yelling, try to calm your breathing and focus on the present (Baer et al., 2012). Remain consistent with your rules and consequences and continue to use positive parenting strategies, such as assist the child in solving the problem, focus on the child's needs, and give plenty of affection (Webster-Stratton, 1998). Afterwards, if you remain frustrated, you can vent in a safe place to your spouse or a friend (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1994).

Now, it is your turn to think about some ways to incorporate positive parenting practices in your life. Record your parenting practices, whether or not they are working, and ideas or strategies to improve the situation on your handout. As you work on this handout, think about how you responded to Handout 1: Parenting Styles Self-Reflection and whether your responses are aligned with the four pillars.

*PAUSE for 5 minutes.*

Now, let's take a more detailed look at discipline and punishment.

### **SHOW Slide 8: Discipline vs. Punishment**

**Punishment is used to describe harsh, neglectful, or abusive strategies that may be intended to hurt or humiliate the targeted person; the goals are often to *make a person pay* for misconduct through physical and/or emotional pain and usually **only focus on getting the undesired behavior to stop**. At times, punishment can be violent. Violent or not, **punishment comes from a place of power, and the intent is to coerce a person to bend to another's demands without regard for the target person's dignity** (Save the Children, 2008). **Punishment is reactive - a parenting tool often used after a problem surfaces**. It focuses on what is wrong instead of what needs to be done correctly. Punishment can promote negative behaviors as it sometimes teaches children to elude being caught to avoid punishment, to continue the behavior if they are willing to accept the consequences, and/or to believe that adults are unfair. **Corporal punishment, such as spanking, has been associated with increased aggression and delinquency** (Gershoff, 2002; Lansford et al., 2014).**

**Discipline is about helping children learn acceptable behavior. Discipline is a positive way to teach self-control, and it emphasizes nurturing and guidance. With discipline, parents use strategies to prevent problems and manage conflict.**

The goals of discipline are to guide the targeted person to a desired alternative behavior; it does not just stop the unwanted behavior (Save the Children, 2008).

**Discipline** focuses on what the child needs to do in the future, redirects the behavior that relates to the misbehavior, **helps the child develop self-discipline and learn how to become responsible, and encourages the child to accept natural or logical consequences of the misbehavior** (Amato & Fowler, 2002).

 **SHOW Slide 9: Discipline vs. Punishment Scenarios**

 **EXERCISE 4: Discipline vs. Punishment**

Facilitator Note:

*The purpose of this exercise is for participants to discuss the differences between discipline and punishment. This should take approximately 7 minutes.*

Let's look at three examples of misbehavior and try to differentiate between punishment and discipline.

**1. A child throws food on the floor. What would be punishment?**

*PAUSE for responses. (Possible answer: **parent forcibly puts child in time out without explanation or discussion**)*

**What would be discipline?**

*PAUSE for responses. (Possible answer: **parent has child clean up thrown food and discusses why throwing food on the floor was wrong [e.g., sanitation; causes extra work]**)*

**2. A bicycle is left on the driveway. What would be punishment?**

*PAUSE for responses. (Possible answer: **child is grounded without explanation or discussion**)*

**And discipline?**

*PAUSE for responses. (Possible answer: **parent takes away bike privileges and discusses expectations for taking care of the bike in the future**)*

### 3. A teenager doesn't come home by curfew. What would be punishment?

*PAUSE for responses. (Possible answer: parent gives the teenager extra chores and tells the teenager, "You know better!" with no further discussion)*

#### And discipline?

*PAUSE for responses. (Possible answer: parent and teenager discuss safety concerns, the importance of calling if something will cause lateness, and what the consequence should be)*

As a parent, you may feel you are at one extreme or the other - you do not set boundaries and follow through on the rules, or you feel like you punish all the time. This can lead to feeling overwhelmed and avoiding confrontations with your child or adolescent, or you may have a strained relationship with your child because of excessive punishment. As a result, your child may lack self-discipline and may become frustrated (Gray & Steinberg, 1999).

Keep doing your best - it's all you can do!

## Summary

### SHOW Slide 10: Review of Objectives

Let's see if we met our objectives:

1. **What are some qualities of positive parenting?** *PAUSE for responses. (Possible answers: an approach to child-rearing that fosters a relationship between parents and children based on mutual respect; the facilitation of the child's full developmental potential; the ability to negotiate diverging interests in a non-violent and positive way; praising good behavior; setting clear rules; taking time to listen; working as a team and using positive discipline; recognize children as individuals with a claim to their own rights for respect; promotes the understanding of and use of an authoritative parenting style and the stages of child development)*
2. **What are some positive parenting practices that you can use in your own life situation?** *PAUSE for responses. (Possible answers: support educational experience, family, and school; provide consistent discipline including rewards; enforce household rules so the child knows what is expected of him or her; set routines and family rituals so children feel they belong, which promotes positive behavior; model positive behavior by encouraging positive feelings, establish a sense of fairness and making time for*

*fun; set a positive family tone and an open line of communication so your children form good relationships with their siblings and other family members; use discipline instead of punishment; emotional coaching)*

**3. What are the differences between punishment and discipline? PAUSE for responses.**

*(Possible answers: punishment is suffering, pain, or loss that serves as retribution; punishment is reactive - a parenting tool often used after a problem surfaces; it focuses on what is wrong instead of what needs to be done right; discipline is about helping children learn acceptable behavior; discipline is a positive way to teach self-control, and it emphasizes nurturing and guidance; with discipline, parents use strategies to prevent problems and manage conflict; discipline focuses on what the child needs to do in the future, redirects the behavior that relates to the misbehavior, helps the child develop self-discipline and learn how to become responsible, and encourages the child to accept natural or logical consequences of the misbehavior)*

 **SHOW Slide 11: Positive Parenting**

Thank you, and please complete your evaluation for this class.

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