

RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE AT HOME

Restorative discipline is a way of looking at wrongdoing not simply as a violation of rules, but most importantly as a violation of real people. Restorative discipline asks two basic questions:

1. **“What was the harm that was done?”**
2. **“How can you repair that harm?”**

The following chart compares the philosophy of Punitive vs. Restorative Discipline:

Punitive Discipline	Restorative Discipline
Wrongdoing is defined as an act against authorities and their rules.	Wrongdoing is an act against real people (other students, teachers, parents, etc.)
Accountability is equated with suffering through punishment.	Accountability is defined as taking responsibility for behaviors and making things right.
Offending students are excluded from the community (family life, school life, etc.).	Offending students are kept in the community to be directly accountable to those they have harmed.
Offending students are defined by their misbehavior.	Offending students defined by their capacity to take responsibility for their actions, and learn from their mistakes.
Students are motivated by external rewards and punishments.	Students motivated by internal sense of right and wrong.

How parents can help

1. Focus on non-punitive solutions to the problem. Punishment (and rewards) may work in the short term but it builds resentment (and dependence) in the long term.
2. If your child is caught stealing, help them focus on how they have harmed others (teachers, other students, themselves, etc.) rather than simply on what rules they broke.
3. If your child breaks someone’s property, ask them how they can “make things right” or “repair the harm” they caused.
4. If your child gets into a fight, encourage them to find creative ways to restore right relationships with those they have harmed.
5. Always have your child take direct responsibility for their actions through apologies, financial restitution, community service, etc.
6. Make sure the consequences of wrongdoing are connected directly with the behavior and to those people who were directly harmed.

RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

When responding to wrongdoing or problem behavior, consider asking these questions rather than lecturing and moralizing:

What happened? What was your part?

What were you thinking of at the time?

Who was impacted by your actions?

How do you think they were affected?

What can you do to repair the harm?

REMEMBER, your tone of voice is as important as your questions. Try to keep a neutral tone, even if you don't feel it inside.