

# BETHEL FOSTER HOME DISCIPLINE HANDBOOK

## I. The Seven Principles of Reality Discipline

### 1. Establish a healthy authority over your children

You need to be in charge. Kids need you to act as a parent not their friend. Their displays of power and rebellion are tests of your willingness to parent them. What you say goes.

But your authority needs to be a display of love MORE THAN POWER.

### 2. Hold your children accountable for their actions

We should be teaching our kids every day that there are consequences for their actions, some positive, some negative.

### 3. Let reality be a teacher

Children learn that they must take care for creatures and things that they are responsible for, or else they will lose them.

Your home needs to be a place where your kids can fail, and learn from their failures. Surround them with love, show them how important they are to you, but don't try to undo their failures.

### 4. Use actions more than words

Your children can often predict what you are going to say. Half of the time they can say it for you.

"Don't be late, you're going to miss the bus," "I'm not going to say this again..." But of course you do it again and again ...and again.

We are tempted to try to teach them with WORDS. "I'll let you go this time, but don't let it happen again." Which do you think speaks louder: the words "*Don't let it happen again...*" or the action of letting them go this time? ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.

Ex. A young boy had to prepare for a spelling test at school. Normally, the father would be happy to help him, but it was already 10 p.m. and he had just spent two hours watching TV. The father said NO, explaining that he should have put his studies first. It was too late now. If the father had helped saying: "all right, but next time I won't be so nice..." THOSE WORDS WOULDN'T HAVE MEANT ANYTHING, BUT HIS ACTION TAUGHT THE BOY SOME RESPONSIBILITY.

With reality discipline, you need to state your expectations clearly. Let your children know their responsibilities to the family (mum), to the school, to others. Once you have clearly stated your expectations, you don't need to keep repeating yourself. Let your actions speak for you.

### 5. Stick with what you have decided

Kids know that if they keep whining, keep pleading, they can wear you down and get their way. You have to be persistent and keep your word.

You may wish to make some exceptions to your rules. So, if you are getting the idea that a different decision would be wiser or fairer, you can change your mind, to be balanced in the way you discipline, not too permissive, but not too harsh either.

## **6. Relationships come before rules**

Yes, we have rules so Bethel is a place of order, where children learn to obey and respect others. But the goal of these rules is to teach children to love others, to put others first, to honour their mothers, to be givers and not takers; “give me, give me, give me, me, me, me...” is not something we wish to hear. We want children who are generous; we do not want these children to consider themselves helpless and always in need of assistance from others, but rather, children that are thankful for what they have.

If the discipline in Bethel is merely a matter of rules posted on the walls, it doesn't work. Maybe we may get these kids to walk in line, but they are not likely to grow into loving, responsible adults.

**RULES OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT OF A TRUE LOVING RELATIONSHIP LEAD TO REBELLION.**

Take time to understand who the children are, with their special interests, talents, personalities. These children are not only orphans but also blind, so they may have a lot of “issues” but we still can accept them as they are and love them as they are...

*You don't stop loving your children when you discipline them.*

**The transition from correcting our children's behaviour to motivating their hearts is vital. If our kids don't learn to own their decisions, to understand why they should make good choices, they will suffer from it. We can't always keep them from making bad decisions; eventually they must make their own choices.**

The goal is for our kids to make the right choices because they KNOW it's the right thing to do. If the children are motivated to obey only out of fear, *they will miss the whole point of obedience.*

## **7. Live by your values**

Your children learn by “watching” you; they may not see, but they feel and hear how you interact with others; the way you respect and love each other. Be as direct and honest as possible.

If there is dirty talk, gossip, lying, hypocrisy, stealing, your children will also learn these things. These things are not acceptable at Bethel: if you want the children you care for to be loving,

giving, have respect, etc... be an example and show them the way.

## **II. Examples**

### **CHORES**

When it comes to doing things around the house, it's preferable that the motivation come from within (and not a monetary reward).

If the child does his or her chore without complaining and does it well, congratulate him by saying: "What a great job, you have done, that's great!! You must be proud of yourself! I appreciate your work very much! It 's so clean now" or "It looks so good!" instead of saying: "Good girl, good boy"

**NEVER LINK THE CHILD'S SENSE OF SELF-WORTH WITH WHAT HE OR SHE HAS DONE.**

For if the child is not doing a good job that does not make the child "BAD." **GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND PUT THE EMPHASIS ON THE ACT.**

*We must do everything we can to encourage our children and help them see that they are loved at all time, not just when they perform correctly.*

### **CHORES DONE CARELESSLY**

If a chore is not done diligently, have your child practice doing it. She'll learn to be more thorough if she's made to sweep the floor 3 or 4 times because of here first effort wasn't good enough.

### **WHINING**

If your children whine or argue to do their chores, add another to the list. Once they get extra chore number three, they will get the point and stop complaining when they are asked to help out.

### **NEED A REMINDER?**

Throughout the week, if you have to tell your children twice about something, add 10 minutes to their Saturday or Sunday chores.

### **DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR**

When one of the children is disrespectful, disobedient or defiant, instruct him to choose a chore from a **JOB JAR**.

We can adjust bedtimes according to the children's behaviour that day. For each infraction, they must go to bed five minutes earlier, but if they 've been extra good, they can earn the right to stay up an extra 5 min. (This applies to students).

## **BEDTIME**

Having a struggle at bedtime? Next time two kids talk when they are supposed to sleep, separate them in two different rooms, in a time out, they have to stand face to a corner. If they talk again while standing, they will have to stay for an extra 5 min.

## **DINING ROOM**

Does your child tend to act up during dinner? Try sending him, along with his plate of food, into the other room to eat alone until he settles down.

## **LATE FOR A MEAL**

Whoever is last to the table at dinnertime becomes the server for next meal.

## **PICKY EATER**

If the child does not like the meal, they won't eat until the next meal (students)

If the child eats all their vegetables and protein, they are allowed to eat the dessert and the bread.

## **CONTROLLING THE TONGUE**

If a child abuses his speaking privileges by hurting someone's feelings, speaking inappropriately, or just making annoying noises, they cannot speak for a predetermined amount of time (5min to 10).

Explain to the children that every time their words wound their brothers or sisters, it's like a nail piercing their hearts. If you just leave these situations without apologies, an infection can set in and can cause bitterness. Explain to the child that, even after he asks forgiveness, and removes the "nail", the hole is still there. "Be careful. You can take back the words, but you can't undo the damage they have caused."

The ayis must be very careful once they have explained that the children have each other and that this represents their family. This is too precious to loose by being mean to each other. If a child continues several times after being punished once, by loosing the privilege of talking, he will be isolated for a whole hour by doing his homework in his room.

## **THE INTERRUPTING RULE**

Using this technique, our kids will gently rest a hand on our side when they want to get our attention. The mum will lay her hand on theirs, acknowledging the request to speak, and then at a logical break in the conversation, the mother can excuse herself and briefly turn her attention to the child. (This is excellent when we have visitors, when all the children try their best to get the attention, by laughing, touching, laughing, or interrupting by talking.) A child that will not be polite, and that tries to interrupt or get the attention in an unruly manner, will have a time out. Do not send the child away without an explanation, but rather explain that interrupting is really impolite, and that the way she is trying to get the attention is wrong. Reassure the child by telling her/him that he is loved, but that she will have to have a time out for five minutes, until she is able to behave the proper way. Reward children who behave well by having five

more minutes with the visitors next time.

### **MOTIVATIONAL REWARD**

Every time a child is kind, obeys without arguing, is on time and so on, they can put a sticker on their chart. When they have 20 stickers, they can go to the “treasure box” where they can choose a candy, a bracelet, a nice girly thing. For the bigger kids, they have a choice between having 10 more minutes before bed time, a new book, a cd, or the right to go with Quan and buy something worth 20 to 30 rmb. (New clothes etc.) Another reward is a trip to the restaurant as a special outing.

Ask the students to do a list of reasonable rewards, to get an idea of what they like the most.

### **WHAT NURTURE IS NOT**

If you want disaster and chaos in your life, DO EVERYTHING for your children. In the process, you will rob them of the opportunity to stand on their own feet and to learn responsibility and accountability, two qualities that are vital in developing a well- balanced adult life.

As children grow up, they should make more and more decisions for themselves. We want our children to be well behaved, but we do not want them to be easily controlled by others. We want our children to be ready for that turbulent world: we want them to be able to stand, to be responsible, to THINK FOR THEMSELVES.

### **WHAT TO DO WHEN A CHILD BREAKS SOMETHING because he did not care for it?**

The reality of this situation is that IF YOU BREAK SOMEONE'S ELSE PROPERTY, YOU PAY FOR IT (for the students for example, with their allowance).OR you replace it or mend it.

This is the way to teach them *accountability*

### **TEMPER TANTRUMS**

Suppose your child has a temper tantrum while you are busy doing something. Is it wise to handle this situation with words only, or with action? Obviously you don't do a lot of pleading and imploring for the child to stop. And you certainly don't want to bribe the child with a cookie or some other reward.

The best approach to a temper tantrum is for the parent to pick up the child and place him in his room. Close the door behind him and let him know that he is free to have his temper tantrum in private, and that when he has calmed down, he can rejoin you and/or the rest of the family.

### **What do these isolation methods do?**

*What they say to the child is, “All right you are having a temper tantrum, and I'm not going to stop you. But you are not going to control me by making listen. When you can be more agreeable, we can get back together.*

*When you attempt to try and stop a temper tantrum with pleading, arguing, scolding or spanking, you usually wind up with the child becoming more powerful and out of control.*

*You are holding the child accountable for his decision to act inappropriately.*

CHILDREN ARE NOT INTERESTED IN USING POWERFUL BEHAVIOR WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE.

### **IF A CHILD IS ROUGH IN HIS PLAY AND BECOMES OVERACTIVE, RESTLESS**

-Physical exercises such as jumping, running, abs or jumping cord for 10 min is a good way to calm them down.

### **SPANKING**

- Never spank out of anger
- Send your kids to a special place for correction.
- Talk with the child about what he did wrong. Ask him why he is receiving the correction
- Where to spank? on the hand, or on the bottom
- It should be done for children aged 4 and older, the children should not receive physical correction after 8 years old.
- Always hug your child when you've finished the correction.

### **THE SIBLING CONFLICT**

These are the rules at Bethel

NO:

- ✓ Pushing
- ✓ Hitting
- ✓ Biting
- ✓ Kicking
- ✓ Pulling hair
- ✓ Name calling
- ✓ Humiliating
- ✓ Verbally wounding another
- ✓ Stealing
- ✓ Destroying
- ✓ Borrowing personal property without permission

Breaking these rules will result in time out, more chores, no allowance, no privileges, an hour by himself doing homework...

The mother should not compare one child to the other. The mother should try to strengthen the friendships between children by encouraging them to say positive things about each other.

Look for opportunities in which your children can serve each other. If you notice that a child is struggling to do something, you can ask, her brother or sister to help him. *The idea is to intentionally build one another up in love.*

### **Preschool children**

This is the age to teach them to pick up after themselves:

- toys after they play,
- cups, bowls back to the kitchen,
- Shoes, coats where they belong.

It's the right season to teach them to do these chores, so they think it is normal, part of the daily life.

When they grow older they will be trained to help with a good heart, without complaining. When they demonstrate these behaviours, do not be afraid to congratulate them, so they will feel good and will be excited to help. Do not hesitate to say: "What a big girl, good job, well done"!

**Summary:**

1. The disciplinary action should fit the infraction

For example, the child misuses her allowance. When she asks for something extra before the week is out, you simply say, "Sorry you will have to wait until next time."

2. Use action-oriented methods whenever possible.
3. Attempt to be consistent at all times.
4. Emphasize order and the need to maintain order.

Works comes before play, chores comes before meal and so on

5. Always require your child to be accountable and responsible for her or his own actions
6. Always communicate to your child that he or she is good, even though the behaviour may have been irresponsible.(differentiate the child and his behaviour)