

## **C.I.S. Your Kids**

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You can't stay angry with someone you kiss. Physiologically, the act of kissing stimulates serotonin, a pleasure chemical in the brain. When my children were very young, the simple act of bending down and kissing them immediately took me to a state of calm.

Having a consistent discipline plan has the same calming effect. That's why I've named my formula for successful discipline the **C.I.S. plan**. Here's how it works...

**C is for Consistent.** "The same thing every time" is my motto. Find out what works for your child and repeat, repeat, repeat. If time-outs are your thing, then use them whether you are at home, in public or at a friend's house. There's always a chair or corner to place your child for a few moments of self-calming. If loss of privilege works, you must follow through EVERY TIME. Threats have no effect if there is never follow-through. And while it may be hard to cancel that play date or dance class the first time, in the future your child will know you're serious about good behavior. Consistency is great for little ones, too. Distract and re-direct or remove them from play when their anger heats up. Are they manipulating you with tears and screaming? Turn off your sympathy ears, put the child in a safe place, and eventually he will get bored or fall asleep from the exertion. The more consistent you are, the faster he'll learn that some behavior doesn't cut it.

**I is for Immediate.** A child's attention span is very short. One minute she's beating on a sibling and the next she's playing quietly with her dolls. If you don't act immediately to address the bad behavior, the child will think you're mad at her for playing dolls. Jump on the opportunity to teach proper social skills as soon as the bad examples crop up. From bad words to ill manners to shoving matches in the car, respond like a bolt of lightning. But leave out the thunder. That's my next tip.

**S is for Sensitive.** It's easy to forget that children are little human beings who deserve respect. They don't like yelling any more than we do. It's shaming and ineffective. The best way to deliver discipline is calmly. Show them who is the adult by modeling mature behavior — not temper tantrums — and they'll learn to do the same. After delivering the discipline, ALWAYS take a few moments to discuss the child's feelings and why he or she may be acting out. Even 2-year-olds can express that they are tired or hungry if you ask them. And preschoolers will often act out when seeking attention from a busy parent. Talk about solutions for better behavior in the future, tell them you love them no matter what, and give them a kiss!

*Christine Hierlmaier Nelson is a mother of two daughters and the author of "Green Yellow Go! Nat Knows Bananas," a picture book that teaches patience to ages 0-6. She presents patient parenting workshops to parenting groups and child care providers. Visit [www.patientparents.com](http://www.patientparents.com) to purchase her book.*