



# *Positive Discipline- Understanding the Child*

*An introduction to the Process*

SARAH GALLEY

“Children deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. They also deserve the opportunity to develop the life skills they need in an atmosphere of kindness and firmness instead of an atmosphere of blame, shame, and pain.”

-Jane Nelson



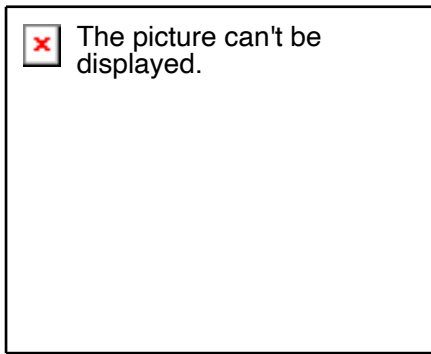


# *5 Criteria of Effective Discipline*



1

It is kind AND  
firm at the  
same time



2

It helps the child  
feel a sense of  
belonging and  
significance



3

It is effective  
long-term



4

It teaches  
valuable social  
and life-skills for  
good character



5

It gives a child the  
chance to build  
his/her autonomy  
skills with grace



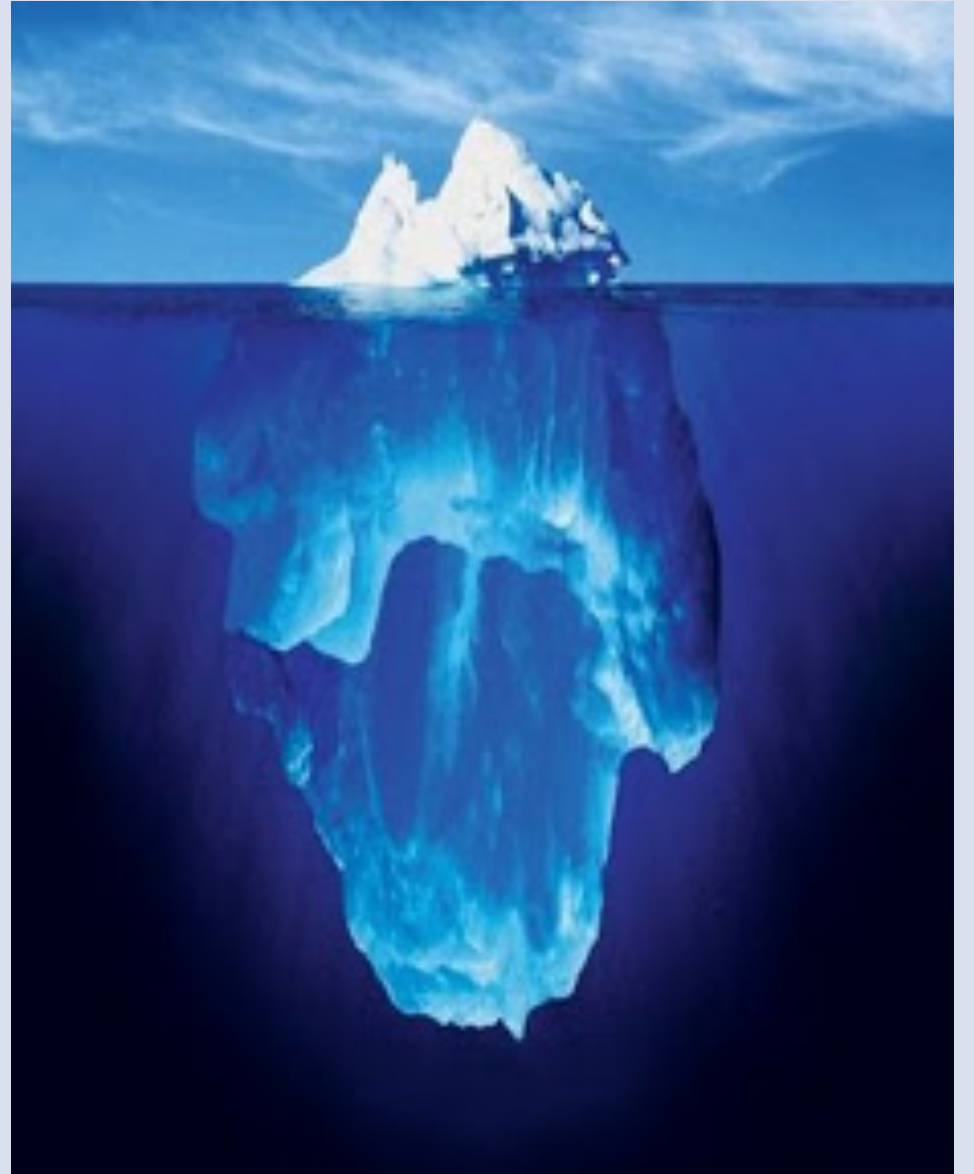
*A child's behavior is based upon their interpretation of their life experiences and what they need to do in order to survive and thrive*

# *Brain in the Palm of your Hand*





## *Mistaken Beliefs*



# *Four Mistaken Beliefs*



Undue Attention



Misguided Power



Revenge



Assumed  
Inadequacy



# *Misguided Beliefs Detective*

LOOKING AT OUR OWN FEELINGS FIRST



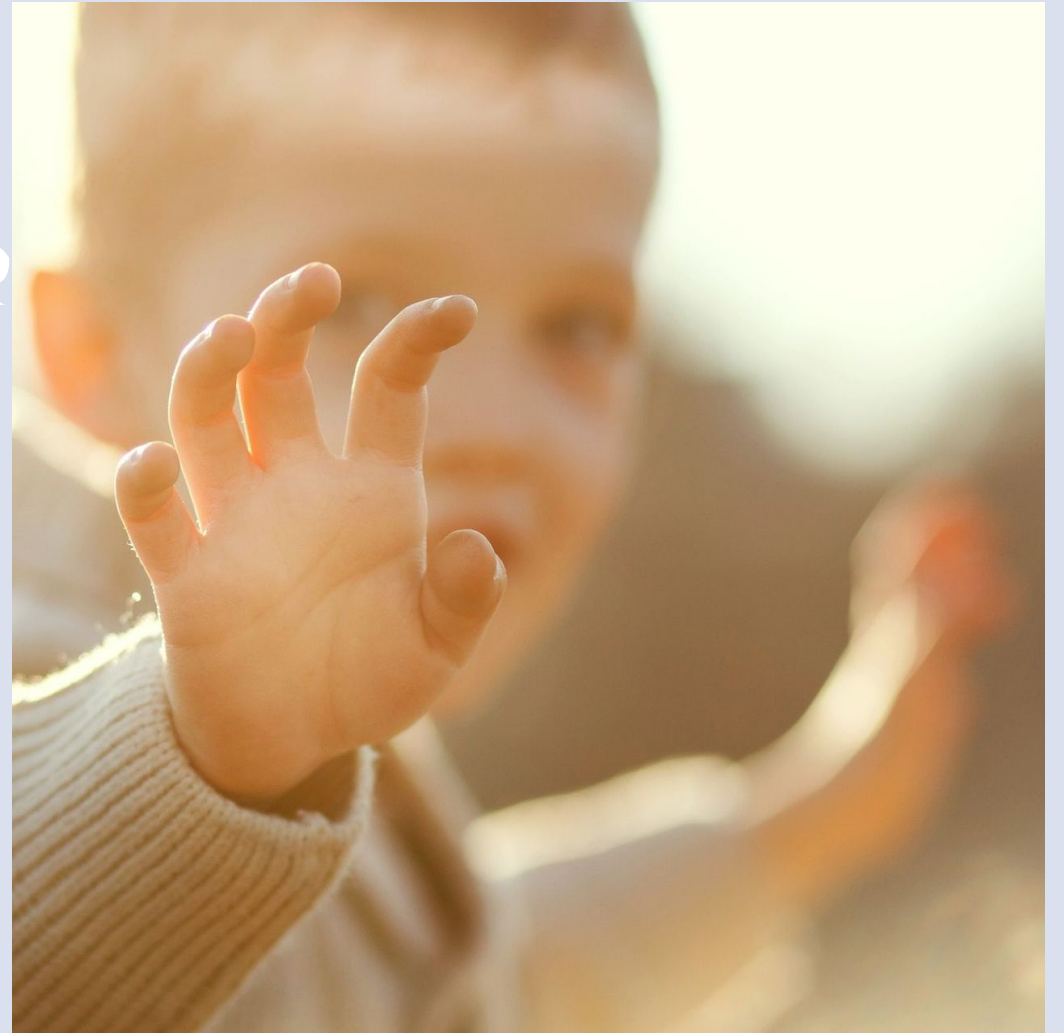
## *Undue attention*

Annoyed

Irritated

Worried

Guilty



# *Misguided Power*

Challenged

Threatened

Defeated

Angry



# *Revenge*

Hurt

Disappointed

Disbelieving

Disgusted





## *Assumed Inadequacy*

Despair

Hopeless

Helpless

Inadequate





# *Undue Attention*

## **Child's Mistaken Belief is"**

**"I count (belong) only when I'm being noticed or getting special service. I am only important when I'm keeping you busy with me."**

## Adult Reacts by:

- Reminding
- Coaxing
- Doing things for the child that he/she could do for him/herself

## **Child's Coded Message is:**

**"Notice me, Involve me usefully."**

## Child Responds by:

- Stopping temporarily but later resuming the same or other disturbing behavior



# *Misguided Power*

## **Child's Mistaken Belief is"**

**"I only belong when I'm the boss, in control, or proving no one can boss me. You can't make me."**

## Adult Reacts by:

- Fighting
- Giving in
- Thinking "you can't get away with it"
- "I'll make you"
- Wanting to be right

## **Child's Coded Message is:**

**"Let me help. Give me choices."**

## Child Responds by:

- Intensifying behavior
- Defiant compliance
- Feeling like he or she won because the adult is upset
- Passive power





# *Revenge*

## **Child's Mistaken Belief is"**

**"I don't think I belong, so I will hurt others as I feel hurt. I can't be liked or loved."**

Adult Reacts by:

- Retaliating
- Getting even
- Thinking, "how could you do this to me?"

## **Child's Coded Message is:**

**"I'm hurting, validate my feelings."**

Child Responds by:

- Retaliating herself
- Intensifying behavior
- Escalates the same behavior or chooses another weapon



# *Assumed Inadequacy*

## **Child's Mistaken Belief is"**

**"I can't belong because I'm not perfect, so I'll convince others not to expect anything of me. I'm helpless and unable. It's no use trying because I won't do it right."**

## **Child's Coded Message is:**

**"Don't give up on me- show me a small step."**

## **Adult Reacts by:**

- Giving up
- Doing for the child
- Over helping

## **Child Responds by:**

- Retreating further
- Becoming passive
- Makes no improvement
- Nonresponsive

# *Encouragement*

“What is the purpose for this behavior, and how can we use encouragement to change this purpose?”





# Questions to ask yourself

- Am I inspiring self-evaluation or dependence on the evaluation of others?
- Am I being respectful or patronizing?
- Am I seeing the child's point of view or only my own?
- Would I make this comment to a friend?



# *Praise VS Encouragement*

## **Praise**

- I am so proud of you!
- I'm glad you listened to me.
- I like what you did!
- Great! That's what I expected.
- You make me so happy when you do that!

## **Encouragement**

- You must be so proud of yourself!
- How do you feel about it?
- You figured it out for yourself!
- I have faith in you to learn from mistakes.
- I love you no matter what.



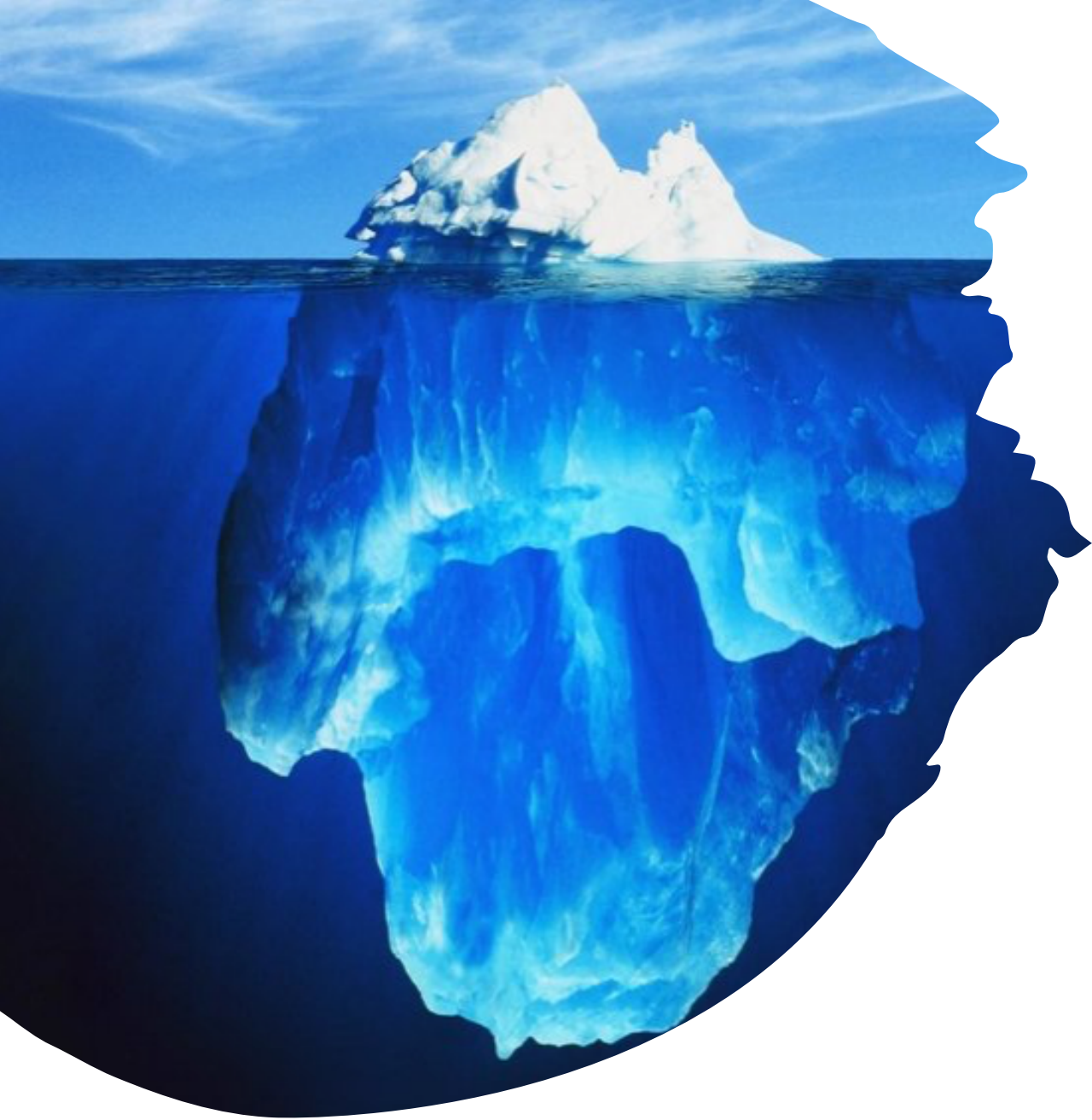
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*Mistaken Beliefs with  
Encouragement*

## *Undue Attention*

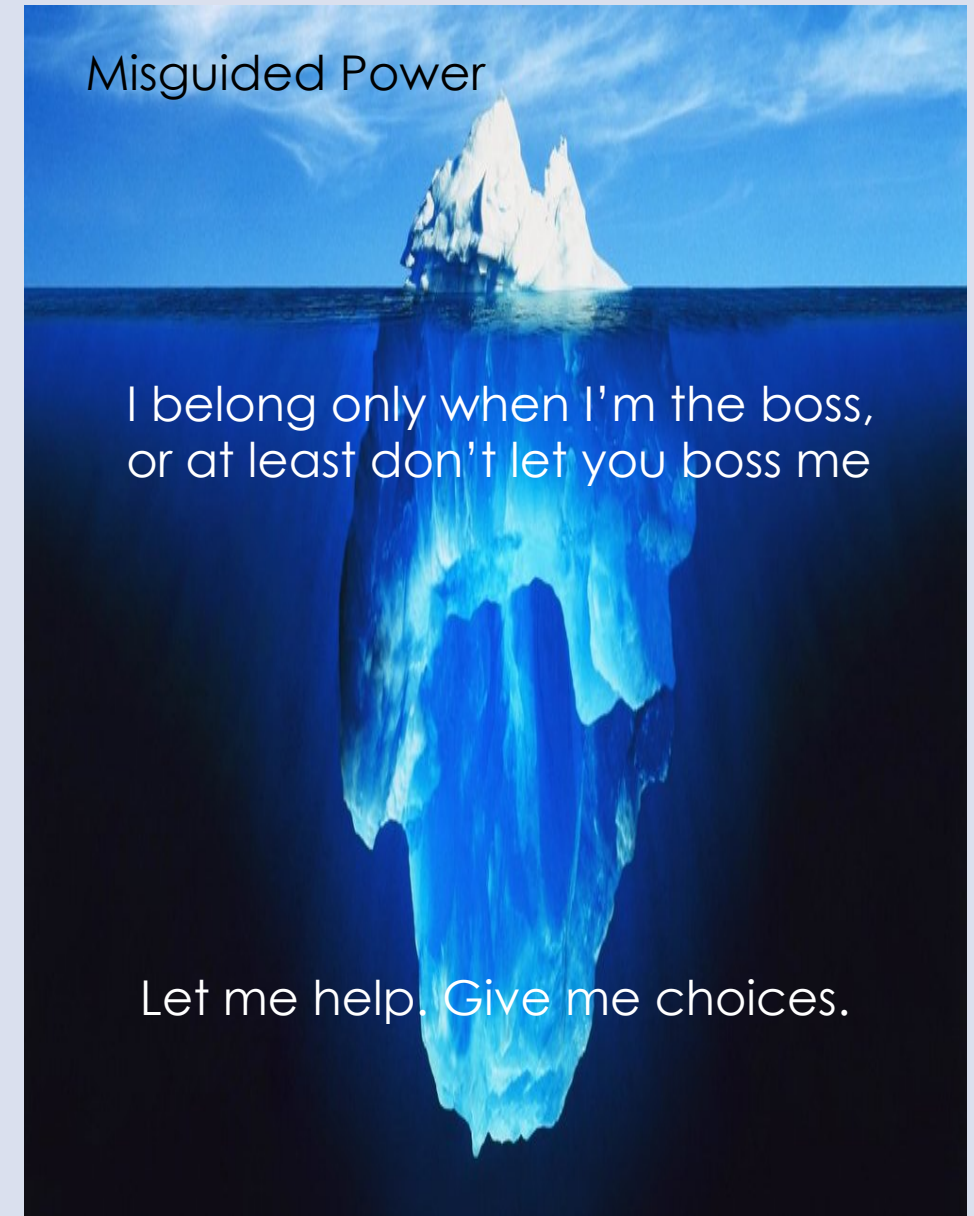
- Redirect children into contributing behaviors
- Do the unexpected
- Set up a schedule for spending special time with your child on a regular basis
- Smile in a knowing way that communicates you are not going to get “hooked” into this, and say something like, “I am looking forward to our special time at 3:30.”
- Set up a nonverbal signal with children in advance
- Avoid special service
- Give reassurance and show faith
- Ignore the behavior while placing your hands on the child’s shoulder in a caring manner
- Take time to training and role-play other ways to behave
- Stop talking and act
- Verbalize love and caring





# *Misguided Power*

- Withdraw from the power struggle to allow for a cooling off period, then do one or more of the following:
- Admit that you can't make children do anything and ask for their help in finding a solution that works for both of you.
- Use the four steps for winning cooperation (chapter 2)
- Follow up with a one-to-one problem-solving session
- Redirect children to use their power constructively
- Get children involved in finding solutions
- Decide what you will do, not what you will try to make the child do
- Set up a schedule for spending special time with your children on a regular basis or one-on-one at school
- Get children involved in creating routines and then let the routine be the boss
- Offer limited choices
- Invite children to put problems on the class meeting or family meeting agenda
- Verbalize love and caring



# Revenge

- Withdraw from the revenge cycle by avoiding retaliation
- Remain friendly while waiting for the cooling-off period
- Make a guess about what has hurt the child and show empathy
- Use emotional honesty to share your feelings
- Use reflective listening
- Use the Three R's of Recovery if you caused the hurt (chapter 2)
- Use the Four Steps for Winning Cooperation (chapter 2)
- Engage children in one-to-one problem solving
- Show you care and use encouragement
- Set up a schedule for spending special time with children on a regular basis or occasionally at school
- Verbalize love and caring.





## *Assumed Inadequacy*

- Take time for training
- Demonstrate a small step that children can duplicate
- Arrange for small successes
- Acknowledge any positive attempts, no matter how small
- Eliminate all expectations of perfection
- Focus on children's assets
- Do not give up
- Spend regular, special time with children
- In classrooms encouraging children to choose a buddy or peer tutor for help
- Verbalize love and caring



# Overview



How we form our  
interpretations of  
ourselves and others



How we result to gut  
instincts as a defense



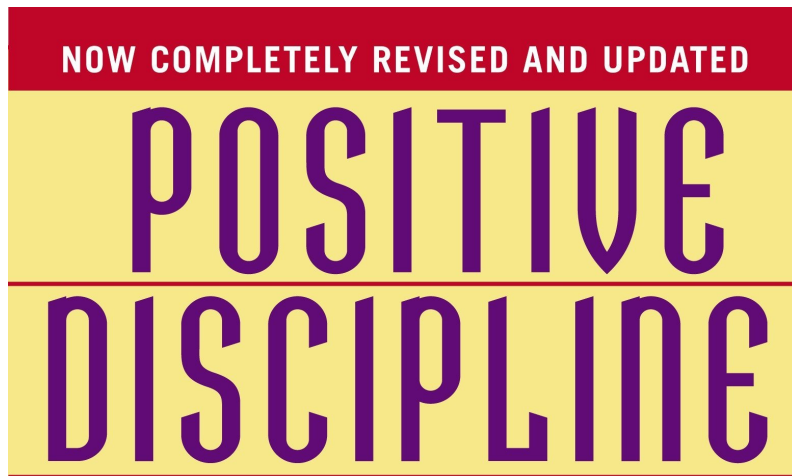

How to look for a  
child's mistaken  
belief



Importance of  
encouragement and  
empowerment



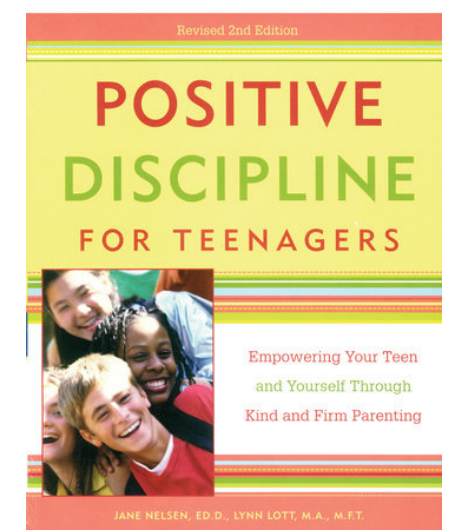
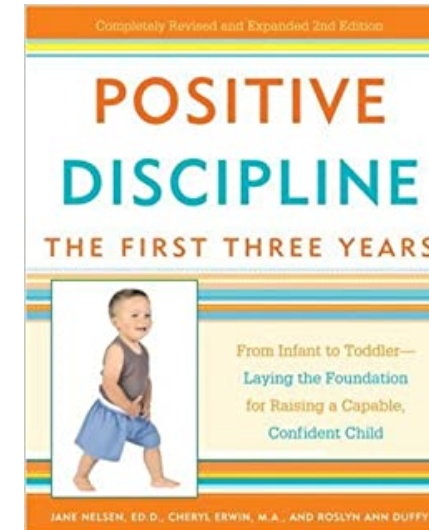
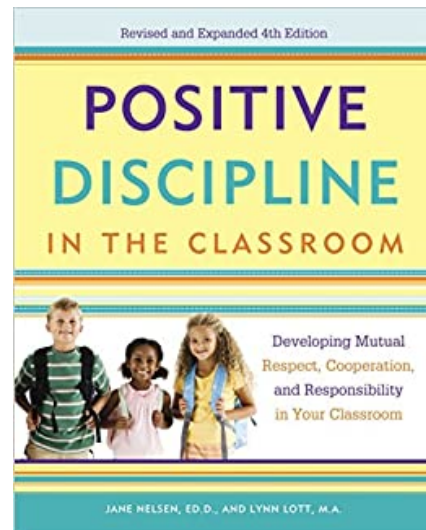
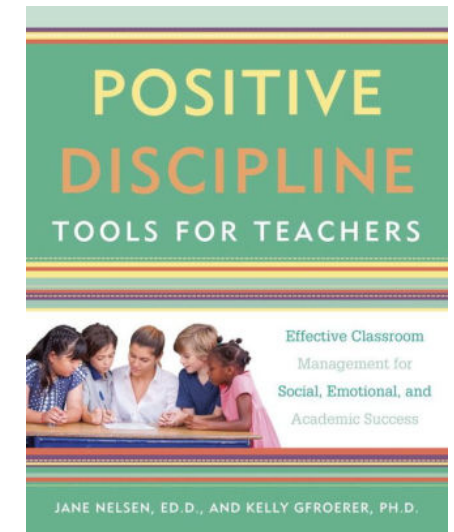
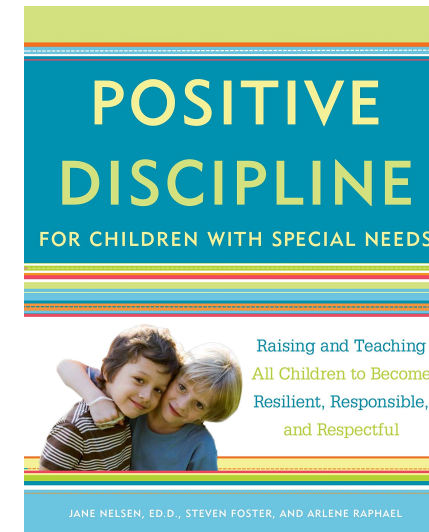
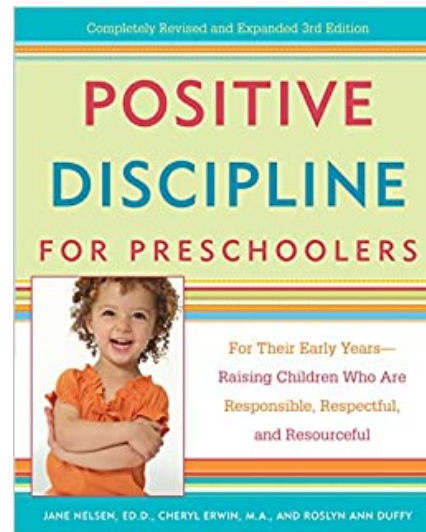
Mistaken beliefs  
encouragement

The classic guide  
to helping  
children develop  
self-discipline,  
responsibility,  
cooperation, and  
problem-solving skills

**Jane Nelsen, Ed.D.**

More than 700,000 copies in print



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