



# Guidance and Discipline for Skill Building Summary

---

## Why Guidance and Discipline for Skill Building?

Guidance and discipline for skill building is not appropriate for infants. They cannot understand cause and effect. Any form of punishment will damage their relationship with you. If they engage in behavior that is potentially unsafe, damaging, or harmful to you or someone else, your goal is to redirect their attention to something else.

Your primary focus is to grow a secure and loving relationship with your infant and encourage this with other caring adults as well. The focus should be on growing safe, stable, nurturing relationships. These relationships are the foundation of your infant's healthy development.

Infants are constantly learning about the world around them and how to interact with others. Even the very basics like how to eat, how to sleep, and how other people react to them are all brand new. So when an infant grabs your hair or drops something from their high chair, they are engaging in important learning by observing and exploring their world. They are not acting inappropriately or "acting up"; they are exploring and learning.

To support their healthy development, you want to keep them safe and encourage this exploring and learning. For example, when an infant pulls your hair or grabs your glasses, you can redirect their attention to something else like their toy.

There will be lots of redirecting and encouraging. At times, this will be challenging and tiring for you. But remember, not only are they exploring objects, they are also learning about how you react. Your reactions will form the basis of your relationship. A healthy relationship comes from repeated caring and loving interactions with you.

Recommended Citation: Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2020). *Guidance and Discipline for Skill Building Summary. Age 0*. Retrieved from <https://www.ParentingMontana.org>.



Brought to you by the Offices of Child Care, SAMHSA, and DPHHS. The views and opinions contained in the publication do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and should not be construed as such.