Eight conditions for effective discipline

Excerpted from "Give Your Child a Future" by Dr. John V. and Eunice C. Gilmore

Discipline in its primary sense involves learning and training rather than punishment. The home is the first center of this training. The first and most important teachers are the child's parents and caregivers. This training is most effective when the following conditions are met:

1. The parents are understanding and affectionate
2. Their own behavior is predictable and their relationship with their child stable and consistent
3. They set a good example for their children
4. They provide their child with sound instruction in the principles of right and wrong
5. The child has a high degree of security and self-esteem
6. When punishment does seem necessary, it is handled as calmly, judiciously, and appropriately as possible
7. The child clearly understands what they did wrong and why, and if possible, participates in selecting the consequence
8. The punishment is carried through to its conclusion and is not left with a residue of guilt

Many parents and caregivers labor in the delusion that they can teach a child by punishing a certain act before they have clearly taught the child that it is wrong. This approach is counter to all we know about the psychology of learning.