

DISCIPLINE

- **Discipline is not about coaxing or forcing children** to do what we want them to do. Its is about helping them learn self discipline and especially helping them through rough patches that they meet in their development.
- **Giving children clear boundaries and limits** helps them to feel secure. If boundaries are too tight – they feel penned in, uncomfortable with no room to move. If boundaries are too wide, they feel lost- lack for guidance and can get into danger'. (See sheep picture).
- **Allow children to make choices (within limits) and to live with the consequences.** Many parents make threats about what will happen if a child does not go to sleep, does not eat, does not stop arguing etc. Quite often they do not follow through what they say. When children have to live with consequences, however, they experience the security of firm boundaries; they learn about the real world and they become more responsible.
- **When there is danger, or when behaviour is totally unacceptable, we may need to remove a child from the situation rather than offer a choice (young children of course).** *'Do you want me to carry you or do you want to go yourself?'*
- **Avoid humiliating your child or getting into a power struggle.**
- **Adults are constantly learning from consequences:** when we overspend, drink too much, forget something or drive carelessly. We learn because we are not protected from consequences.
- **For very disruptive behaviour parents can use 'time out'.** Removing your child from the situation for a few minutes to a room with no distractions gives them time to think about what is happening.
- **Talking it out in advance** and taking time to prepare children for something will often win their cooperation. Preparing your child with reminders will help them to anticipate the events. Preparing children and helping them to know what to expect can make discipline easier and it lessens the chance that you will end up resorting to anger or threats.

PLANNING AND SKILL PRACTICE: Think of a behaviour you need to deal with at present, what choices could you offer and what consequences might help the child to learn that the limits are to be taken seriously?