



Working with buttoning frame

Spontaneous Self-Discipline

An indicator of healthy and normal development in children (and adults, too!) is the presence of self-discipline that seems to appear almost out of nowhere. In reality, there are factors that contribute significantly to the development of self-discipline in the child and adult.

As a child's will is strengthened by the use of free choice, spontaneous self-discipline appears and we see concentration, coordination, order and independence develop within the life of the child.

As mentioned in previously, children are born willing to listen and follow adults whom they trust. When we as the adults in a child's life can provide the child with clear direction for independent activity, concentration is strengthened and self-discipline forms.

The word, discipline, has roots in the Latin word, *discere*, to learn. Self-discipline connotes that we are able to learn and follow a path with self-determination and control.

Sue and Steve worked to create a home environment for their three-year-old daughter, Tasha, where Tasha could make appropriate choices for her activities. Their home contained a variety of independent tasks for Tasha, from working puzzles to making a snack for herself and others. Steve and Sue used their home to create a place where Tasha could tap into the natural tendencies of early childhood—love of order, love of purposeful

activity, love of silence, obedience, attachment to reality, practice in choosing, and support of independent activity. All these factors contributed to Tasha's development of self-discipline.

Tasha showed the signs healthy and natural development—joyful activity, a sociability to help others, ability to concentrate on self-chosen tasks for over an hour at a time, as well as the ability to listen and follow directions from the trusted adults in her life.

A morning with Tasha might look something like this:

7:00 am Wake up, go into parents' room to tell them good morning and get a hug and kiss.

7:15 am Choose clothes and get dress independently.

7:30 am Pour milk on oatmeal, put jam on toast, and carry to table.

8:00 am Put dishes in dishwasher and brush teeth without reminder from parents.

8:15 am Help Sue sweep porch.

8:30 am Choose puzzle from activity shelf.

9:00 am Put puzzle away. Choose blocks.

9:30 am Put blocks away. Choose beading necklace.

10:00 am Put beading necklace away. Make snack in kitchen with Steve.

10:30 am Go outside and feed dog.

10:45 am Swing.

11:00 am Dig in garden.

12:00 pm Go to bathroom, wash hands, set table for lunch.

12:30 pm Help clear table. Choose book for Sue to read at naptime.

Tasha's parents have created an environment where Tasha can make successful choices for purposeful activities in an independent manner. Tasha is able to live with quiet dignity, gaining self-discipline and self-confidence with each activity chosen and successfully completed.

Summary. Children who are on-track with their development display all or most of the following: love of order, love of work, deep spontaneous concentration, attachment to reality, love of silence, love of working alone, sublimation of the possessive instinct, power to act from real choice not just curiosity or impulsivity, trust and obedience, independence and initiative, as well as spontaneous self-discipline.

The main sign of normal and natural development, or normalization, is joyful work. Nurturing this process of normalization is our most important work.