

MODULE 13

AGENDA

- I. Vocabulary
- II. Value Statements
- III. Discipline Policy
- IV. Ten (10) Techniques to Shape Children's Behavior
- V. Review and Closing



MODULE 13

VOCABULARY

Structure: Setting appropriate guidelines to create an environment that promotes safety.

Respect: To consider worthy of and in high regard; to refrain from interfering with.

Limit Setting: To establish age-appropriate expectations.

Discipline: To teach; educating a child on healthy behavior.

Punishment: Issuing negative consequences for inappropriate behavior.

DFCS DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Division of Family and Children Services Discipline Policy is that any physical or emotional punishment to a foster child is prohibited. Physical punishment is defined as any deliberately inflicted pain to the body of the individual. Foster parents in the State of Georgia are required to know the difference between punishment and discipline. Discipline is instruction - a standard of behavior that is maintained consistently and with authority.

Punishment is one means of enforcing discipline, usually though the least effective means. Discipline is a learning process for children. Discipline should help a child reach a goal of controlling his or her own behavior, acquiring self-discipline.

Foster parents may have used some forms of physical and emotional punishment with their own children. We must remember, however, that children raised in an accepting and loving family which is able to meet their needs tolerate punishment in a different way than children removed from their families because of severe neglect and abuse. Children entering foster care usually feel at least one and often all of the following:

- Negative attention is better than no attention at all;
- The natural response to frustration, disappointment, anger, etc., is physical or verbal violence;
- Any form of physical action can lead to severe abuse creating fear and mistrust;
- They are not lovable, which is reinforced by physical pain and verbal demeaning; and
- They are the reason the family is not together and deserve punishment.

Acceptable Methods of Discipline

To help you develop acceptable alternatives to punishment, we have listed some guidelines below:

1. Reinforce Acceptable Behavior

Examples: Honest praise, special privileges and treats, extra hugs and kisses, additional time spent with the child, and awards such as stars or smiley faces on a door or bulletin board.

Reinforcement should be made immediately and frequently when positive changes (no matter how small) are observed.

2. Use Logical Consequences For the Behavior

Examples: If you leave your bike out, you can't ride it tomorrow.

If you go in the street, you have to come inside.

If you can't get up on time, you will have to go to bed 30 minutes earlier.

3. Criticize the Behavior, Not the Child when talking with your children. It is helpful to think in terms of "you messages" and "I messages." The "you-message" lays blame and conveys criticism of the child. It suggests that the child is at fault. It is simply a verbal attack. In contrast, an "I message" simply describes how the behavior makes you feel. The message focuses on you, not the child. It reports how you feel. It does not assign blame. Example: "I can't hear the television when there is so much noise. I would like to be able to hear it."

4. Loss of Privileges

Example: Television, telephoning friends, playing with a specific toy. Make this time appropriate according to the child's age, i.e., take the TV away for an hour, not a day. It is more important to use a positive reinforcement than punishment to control behavior.

DFCS DISCIPLINE POLICY (Cont'd)

5. **Grounding**

Example: Restricting the child to the house or yard or sending the child out of the room and away from the family activity for a short period of time. Be careful to make the time appropriate. Use the latter restriction judiciously making sure the child realizes the purpose is to help him regain control of his/her behavior.

6. **Helping Children Deal With and Manage Their Own Behavior**

Example: If the child is fighting, have him or her hit a pillow. Explain calmly that to feel angry is ok, but that to hurt others or the property of others is not ok. This requires much repetition and practice.

7. **Re-direct the Child's Activity**

Example: Suggest the child play with a toy instead of a sharp object.

8. **Time-Out from Activities**

Example: With younger children, sit them in a chair for a few minutes and possibly use a timer so that they can understand the time frame. A good rule of thumb is one minute for every year, i.e., 5 years of age: 5 minutes.

Specific Problem Behaviors

1. If the child is not being truthful, try to understand the reason and the motivation behind the child's action. Often the child is seeking acceptance, rather than trying to be deceitful.
2. In the case of tantrums, you may need to discuss these particular problems with your caseworker so that you can work together to try to determine why they occur and what can be done to eliminate them. Foster children's tantrums may be more destructive in nature than those of your children.

Prohibited Disciplinary Practices

1. Spanking, slapping, switching, or hitting a child with your hand or any object.
2. Shaking, pinching, or biting.
3. Tying a child with a rope or similar item.
4. Withholding of meals.
5. Denying mail, family visits, and telephone contacts with family or activities with the services worker or other Department staff.
6. Criticizing the child's family or the child's experiences with the family.
7. Humiliating or degrading punishment which subjects the child to ridicule, such as:
 - Cutting or combing the child's hair for punishment
 - Name calling and public scolding
 - Forcing any child to wear clothing or accessories usually associated with the other sex
8. Threatening a child with removal from the foster home. This creates fear, anger, and increased anxiety.
9. Locking a child in a room/closet or outside the home.
10. Group punishment for the misbehavior of an individual child.
11. Delegating authority for punishment to or allowing punishment by other children or adults.
12. Destroying the child's property.

Agency Policy Regarding Reports of Abuse/Neglect in DFCS Home

There may be times when the Agency receives a report of abuse and/or neglect concerning a DFCS Home. As an agency resource, you need to be aware of the policy and procedures regarding this issue in the event your home is the subject of such a report.

- A. *DFCS homes* include the following placement resources:
 - 1. Foster homes, foster/adoptive homes, and adoptive homes prior to finalization. This includes therapeutic and specialized foster homes receiving level of care (LOC) payments.
 - 2. Relative placements such as relative foster homes, relative foster/adoptive homes, relative adoptive homes prior to finalization, approved relative homes receiving TANF benefits, or approved relative free homes.
 - 3. Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) approved placements of children in the custody of another state, who are in an approved Georgia family foster home, foster/adoptive home, adoptive home, or relative placement.
- B. When the Agency receives a report of abuse and/or neglect on one of the above homes, there are specific policies and procedures that the Agency is required to follow.
- C. Procedures for Reports of Abuse and Neglect in a DFCS Home
 - 1. Reports that are not screened out are assigned to a regional or county investigator. This is not a regular case manager, but a special expert in the field who will handle the investigation.
 - a. Screened-out reports are referred to the resource development/placement supervisor for an assessment, as directed by adoptions or foster care policy.
 - b. All reports alleging child abuse and neglect are immediately forwarded to law enforcement.
 - 2. The investigator, based on the allegations in the report, the needs of the county, and their availability may:
 - Assume primary responsibility for the CPS investigation;
 - Assist the county with any part of the investigation that is mutually agreed upon by the county director/designee and the investigator/manager;
 - Consult with the county on the investigation; or,
 - If maltreatment is not suspected, conduct an evaluation of the circumstances of the death of a child in a DFCS home instead of conducting a CPS investigation, if the death was anticipated or expected and is medically documented in the case file.
 - 3. Reports alleging violations of adoption or foster care policy/discipline policy are **not** investigated as CPS, but will be referred to resource development or placement staff for assessment and possible corrective action.

Agency Policy Regarding Reports of Abuse/Neglect in DFCS Home (Cont'd)

4. The county of residence for the DFCS-approved caregiver has primary
5. responsibility for coordinating and managing the CPS investigation until case disposition. That county will request assistance from other county DFCS offices, as needed, to interview children or other witnesses residing in another county or state.
6. The county director or designee will immediately notify the Office of Adoptions - Adoption Exchange, in the event a CPS report is received on a family in the adoptive process, prior to finalization.

CPS reports received on DFCS homes with a child in the adoptive process may require DFCS to delay adoption finalization proceedings, until permission to proceed is granted from the DFCS Social Services Section Director and the Office of Adoptions. If the Affidavit of Release and Consent has been requested or sent to the family's attorney, the county director or designee immediately notifies the SAAG and family's attorney to delay the finalization process, until the CPS investigation is completed and approval to proceed with finalization is secured from the Social Services Section Director.

D. After a determination is made:

1. A substantiated CPS investigation of a DFCS home results in removal of children in the custody of DFCS/DHR from the home and closure of the DFCS home, unless a policy waiver is being requested from the Social Services Section Director.
2. An unsubstantiated CPS investigation in a DFCS home may result in:
 - No further action being taken;
 - Development of a corrective action plan, addressing adoptions or foster care policy/discipline policy violations; or,
 - Closure of the foster home.
3. As a DFCS approved caregiver, you cannot request a formal CPS review (panel or administrative) of the case determination - these decisions are not subject to review by the caregiver.
4. Neither will you be able to file a grievance concerning the closure of your home, in the event that happens.
5. DFCS approved caregivers do **not** receive case determination letters, if the report of maltreatment involves a child in the legal custody of DFCS. DFCS approved caregivers will receive case determination letters, if the report of maltreatment involves only a child in the caregiver's legal custody.
6. Staffing outcomes are shared with DFCS approved caregivers, all case managers, supervisory staff, and out-of-county DFCS staff, involved with the DFCS home, but not present at the staffing.
7. Children in the legal custody of DFCS/DHR, who were removed from a DFCS home during the CPS investigation, will not be re-placed in that home, unless a policy waiver is requested, reviewed, and approved by the Social Services Section Director.

Agency Policy Regarding Reports of Abuse/Neglect in DFCS Home (Cont'd)

8. Children in the legal custody of DFCS/DHR, who were deemed safe and not removed from the DFCS home during the CPS investigation may remain in the home under a corrective action plan until the Social Services Section Director responds to policy waiver request.

E. Sharing of information

1. All CPS case information concerning DFCS homes is shared with any DFCS county office, or other legally mandated public or private child protection agency, involved in a CPS investigation of the home.
2. CPS case information is also shared, for the purpose of background checks, with other DFCS county offices involved in approving a DFCS home.
3. If a DFCS county office receives a request from an outside agency for background checks on DFCS approved caregivers, DFCS:
 - May release information if there is no substantiated CPS history
 - May tell the outside agency that the resource "may not be used for the placement of a child in the legal custody of DFCS/DHR," when such placement may put a child in the Agency's legal custody at risk.
4. No further information is to be provided to the outside agency, and it should be made clear to that agency that their agency, and not DFCS/DHR, is determining whether to contract with or utilize a specific placement resource, and that the placement resource should not be referred to DFCS/DHR for clarification of this information.
5. DFCS will not release information, if there is substantiated CPS history, unless the DFCS Legal Services Office gives approval. The DFCS Legal Services Office will be contacted, and a case-specific review of the information may reveal an exception to confidentiality laws.

I am one of America's
523,000
children
in Foster **Care.**

You can help
change my lifetime.



TEN (10) TECHNIQUES TO SHAPE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

"Shaping" means providing the child with cues and reinforcements that direct them toward desirable behavior. As you shape behavior, the child's personality tags along and should also change and improve. The key methods to shaping a child's behavior are through:

Praise
Selective ignoring
Consequences
Motivators
Reminders
Negotiation
Withdrawing Privileges
No Nagging
Humor
Holding a Family Meeting

PRAISE

Praise is a valuable shaper; children want to please you and keep your approval. Yet, you can easily overdo it. Praise the behavior, not the person. Praises like "good girl" or "good boy" risk misinterpretation and are best reserved for training pets. These labels are too heavy for some children. ("If I don't do well, does that mean I'm bad?") Better is: "You did a good job cleaning your room," "that's a good decision," "I like the way you used lots of color in this picture." The child will see that the praise is sincere since you made the effort to be specific; it shows that you're paying attention. For quickies, try "Great job!" or "Way to go!" or even "Yesss!" To avoid the "I'm valued by my performance" trap, acknowledge the act and let the child conclude the act is praiseworthy. If you praise every other move the child makes he will either get addicted to praise, or wonders why you are so desperate to make him feel good about himself. Be realistic. You don't have to praise or even acknowledge things he just does for the joy of it for his own reasons.

Shaping through praise works well if you have a specific behavior goal that you want to reach. For example, stopping whining. Initially, you may feel like you are acknowledging nearly every pleasant sound your child makes ("I like your sweet voice"). Eventually, as the whining subsides, the immediate need for praise lessens (of course, a booster shot is needed for relapses) and you move on to shaping another behavior.

Change praises. To keep your child's attention, change the delivery of your accolades. As you pass by the open door of the cleaner room, say: "Good job!" Show with body language a thumbs-up signal for the child who dresses herself. Written praises are a plus in large families. They show extra care. Private praises help, too. Leave little "nice work" notes on pillows, yellow "post-its" on homework, messages that convey that you noticed and that you are pleased. Children need praise, but don't overdo it. You don't want a child to look around for applause whenever she lifts a finger.

As an exercise in praise giving, write down the number of times in the last 24 hours that you praised (pull-ups) or criticized (pulled-down). If your pull-ups don't significantly outnumber your pull-downs, you are shaping your child in the wrong direction.

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Praise genuinely. Praise loses its punch if you shower acclaim on usual and expected behavior; yet when the child who habitually strikes out finally hits the ball, that's praiseworthy. Simply acknowledge expected behavior, rather than gushing praise. Acknowledgment is dispassionate praise that shapes a child to please him/herself rather than perform for approval. Don't make up fake kudos.

Use the art of complimenting. Teach children to be comfortable giving and receiving compliments. Tell them, "What a handsome boy you are" or "How pretty you look in that dress!" Eye and body contact during your delivery reinforces the sincerity of your acknowledgment. Make sure you're sincere. Children with weak self-worth have difficulty giving and receiving compliments. They are so hung up on how they imagine the receiver will take their tribute that they clam up; they feel so unworthy of any compliment that they shrug off the compliment and put off the compliment. Learn to give and take a compliment yourself so that you can model this to your child. Compliment yourself, "I feel good about the sale I made today!" Parental self-image directly affects children's self-confidence and the ability to give and receive compliments comfortably.

Problems with praise. While appropriately used praise can shape behavior, it's not the only way to reinforce good behavior. Praise is an external motivator. The ultimate goal of discipline is self-discipline—inner motivation.

Expect good behavior. Excessive praise will give children the message that obedience and good behavior are optional. It's better to give your child the message that he is doing exactly what you expect, not something out of the ordinary. Children are programmed to meet your expectations. Sometimes all that is needed for you to break a negative cycle is to expect good behavior. Treat them as if they really are going to choose right. When parents don't expect obedience, they generally don't get it.

SELECTIVE IGNORING

Learn to ignore “smallies” and concentrate on biggies. A “smallie” is a behavior that is annoying but doesn't harm humans, animals, or property, or which even if uncorrected does not lead to a biggie. This childish irresponsibility will self-correct with time and maturity. Ignoring helps your child respect the limits of a parent's job description (e.g., "I don't do petty arguments"). Ignoring undesirable behaviors works best if you readily acknowledge desirable ones. The ignored interrupter learns to enter adult conversations with "excuse me" once you reinforce the use of these polite addresses. Ignore the misbehavior, not the child.

CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Experiencing the consequences of their choices is one of the most effective ways children can learn self-discipline. These lessons really last because they come from real life. Most success in life depends on making wise choices. Being able to think ahead about the positive or negative consequences of an action and choose accordingly is a skill children must learn.

Building a child's natural immunity to bad choices. Letting natural consequences teach your child to make right choices is a powerful learning tool. Experience is the best teacher: He's careless, he falls; he leaves his bicycle in the driveway, it gets stolen. Children make unwise choices on the way to becoming responsible adults. Children must experience the consequences of their actions in order to learn from them. Expect the preschooler to help clean up his messes. Let your school-age child experience the penalty for not completing homework by bedtime. After years of small inoculations of consequences, the child enters adolescence at least partially immunized against bad choices, having had some genuine experience with decision-making. Children learn better from their own mistakes than from your preventive preaching.

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Adolescence is a time when the consequences of wrong choices are serious. The child who has learned to deal with "smallies" is more likely to be successful with biggies. Being a wise immunizer means keeping a balance between overprotecting your child and being negligent.

Sometimes the best solution is to offer the child guidance, state your opinion, and then back off and let the consequence teach your child. Use each consequence as a teachable moment, not an opportunity to gloat. Avoid sentences that begin with "I told you so..." or "If you would have listened to me..." But to be sure that your child learns these little lessons of life, talk through each situation. Replay the tape so that your child gets the point that choices count, and his actions affect what happens. You want your child to realize that he is happier and his life runs more smoothly when he makes wise, though perhaps not easy, choices. Let the consequence speak for itself. The child spills her soda and there's no more soda – without your commentary.

Use logical consequences to correct. Besides letting natural consequences teach your child, you can set up parent-made consequences tailored to have lasting learning value for your child.

For the most learning value, balance negative with positive consequences: The child who frequently practices the piano gets the thrill of moving through his books quickly and receiving hearty applause at his recital. The child who consistently takes care of her bicycle merits a new one when she outgrows it; otherwise, she gets a used one. The child who puts his sports equipment away in the same place each time gets the nice feeling of always being able to find his favorite bat or soccer ball.

In these examples, no amount of punishment could have had the lasting teaching value of natural and logical consequences. With punishment, children see no connection between their behavior and the discipline. With consequences, the child makes the connection between the behavior and the results. You plant a lesson of life: take responsibility for your behavior.

MOTIVATORS AND REWARDS

Children and adults behave according to the pleasure principle: behavior that's rewarding continues; behavior that's unrewarding ceases. While you don't have to go to the extreme of playing behavioral scientist, you can invent creative ways to motivate desirable behavior with rewards. Motivators help family life run more smoothly: "First one in bed picks the story."

A word of caution. Prizes are a way to entice the child toward goals you've made for him. The ultimate goal is self-discipline – a child behaves because she wants to or because she knows you expect good behavior. She shouldn't expect a prize each time she behaves well.

To work, a reward must be something the child likes and truly desires. Ask some leading questions to get ideas:

"If you could do some special things with mom or dad, what would they be?"

"If you could go somewhere with a friend, where would you like to go?"

"If you had a dollar, what would you buy?"

Granting privileges and rewards are discipline tools to set limits and get jobs done. "If you hurry and do a good job cleaning your room, you might get finished in time to play outside before dinner."

Reward charts. Charts are a helpful way to motivate young children. They see their progress and participate in the daily steps toward the reward. The chart stands out as a testimony of good behavior for all to see. Charts work because they are interactive and fun. Even the business world uses charts as profit motivators. Throughout life many

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children will be surrounded by performance charts, so they may as well get used to seeing them in their home. When nothing else seems to be working, behavior charts help a child get over the hump of extinguishing an undesirable behavior. As you weed out undesirable behaviors one by one, your child gradually gets used to the feelings that come with good behavior, and these feelings become self-motivating. In making reward charts, consider these tips:

Follow the basic rule: **KISMIF** – Keep it simple, make it fun.

Work with your child. Let your child help construct the chart and make daily entries.

Construct the chart so that the child has a visual image of closing in on the reward. Have the child draw a picture of what she wants. Then outline the periphery of the picture with dots several inches apart. With each day of successful behavior (e.g., each time he remembers to take out the trash) the child connects another dot. When all the dots are connected, the child collects the prize.

Display the chart in a high visibility location. Giving the chart a high profile and high visibility gives the child easy access, and serves as a frequent reminder of the desired behavior. Make the chart interactive: connecting dots, pasting on stickers or different colored stars, anything more interesting than a check mark.

Charts can contain positive and negative entries, reminders of both types of behaviors. For example: Use daily charts to correct bedwetting in children older than five. The child puts a happy face sticker on the chart every morning he wakes up dry and a sad face sticker on the chart on mornings he wakes up wet. If the happy faces outnumber the sad faces at the end of the week, the child gets to choose where he wants to go for lunch on Saturday.

Frequent, simple rewards keep motivation high. For a toddler, use end-of-the-hour rewards; for the preschooler, end-of-the-day rewards; for the school-age child, end-of-the-week rewards. A month is an unreachable eternity for any child. For the preschool child, rather than set a calendar time, refer to an event such as "dinner time" or "after Sunday school." Novelty wears off quickly for children. Change charts frequently.

Creative rewards. Besides charts, design your own clever motivators. For example: "The ticket system" Give three 'free' tickets to start the day. Let the child earn tickets for helping without being asked, for doing assigned chores, for having a good attitude, etc. They lose tickets for whining, complaining, or refusing to obey. At the end of the day or the week, the child should get a special treat that was prearranged according to the number of coupons collected (frozen yogurt, a movie, a hamburger, etc.).

This is not a system for everyone's problems. It's very time-consuming. It is, however, a lot of fun and well worth the effort.

REMINDERS

"But I forgot." "But I didn't know I was supposed to." As lame as these excuses sound to adults, children do honestly forget and need reminders to keep their behavior on track. Reminders are cues that jog the hazy memory of a busy child. They may be subtle prompts in the form of a look that tells the about-to-be-mischievous child, "You know better," or a short verbal cue that turns on the child's memory: "Ah! Where does that plate belong?"

Reminders are less likely to provoke a refusal or a power struggle than are outright commands. You have already painted the scene in the child's mind, he knows what you expect, and he has previously agreed to it. Reminders prompt a child to complete a behavior equation on her own. You give a clue and the child fills in the blanks. You stand over a pile of homework sprawled on the floor, then scowl disapprovingly. He gets the message and picks up the homework without you even saying a word.

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Written reminders go over better with children who don't like to feel controlled. You avoid a face-off. It's up to the child to carry out the reminder in good time to avoid getting a verbal direction. Frequent reminders of what's acceptable and what's not, lets the child know what is normal for your home.

THE ART OF NEGOTIATING

Bargaining with your child doesn't compromise your authority...It strengthens it. Children respect parents who are willing to listen to them. Until they leave your home, children must accept your authority— that's not negotiable; but that doesn't mean you can't listen to their side of things.

Negotiating is a win-win situation that benefits both parents and children. Parents show that they are approachable and open to another's viewpoint—a quality children become more sensitive about as they approach adolescence. In teen years you will find that negotiating becomes your main behavior management tool, because adolescents like to be treated as intellectual equals and expect you to respect their viewpoint. If used wisely, negotiating improves communication between parent and child. A stubborn insistence on having your own way has the opposite effect.

Sometimes let your child take the lead. Use a well-known negotiating tool: Meet the child where he is, and then bring him to where you want him to be. For example, you want your child to sit and read a book with you, but he's intent on wrestling as evidenced by his grabbing your arm and showing signs that he wants physical play. Let him spend a bit of energy roughhousing on the floor. Tire him out enough so that he can then sit still and read the book. This is not giving into the child or letting the child be in control, it's simply being a smart negotiator. It's a way to bring your child back to your agenda after a short excursion that satisfies the needs of his agenda.

Follow the house rules. Command and exhibit respect during negotiations. If your child starts yelling or acting disrespectful of your authority, close the discussion: "You must not talk to me in that tone, Susan. I'm the mother, you're the child, and I expect respect." This sets the tone for future negotiations. You may have to remind your child of this non-negotiable fact of family life often during the pre-teen and teen years. Because of the constant haggling that older children do, it is easy to let your authority slip away. Don't! You need this authority to keep order in the house, and your child will need to respect authority to get along in life.

There will be situations when you don't want to dicker with your child. You know you're right and your child is being unreasonable. Before the child works himself into a dither, break off the negotiations. That's the parents' prerogative.

If used wisely, negotiation can become a valuable communication tool, helping children develop their reasoning abilities. Teach your child that negotiations work best when everyone is calm and peaceful, not in the heat of the moment. "I don't like the way you are talking to me. Come back later when you're feeling more peaceful." When you're not sure, or feeling pressured, decide not to decide.

WITHDRAWING PRIVILEGES

Withdrawing privileges is one of the few behavior shapers you never run out of. Kids will always want something from you. For this correction technique to have a good chance of preventing recurrence of misbehavior, the child must naturally connect the privilege withdrawal with the behavior: "If you ride your tricycle into the street, you lose the use of your tricycle for the rest of the day."

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This correction technique is commonly used in adult law enforcement: You get caught driving drunk and you lose your license. But this doesn't cure your drinking problem. So you see, withdrawing privileges has its limits as a discipline technique. What does withholding television have to do with being home in time for supper, a child may wonder?

Losing privileges can work if its part of a pre-agreed behavior management strategy decided on during a family meeting. Parents state the behaviors they expect from their children and announce that part of the fun of being a parent is granting privileges to the children so they can have some fun too. But if the children don't hold up their end of the bargain, the parents cannot grant those privileges. So, being home in time for supper gets you the privilege of a half-hour of TV rather than the TV time being an inalienable right of every citizen of the household. As children get older they need to learn a valuable lesson for life: with increasing privileges come increasing responsibilities.

NO NAGGING

"You're picking your nose again." "Watch where you're going." "Late again!" "Can't you do anything right?" Persistent negative comments like these, called nagging, nip away at a child's self-worth. Studies show that nagging does not improve behavior; it actually worsens it. Nagging is especially defeating in children with a poor self-image. Nagging and repeating commands make children nervous. Some children exhibit more than their fair share of negative behavior, but constantly reminding them, produces more negative behavior. It is better to purposely pick out some redeeming qualities and concentrate on the positives ("I like the way you stepped aside for your sister"). You will see the negatives melt away.

Continuing to talk, or repeating advice that you've previously given, tells the child that you don't trust her to carry out a simple request, such as "Put a load of laundry in, please." If you add a string of qualifiers, you're teaching her you don't trust her to do it right (your way). If you can't stop "advising," start writing notes.

HUMOR: THE BEST MEDICINE

In disciplining a growing child, a parent wears many costumes: You put on your policeman's cap for dangerous situations, your preacher's collar for morality lessons, your diplomatic tie and tails for power struggles, and your doctor's coat for healing little hurts. But the costume that will serve you best during tough discipline times is your jester's cap.

Humor surprises. Levity catches a child off guard and sparks instant attention, diffusing a power struggle before the opening shots are fired. Humor opens up closed little ears and minds.

Use humor sensitively. There are times when your child's behavior is no laughing matter. Also, children are sensitive to ridicule and sometimes take your humor as a sarcastic put-down, even when you may simply be trying to bring a bit of levity to a tense situation. There are times to be serious, and there are times to be funny. Both have a place in disciplining your family. Much of your discipline can be amusing to your kids, and its fun to have an admiring audience.

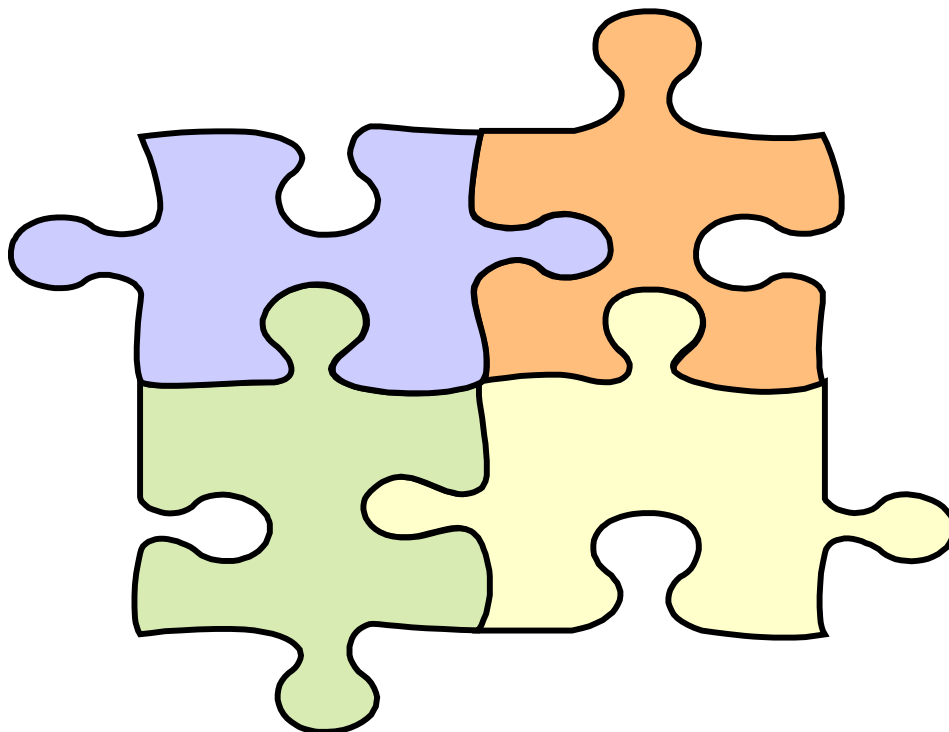
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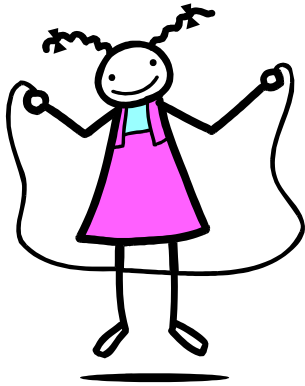
HOLDING A FAMILY MEETING

Family meetings are good times to set house rules. You are relaxed, and the children are more receptive. Spur-of-the-moment rules ("You're grounded!") made when you are angry are likely to be unfair and not followed. Getting together to sort out discipline problems is a valuable way for parents and children to express their concerns. Discipline problems that involve one child should be handled privately, but there are times when all the children get a bit lax in the self-control department and the whole family needs a reminder. Suppose your house is continually a mess. Call a family meeting and invite suggestions from the children on how to keep the house tidy. Use a chalkboard to make it more businesslike. Write down the problem and propose solutions. Put together a "kids want/parents want" list in order to set goals.

Formulate house rules for happier living. Arriving at a general consensus is better than voting, which has winners and losers. Try a suggestion box and have the children write their suggestions on little cards. You'll learn a lot about your living habits that way. You can use family councils to help a child solve a problem. Develop a share-and-care atmosphere. Make the meeting fun. Besides your living room, try other meeting places such as a family picnic at the park. Meetings shape family behavior and are a forum in which to foster family communication.

The information was adapted from Dr. William Sears at his website at www.askdrsears.com. Dr. Sears, or Dr. Bill as his "little patients" call him, is the father of eight children as well as the author of over 30 books on childcare. Dr. Bill is an Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of California, Irvine, School of Medicine. Dr. Sears is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and a fellow of the Royal College of Pediatricians (RCP). Dr. Bill is also a medical and parenting consultant for BabyTalk and Parenting magazines and the pediatrician on the website Parenting.com.





KEYS TO EFFECTIVE LIMITS

- ◆ **Set Few Limits - Choose Only What is Really Important**
- ◆ **Set Fair and Reasonable Limits**
- ◆ **State Limits Clearly**
- ◆ **State Limits in Positive Terms**
- ◆ **Change Limits to Adapt to the Child's Age**
- ◆ **State the Reason for the Limit**
- ◆ **Set Enforceable Limits**



USE OF NATURAL OR LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Everyone makes mistakes. When we do, we “pay the price.” What does this statement mean? It means we must face the consequences or results of our actions. As unpleasant as this may be at times, experiencing consequences is an important part of learning. If consequences or outcomes of our behavior are good, we may repeat that action. If the consequences are bad, we probably won’t. This is true for both children and adults.

Parents sometimes try to protect their children from the negative consequences of their actions. We don’t like to see our children unhappy. But when we protect children from the consequences, they miss important lessons. These lessons are a part of growing up into mature, responsible adults.



What are “natural” consequences?

Natural consequences are the direct results of behavior. For example, if your child forgets to put her dirty clothes in the laundry, those clothes won’t be washed. She may not have her favorite jeans ready to wear. Note that you, the parent, did not have to take any action. The consequence occurred naturally.

What would be the natural consequences of the following behaviors?

- ❖ *Your 9-year-old is watching TV. He doesn’t come when you tell him dinner is ready.*
- ❖ *Your 8-year-old puts on her favorite shirt and goes outside to play. When she gets dirty, she wants you to wash her shirt quickly, so she can wear it to a party.*

You should protect your child from natural consequences if they are dangerous. For example, a parent can’t let a child fall off his bike and get hurt in an effort to teach him always to wear his helmet. At other times, it may take too long for a natural consequence to occur. Or, your child’s behavior may be unfair to others. In these instances, parents can use logical consequences.

What are “logical” consequences?

Logical consequences are set by the parent. Let’s look at an example: *Yesterday, Tim’s Dad asked him to stop bouncing his basketball inside. He told Tim that the bouncing made too much noise and could break something. Today, Tim is bouncing his ball again. When his dad sees this, he says “Tim, we talked yesterday about not bouncing the ball inside. Please put your ball away until tomorrow. Then, you can practice dribbling outside.”*

The logical consequence is to have Tim put his ball away for a while. Because the consequence is related to the action, it teaches Tim a lesson. His father’s consequence teaches Tim why he shouldn’t play inside (He might break something). It also teaches him what to do instead (Play outside). It would not be logical to spank Tim or send him to his room. That would not teach him about playing responsibly with his basketball.

USE OF NATURAL OR LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

What would be some logical consequences for the following behaviors?

Your child leaves a library book out in the rain.

Your child went down the street to play at a friend's house without telling you.

Your eight year old is teasing children at the park.

How do I use “natural” or “logical” consequences?

1. Make sure the rule is clear. Do all the members of the family understand it?
2. Discuss the consequences. What will happen if the rule is broken?
3. Let your child learn from natural consequences when possible.
4. When you use logical consequences, be firm and consistent.

