

Moving Beyond Rewards, Punishments to Choice and Appropriate Consequences

Presented by Megg Thompson M.Ed. ECMPWTPCF

Certified Behavioral Consultant

Certified Life Coach working with children, adults and families

Founder and Filler of The eMpTy Toolbox

meggthompson.com

megg@meggthompson.com

603-706-3288

How do you currently discipline?

Do you use punishment? Do you take items or experiences away when misbehavior is seen? Does the discipline use natural, logical or teaching consequences? Are you teaching skills and meeting needs?

Before we go any further.....

- The emotional and logical piece can't happen at the same time.
- If you consider your classroom/home inclusive, watch out for excluding others.
- Time and patience are your greatest tools.
- If people feel like they have lost control or power, they will find a way to get them back!
- Being someone who can influence others, is the greatest strength in building relationships.
- Conflict happens: Enter, maintain and exit it well!
- Whispers turn into yelling if you aren't paying close attention
- People who hurt often hurt people

Developmental Norms

- 3 years old 60%-70%
 - 4 years old 70%-80%
 - 5 years old 80%-90%
 - 6 years old-Adulthood 90%
-
- It is NEVER 100% of the time! When we want blind obedience, that is called authoritarian!

12 Guiding Principles:

1. Be reflective
2. Reconsider your requests
3. Keep your eyes on your long-term goals
4. Put the relationship first
5. Change how you see, not just how you act
6. Respect
7. Be authentic
8. Talk less, ask more
9. Keep their ages in mind
10. Don't stick your no's in unnecessarily
11. Don't be rigid
12. Don't be in a hurry

*adapted from Unconditional Parenting by Alfie Kohn

Authoritative Caregivers

- Act, Don't talk: stop talking and buckle seat belt, carry out of park, remove toy that is being fought over.
- Follow Through. It is hard but very necessary.
- Be Firm and Kind or Firm and Neutral.
- The person who can and must change is the teacher/parent.
- Give children permission to make mistakes, to be imperfect, and to try again.
- Learn to change yourself instead of trying to control others and make them change. Self-reflection is essential!
- Children help set and maintain reasonable and fair rules.

Authoritative Caregivers Continued

- Think before talking. Anger makes you forget to do this.
- What is the “WHY?” This is the most important question when being behavior detectives.
- Replace punishment with information and opportunities to learn from mistakes.
- Hold classroom/family meetings and keep agendas for these meetings
- Offer limited choices
- Set limits. Children need parameters.
- Use encouragement over praise and rewards
- Natural and logical consequences are alternatives to punishment.

Natural Consequences: It is the result of the child's behavior and it works best when it just happens, and natural consequences happen naturally.

This type of consequence results from the child's own action

- When you stand in the rain you get wet.
- When you don't eat dinner, you are hungry.
- If you go to bed late, you will be tired in the morning.

Children learn naturally if teachers/parents can resist the urge to step in and rescue the child, control the situation, or punish them for their choices.

Logical Consequences:

When a natural consequence is unsafe or inappropriate for helping your child learn a life skill or lesson.

- Try not to disguise punishment by calling it a logical consequence. The point of a logical consequence is to help children learn for the future instead of paying for the present or the past. Logical consequences are future focused.
- Logical consequences that work best are those you set with a child's involvement.
- Using logical consequences will help avoid power struggles because they seem fair to the child as long as they have the 3 R's. Related, Reasonable and Respectful.

Time out vs. Renewal Time

- Time outs use shame, guilt and suffering to motivate children. “Shame, blame, disrespect, betrayal and the withholding of affection damage the roots from which love grows.” –Brene Brown. The outcome of shame is ALWAYS fear, blame and disconnect.
- Be careful not to disguise time out with new words. Be clear about how children can take a break and collect themselves.
- Kids do better when they feel better and you don’t motivate children to do better by making them feel worse.
- Take a break and come back and try again when you feel better.
- Create a renewal space with your child’s help. What will this space look like, feel like, smell like? Call this space something other than time out.
- Model renewal time for children. Use the space and show children how to use it and what it can do. Children will do what you do!

Examples of frequently asked questions about situations:

- Brushing teeth: no treats
- Not cleaning up toys: community, earn them back
- Hitting: Hurting will not be tolerated, hold hands gently, replace with externally physical behavior, emotions modulation (I get mad with my hands)
- Doesn't want to leave the park: carry out or hold hand, little talking, brainstorm for the future
- Tantrums in grocery store: go to car and start over
- Car seat: teach when not in a hurry, wait and be willing to miss event, little talking
- Bedtime: tired and let someone know you are following through on natural consequences.
- Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner: time limit, when adults finished...dinner is finished, natural consequence of hunger, no food after dinner when child is hungry.

What is the difference between consequence and punishment?

Punishment

- Retaliatory
- Focuses on past behavior.
- Uses external control to show a child how much power an adult has.
- Leads to anger, shame, guilt, and a trip in the “bad kid bubble”
- Reacts emotionally to the child and their behavior
- A child does better because they now have fear as a first thought and revenge may be building. “I am scared I will lose something or be prevented from getting something.”
- Models how power or submission are the only strategies.

Consequence

- Corrective
- Concerned with present and future behavior. Clean slate club!
- Helps child develop internal control
- Asks the question, “How can I teach a lesson and be emotional an appropriate amount?”
- Teaches alternative behaviors in a firm and kind manner
- Responds logically to behavior
- When children practice and are lead to think about what happened, success is the result.
- Children are inherently good and sometimes make poor choices. Help them make better choices!