



BE HAPPY

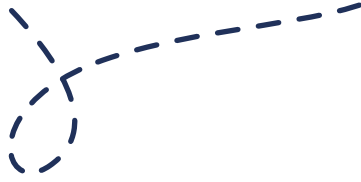
RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR: A PARENT GUIDE

The University of Texas at Tyler School of Medicine

When children receive consistent, logical, and impactful consequences for unhelpful behaviors, they are more likely to make helpful choices in the future. Remember to always pair consequences with praise for positive behavior!

EFFECTIVE CONSEQUENCES ARE:

- **Immediate:** Implement consequences as soon as unhelpful behavior occurs.
- **Consistent:** Respond to unhelpful behaviors the same way every time. Do not let unhelpful behaviors slide!
- **Logical:** Children learn faster when consequences are naturally connected to behavior.
Examples:
 - If you make a mess, you clean it up.
 - If you break a toy, it is not replaced.
 - If you do not put on your coat, you feel cold.
- **Feasible:** Make sure you can realistically follow through consistently.
- **Motivating:** Choose something that your child cares about.
- **Focused:** The consequence should only impact the target child.
- **Time-limited:** Shorter consequences are often more effective- keep it under 24 hours.
- **Not overly punitive:** Consequences should teach your child, not create resentment!



REMOVE PRIVILEGES

Taking away privileges can be especially helpful for older children.

STEP 1: CHOOSE TARGET BEHAVIORS

- Start with 2–3 specific behaviors
- Include both minor and major concerns

STEP 2: CHOOSE EFFECTIVE CONSEQUENCES

- Select a specific consequence for each target behavior.

STEP 3: BE CLEAR AHEAD OF TIME

- Explain rules and consequences **before problems happen**
- Consider using a **visual chart or list**
- Keep expectations simple and easy to remember

STEP 4: FOLLOW THROUGH CALMLY AND QUICKLY

When a rule is broken:

- Respond **immediately**
- Use **clear language**: “Because you didn’t keep your hands to yourself, we have to leave the park.”
- Stay **calm and neutral**

STEP 5: MOVE ON

- Ignore negative reactions like whining or pleading
- Avoid arguing or negotiating
- Once time is up, **restore the privilege calmly**
- Give your child a fresh start

