



**1. Provide clear expectations** - explain both incentives and penalties to your child ahead of time. In order to provide your child with a fair opportunity, consequences (for both desired and undesired behaviors) need to be clearly determined by you and your family and then shared with your child prior to the moment of conflict.

"Eat your lunch, and then you can have a popsicle. If you don't eat your lunch, no popsicle".

**2. Follow through** - Implement contingencies consistently (no exceptions). The strongest schedule of reinforcement is intermittent reinforcement or reinforcement that happens "on occasion". Implementing our expectations consistently helps us to avoid inadvertently making undesirable behaviors more likely to increase. Parents (and their children) will benefit from consistent implementation of established rules and expectations; particularly in the long-term. Using the example above:

If your child eats their lunch, they should receive a popsicle; similarly if they do not eat their lunch, they should not be given a popsicle. If you find it difficult to follow through with a demand, reevaluate your demand next time, rather than backing down...actions speak louder than words.

**3. Deliver reminders as general statements** - "I really like it when we wipe our feet before we walk on the carpet". Using general statements enables your child to receive prompts or cues without having additional attention drawn specifically to their undesired behaviors. At home, this may also serve as a preventative way of decreasing attention from siblings for undesired behaviors. When needing to attend to your child's specific undesired behavior, remember:

- Approach him/her within close proximity (come closer rather than across the room)
- Approach the child at his/her level (bend down)
- Use discrete tone and language (low volume - calm/neutral tone)

**4. Use visuals and gesture cues** (i.e. finger in front of lips or hand up to signal wait). Limiting the amount of auditory stimulation (i.e. noise or sound) aids in your child's ability to more quickly process the request you are making of him/her. When giving a verbal directive is necessary, use short, simple statements "Pick up the trains" versus "Pick up the trains and put them over there".

**5. Deliver your directives as statements rather than posing as questions.** (i.e. "It's time for dinner" rather than "Can you come over to the table"). Simply put, if we ask a yes/no question, we technically should be willing to accept either response. As this most often is not the intent, parents should aim to state directives and refrain from posing them as questions.

**6. Limit discussions around consequences/Refrain from repeating yourself.** In attempts to decrease adult attention (negative or positive), parents should be aware of maintaining a firm, yet neutral tone of voice and facial expressions. Often times, a child may exhibit a behavior (such as throwing items) and predict the responses (being yelled at) which can offer a distorted sense of control to the child, which may lead to an increase in undesired behaviors.

- Maintain firm, yet neutral tone

- Maintain neutral facial expressions

- Follow through with expectations you originally communicated/set forth

**7. Attend to desired behaviors.** Parents are frequently overwhelmed with the responsibilities and challenges they encounter with their children; particularly those with intensified needs. Due to this, parents (and teachers alike) may unintentionally attend to their child more frequently when they are exhibiting disruptive or unsafe behaviors. While addressing these situations may be warranted, parents should also be aware to make efforts to attend to their child when they are engaging in desired behaviors as well.

Let your child know when they are doing the things you want them to do. This can be both said and shown (i.e. "Hey, thanks for putting your toys away in your room", cuddling on the couch when they are sitting a good distance from the T.V., etc.).

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