

RESILIENT KIDS

NEWSLETTER by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

Discipline is not a dirty word!

Children like limits and boundaries. They provide them with a structure and teach them how they should behave. In fact, many studies indicate that families who have very few clearly stated rules or standards are more likely to have children who misbehave.

Children also like to push parental boundaries so parents need to resist pressure that children can exert upon them. This is a normal but irritating expression of a child's push for independence and autonomy.

Effective limits and boundaries:

- Are given using clear, direct, concrete, specific terms – "Be home by six o'clock" rather than "Don't be late."
- Explain reasons if appropriate
- Involves choices when appropriate

One of the simplest ways to improve a child's behaviour is to be more consistent.

Children love their parents to be consistent as they are able to predict how they will act. A consistent approach to discipline helps put children in control of their behaviour.

Consistency means as parents we follow through and do as we say. Consistency means not giving children second and third chances. It means not allowing children to get away with misbehaviour two or three times then coming down hard the fourth time they misbehave.

Consistency also means that both parents in a dual parent family get their act together and respond in

similar ways when children are less than perfect. Sole parents need to be consistent with how they react when children misbehave.

Difficult children like consistency. Consistency is a challenge as it is tempting to let children's misbehaviour go. We become tired and sometimes we doubt our own judgement. It is easy to think, "Maybe I am being a bit tough..."

Consistency prevents misbehaviour from escalating. We help children develop self-discipline, which is our aim, when we are consistent and do as we say we will – every time.



TRY THIS...

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

To ensure consistency for children:

1. Focus on priority behaviours. It is difficult to be consistent with every single misbehaviour but it is easy if you focus on one or two. When you are consistent and follow through with **priority** behaviours it has a positive effect on other behaviours.
2. Give yourself a **tangible** reminder about the behaviour you want to follow up. Leave a note somewhere telling yourself that you need to "Walk away when they whine. Don't give in." Or "Catch them being good when they resolve a problem without arguing."
3. Check your **routines**. Do you have routines for troublesome times of the day such as bedtime or mealtimes?
4. **Act** rather than overtalk or repeat yourself. Sometimes a consequence can be inconvenient in the short-term but, in the long term, it pays off with children who are better behaved.

ACTION PLAN

First Step . . .

Next Step . . .

For more ideas about promoting resilience in children visit www.parentingideas.com.au

QUOTE

'Consistency is the most important element in a parent's relationship with their children.'

SAL SEVERE

WHAT'S YOUR DISCIPLINE LIKE?

HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR DISCIPLINE?

DO YOU

1. Have a flexible set of routines in place particularly around morning, mealtimes and bedtime? **Yes [2] No [0]**
2. Develop his self-help skills and willingly take on independence? **Yes [2] No [0]**
3. Generally put a consequence in place the first or second time a child misbehaves rather than continually remind and threaten? **Yes [0] No [2]**
4. Have a strategy that deals with most

misbehaviours rather than make them up on the spot? **Yes [2] No [0]**

5. Anticipate problems and make plans to minimise misbehaviour before it happens? **Yes [2] No [0]**

SCORE:

- 10:** Discipline usage based on consistency. It's hard work!
6-8: Getting there. Perhaps need to anticipate more and act rather than let things go.
0-4: Need to work on your consistency. Probably need a break too!