

Discipline Strategies

Remember: When your child is misbehaving, that is when he or she may need to connect with you the most!

Try to be attuned to why your child is misbehaving. Misbehavior may be motivated by an unmet need (e.g., hunger), difficulty managing strong emotions, or a skill he or she has not mastered.

Step 1: Calm Down

Step 2: Connect

While Connecting with Your Child:

- **Be Reassuring and Respectful.** Remember, you love your child but dislike the behavior.
- **State the Rule and the Reason.** Remind your child of the rule and the reason for it. This can be an opportunity to use an ***I statement***:

  "I feel *insert a feeling word* when you *name the misbehavior* because *state the impact* and I want you to *name the desired behavior*."

- **Request the Desired Behavior Respectfully.** Say, "Please do this..." ***or*** ask your child to tell you what behavior is expected.

Step 3: Listen

Step 4: Involve Your Child in Problem Solving



Honor Your Child and Your Relationship!



Additional Strategies

Planned Ignoring

This is deliberately withholding your attention from your child while he or she is misbehaving. This technique can be used when your child is exhibiting a frustrating behavior — like making noises, whining, or having a temper tantrum. It should not be used when harm is possible, if your child is emotionally distraught, or if the behavior is driven by a physical need (e.g., hunger, more sleep).

Precision Requests

This is redirecting your child or providing clear and direct instructions. When giving a precision request, keep the following in mind:

- Get physically down to your child's level by kneeling or squatting next to him or her.
- Reassure your child that you love him or her and explain that you dislike his or her behavior.
- Honestly express how your child's behavior affects you, others, or the environment.

Discipline Strategies

Explain that there is a reason behind each rule.

Give time for your child to process your request. Wait at least 5-10 seconds, so he or she has time to comprehend and react to your request.

Give the instructions only once.

If the behavior doesn't change, remind him or her of the consequences for not cooperating.

Issue the consequence immediately, if needed.



Consequences

Natural Consequences

Natural consequences can occur without parental intervention as long as there are not safety concerns.

Allow your child to assume responsibility for the consequence and be certain to engage him or her in talking about the role of his or her decisions and actions.

Natural consequences teach problem-solving and healthy decision-making skills.



Be Calm, Clear, Concise, and Consistent!

Logical Consequences and Removing Privileges

Explain the consequences ahead of time.

Give your child a warning and allow time for him or her to adjust his or her behavior.

If the behavior continues, promptly give a consequence that matches.

When removing an object or activity, select one that has value to your child. It is recommended that food items not be used as a privilege.

Deliver the consequence calmly.

Keep the consequence simple and the duration short, so it is not difficult for you to monitor and enforce.

Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website https://thrive.psu.edu, and sign up today!