

# NATURAL & LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

## Definition of "Consequence"

Natural consequences occur without any enforcement on the part of the parent. Often, allowing the natural consequence to occur will prevent a parent/child argument and the child will learn the right lesson. Logical consequences involve action taken by the parent. No consequence should ever place a child at risk for injury.

## Examples of Natural Consequences:

- Child argues about wearing gloves in winter to play outside; provided frostbite is not an issue "the gloves will be here if you change your mind."
- Child argues there is no homework tonight; the next day they will have to face the teacher and peers.
- Child spends allowance foolishly; there is no money for the newly released video game.
- Child cheats in playing with friends; friends will start to stay away.
- Child is bossy with friends; friends will start to stay away.
- Child wants to put too much stuff in the backpack; they have to carry it.
- Child refuses raincoat or umbrella when raining; they will get wet.

[You could have chosen to turn each of the above into an argument, a power struggle, but allowing the natural consequences to happen taught the child the same lesson, probably even better!]

## Examples of Logical Consequences

- "in control" temper tantrum(yelling and pounding on floor; no one is getting hurt)-- leave area of tantrum, i.e., tantrum does not even get attention, which was the goal
- leaves toys all over—toys get a timeout
- misbehaves at dinner-- leaves the table
- do not give choices when there are none: "It is time for bed" not "it is time for bed, OK?"
- no dinner, no dessert (or late night snacks for that matter). It should be child's choice to eat or not eat. Child should eat reasonable dinner to get "treats."
- breaking curfew results in grounding

- annoying or gets into things while you are on the phone-- grounding to room/chair time (anticipate, by planning activity for child while you are on the phone and avoid need for any consequences, everybody will be happier!)
- do not threaten consequences you cannot or will not enforce, e.g., "I will throw out your toys if you do not pick them up." Financially this is not a good idea and you are not likely to follow through with the threat. Even if you are, the message to the child is not very practical and is actually reckless.
- ride bike outside area permitted--bike gets grounded
- does not wear bike helmet--bike gets grounded
- stays out beyond curfew hours--curfew time becomes earlier
- stealing--1] pays victim out of own pocket; 2] returns item with apology
- lying--lowers trust, adult must "confirm" information child provides until child re-earns trust
- speaks with disrespect--do not respond, ignore the child's presence; "I will not speak with you unless you are respectful" (being angry is not disrespectful; name calling is disrespectful)
- destroys property--pays for it out of allowance, work, etc.
- sneaks out of house--grounding for reasonable period of time
- if clothes do not get to the hamper—they do not get washed. May have to wear soiled, wrinkled clothes to school as a result.

**\*In the eyes of the child, parents are "mean" when the child discovers that their parents MEAN what they say!**

**"I will treat you as responsible as you behave." If kids behave properly than they earn the privilege of greater independence and freedom, i.e., less adult supervision. On the other hand if they act irresponsibly, than they should expect to be treated accordingly. For example, their bike gets left outside and is stolen (parents refusing to replace bike, child having to save money for replacement is a logical consequence as child is not demonstrating responsibility.)**

**Consequences are what influence most of what we do on a daily basis. Unpleasant outcomes usually keep us from repeating the same decision. (Get a speeding ticket, we slow down. Spill grape juice on living room carpet, we don't drink grape juice in the living room. Yell at boss, get fired, you don't yell at the next boss.)**

**Consequences are what help us become responsible people. We do the right things because we don't like the outcomes if we don't. If we make bad choices and there are no bad outcomes we learn nothing and continue to make the bad choices. Say you make a bad choice; someone argues your innocence and blames someone else. You just learned to be irresponsible.**

It is better to prevent problems than to try to deal with them after they have happened. When it comes to children, we should have pre-set consequences already in mind. This makes it easier to enforce when you need to do so. Despite the kids knowing what will happen if they misbehave, they WILL misbehave. It is human nature to resist someone telling us what to do but there must be outcomes to poor choices.