



## Effective Discipline Strategies

### Negative Consequences and Punishment: Taking Responsibility

A positive approach to discipline includes negative consequences and punishment. Some parents get discouraged when their child misbehaves. They think, “This attention, praise and rewards stuff isn’t working!” Children will still break the rules-because they are learning, exploring and testing the limits of their world. A positive discipline approach includes positive parenting strategies AND tools to use when children misbehave.

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#### **Taking Responsibility for Misbehavior**

- When your child misbehaves and you have them take responsibility for their behavior, you let the natural and logical consequences of their behavior be the “punishment.”
- This strategy works with all ages. Even toddlers can quickly understand that if they hit you with a toy, they no longer get to play with that toy.
- There are 2 ways to let the consequences of your child’s misbehavior BE the punishment: natural consequences and logical consequences.
- When you let the natural consequence be the punishment, you basically don’t do anything! You let the natural consequence of your child’s actions play out. As long as your child is safe, you don’t rescue them from their decision or actions.
- “I’m sorry you forgot your lunch again today. But I told you, if you forgot again, I wouldn’t bring your lunch to school. You can go through the lunch line and ask for the free peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Yes, I understand it might be embarrassing. But this is what happens when you don’t put your lunch in your backpack in the morning.”
- When you use logical consequences as the punishment, you have your child fix the problem caused by their actions. Think about that old saying, “Make the punishment fit the crime.”

For example, your daughter breaks her phone. You might say, “So, let me get this straight. You were mad at your boyfriend, you threw your phone at him, the phone won’t work now, and you want me to buy you a new phone. Seems to me getting a new phone is your responsibility – not mine. I didn’t break it.”