

The importance of consistency to children

Parenting ideas Page

Consistency is both the key to effective discipline and an essential element in our relationship with our children.

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 following-through and doing as you say you will. 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. If you are a sole parent then you need to be consistent with how you react when children misbehave.

Difficult children like consistency. Limits and boundaries provide them with a structure and teach them how they should behave. Children also like to push parental boundaries so parents need to resist pressure that they can exert.

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.



Quick Parenting Quiz

- Recent research shows that bullying is the cause of what percentage of school absenteeism:**
 - 5 per cent?
 - 10 per cent?
 - 15 per cent?
 - 20 per cent?
- Which of these techniques help children deal with their feelings?**
 - Listen quietly when they have a problem
 - Give their feelings a name
 - Tell them to get over their problem
 - Remind them things will be better in the morning

Answers 1c) 2a) b)

Vitamins for parents

Four alternatives to punishment

- Tell a child how to be helpful
- Express your disapproval of the behaviour (not the child)
- Show your child how to make up for the misbehaviour
- Give a choice between two behaviours

Bright idea



Catch your children being good

One of the most overlooked ways of shaping children's behaviour is to catch them doing the right thing. When your children behave well let them know that you appreciate their cooperation. Comments such as, 'thanks, I really appreciate your cooperation' can have a positive impact on the behaviour and attitude of children.

Wise & Witty Words

"Children need love, especially when they do not deserve it."

Harold S. Hulbert

"The word No carries a lot more meaning when spoken by a parent who also knows how to say Yes wisely."

Joyce Maynard