

Questions as generated from Kids Matter parent survey responses:

This week we will address the area of ***Consequences***.

### **Consequences: A Positive and Effective Way of Disciplining Your Children**

Consequences are one of the most effective strategies for helping children to respond appropriately and to change inappropriate behaviours. Using consequences helps to avoid the need to yell, threaten or explode!

Consequences, when used consistently over time, change behaviours and provide the opportunity for children to practice responsible decision-making, intrinsic motivation and making appropriate choices that are good for all.

Consequences assist the child to identify and understand the result of their action and to have an opportunity to make a better decision or choice next time. Consequences generally lead to less resentment from the child than when punishment is used as discipline.

### **How Does Using Consequences Differ to Punishment as Discipline?**

Consequences may look similar or sound similar to punishment but differ from punishment in terms of rationale and purpose.

Punishment is about imposing some form of deprivation because behaviour has occurred that is deemed inappropriate. Often the punishment will have little or nothing to do with the actual event or misbehaviour. For example, a child may refuse to turn off the television and the punishment that is given is that the child has to go to bed early.

Punishment is a strategy that simply is controlled by a more “powerful other” (i.e. the adult) and the nature of the punishment may or may not relate to the “crime” (i.e. inappropriate behaviour).

Punishment is a strategy that reinforces extrinsic motivation and can often, in the longer term, lead to resentment or fear in the child. It may lead to behaviours that are motivated simply to avoid being punished and not because the child understands and is able to adopt more acceptable behaviours.

Consequences therefore seek to help a child to learn a number of key things about taking responsibility for their own behaviours.

1. Consequences seek to help the child make an informed choice and to have practice in making choices and living with the consequences
2. Consequences attempt to relate directly where ever possible to the actual event that is occurring at the time rather than an arbitrarily imposed punishment
3. Consequences provide children with a model that promotes and leads to intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic.

Thank you,

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