



Behavior Solutions for Children and Families, LLC

Got Behavior? We've got solutions.

Effective Discipline

What doesn't work: Yelling, scolding, shaming, ignoring, pleading, lecturing. Some children actually are reinforced when they know they have made you angry, so effective discipline should be delivered without much emotion.

What does work:

- **Immediate consequences** for clear rule violations like hitting
- **Providing an appropriate place for having feelings** - a child's bedroom is a great place, but you can create a special "calming down" spot too. Depending on your child and the extent of the tantrum problem, not allowing tantrums in public spaces of your home might be important.
- **Teaching calming down skills and problem-solving** - this takes time, and can be facilitated by a reward system to motivate your child to actually use these skills
- **Taking disciplinary action quickly** - for example, the SECOND TIME your direction is ignored, count to 3 and deliver a mild consequence immediately if there is no effort by your child to begin following the direction. If your child hits, IMMEDIATELY (but calmly) put them in Time Out.

An effective continuum of consequences includes different responses to different behaviors:

1. **Low-level negative behaviors** (not following a direction after a count to 3, saying something mean to a sibling, growling when told to shut off screen time)
Take a point or take a privilege away for a short period of time
2. **Mid-level negative behaviors** (3 incidents of low-level behaviors within a short period of time, having a meltdown without physical aggression)
Send to room for a designated amount of time to re-set – parent must check in after the time is up to determine if child is "fit for human company" and can come out to be with the rest of the family – Teaches independent self-soothing and emotional re-regulation
3. **Severe negative behaviors** (physical aggression, sustained screaming with refusal to go to room, refusal to do critical "Must Do"s after taking points or privileges has not worked)
Time Out (Stay in Time Out chair with no talking for "x" minutes, use visual timer) – Teaches calming down skills and emotional regulation

Effective discipline can be tricky for some children. In particular, the research and my clinical experience indicate that Time Out can be extremely effective (and is not harmful in any way), but like all discipline, it needs to be implemented consistently, confidently, and calmly. There are a few tricks to giving directions and implementing each of the above discipline measures so that they are

effective at curbing negative behavior. If you need help, contact me at Drterib@gmail.com. Learn more at www.behaviorsolutionsvt.com.