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Parenting Tips

Planning Consequences

When giving out consequences don't think JUSTICE, think HEART CHANGE. This one truth can change the way you discipline your kids. Many parents think, "Because you did this, you deserve that." That kind of justice mentality doesn't usually produce the desired results.

Consequences should not be viewed as a sentence for committing a "crime," but rather as motivation to bring about heart change. Consequences are tools to get a child's attention. They are preparation for significant discussions to address heart and character issues. Here are some suggestions for planning consequences:

The younger the child, the more immediate the consequence. "Because you keep running away, now you have to ride in the stroller."

As children get older, connect consequences logically to life. "Because you're not finishing your homework assignments, you'll have to get them checked each day by me." (Lack of responsibility requires greater accountability.) "Rachel, since you didn't listen to my warning, and you continued to be wild and broke the lamp, I'm going to have you earn the money to replace it." (When children are unresponsive to words of correction, they need to experience the negative consequences of their actions.)

Tie privilege and responsibility together. "Since you're not sticking to the time limits we agreed upon, now you lose the privilege of playing on the computer for awhile." You might ask yourself, "What privilege is my child misusing?" to help determine the consequence. "Jim, because you left your bike out on the front lawn overnight, you're going to lose the privilege of riding it today. You know that if it gets stolen you won't have one to ride at all."

When possible, choose constructive consequences. "Because you continue to be mean to your brother, I want you to choose three ways to show kindness to him."

Determining consequences can be a challenge. Often it's helpful to take time to plan and strategize for character development.

This tip comes from chapter four in the book [Good and Angry: Exchanging Frustration for Character in You and Your Kids](#) by Dr Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.