



What Can I Do When My Child Misbehaves?

Before you do/say anything...calm yourself and think! Most misbehaviors do not require a rapid response. Stop, take a deep breath and decide your best course of action.

IGNORE: Misbehaviors that will not harm anyone or anything can often be ignored.

Those behaviors that are meant to gain attention can be annoying but by ignoring them it takes away the audience the child is seeking.

RE-DIRECT: If the behavior is a problem, take the time/energy to move the child's attention to some other activity. This technique is especially effective with toddlers.

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES: Allow the natural consequences for the child's action to be the discipline. *Examples:* the child throws a toy...the toy goes away; the child comes home later than agreed upon...the time is subtracted from the next day's limit.

SUSPENSION OF PRIVILEGES: A child loses the privilege for something (s)he likes for a short period of time. Match this loss closely to the misbehavior. The focus needs to be on the change in behavior that you want to occur.

REVIEW OF THE RULES: Children often need a reminder of the limits that you have set. A brief discussion that lets the child know what is expected can be effective.

EXTRA CHORES: For children 8 or older, a child may need to do some extra chores that the parent would normally do to take the place of the time the parent had to take to deal with the misbehavior.

RECOVERY TIME: Allow the child to calm down. Remove the child to a place away from the action where they are to stay until you believe they have calmed down and are ready to join the family. A suggestion would be...2-3 minutes after any crying, yelling etc. has stopped. When the time is over, give them a hug or other show of affection and send them on their way without any further discussion.

RE-ARRANGE SPACE OR PLACE: Sometimes, as parents, we need to realize that things in our home that are attractive to children need to be moved.