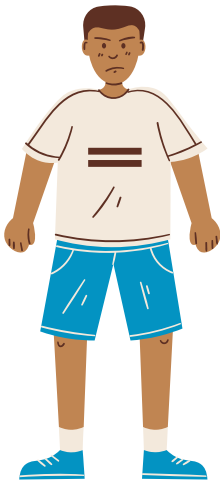
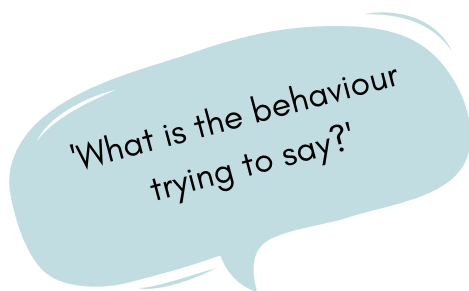


CONSEQUENCES

Consequences help show your child that they have an impact on the world and will establish secure boundaries. It is important that consequences are natural or logical in order to show cause and effect e.g. the consequences needs to connect to the behaviour. It takes time for children to develop the skills to consistently link up cause and effect. Parenting techniques that focus on the behaviour might aim to develop the link between cause and effect, but they can also induce feelings of shame (see 'Understanding Shame' resource for more information).



Children who have difficulties in their childhood are very sensitive to anything that they perceive as unfair (because life has been unfair to them). They need approaches that help heal what they have experienced, not correct the way they manage their emotions. Behaviour is a form of communication (which is explained in more detail in our 'Understanding Behaviour' resource). Children sometimes act out in ways that may seem inappropriate, but it is that they have not found a way to express their feelings and needs more effectively. We must look behind the behaviour to what they are trying to tell us, not just focus on the behaviour itself.

The main aim of consequences is to establish secure boundaries to help show your child they have an impact on the world and help to teach them cause and effect. The best way to do this is to use Natural and Logical Consequences.

Consequences need to be natural or logical to help build new synapses in the brain that links cause and effect thinking. As mentioned above, all consequences need to be connected to the behaviour. The consequence is then explained as being a result of a choice your child made, which means it is not experienced as a punishment. This will allow your child to begin to realise they have an impact on the world. During these times it is best for you to empathise with your child whilst they experience the consequence; this allow your relationship to remain unharmed. Below are examples of the 3 types of consequences; Natural, Logical, and Illogical.

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

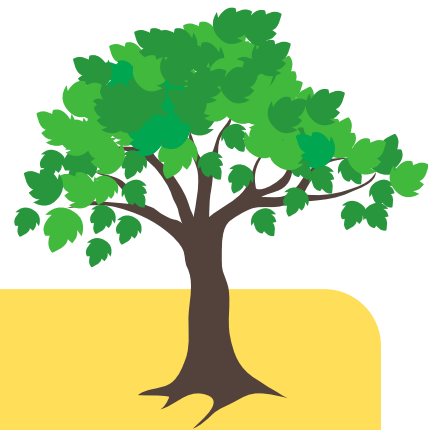
Natural consequences occur without you having to do anything e.g. when your child refuses to eat their dinner they will be hungry, if they refuse to wear a coat and it rains they will get wet, or if they don't do their homework they will have to tell their teacher. The natural consequence is that they will be hungry, they will get wet or they will have to admit to their teacher they hadn't completed the work. This helps your child to learn cause and effect. It is also a time for you to provide nurture. This will allow your child to learn that they can trust you to help them, and that when they make a mistake, they will still be valued by adults who care about them.

Although natural consequences will help your child, there are times where natural consequences are not suitable:

1. When your child could be at risk e.g. child playing in the road.
2. When natural consequences have negative impacts on others e.g. damaging others property.
3. When the natural consequences don't seem negative to your child but the natural consequences could impact their health and wellbeing e.g. not brushing teeth.

How to provide nurture during natural consequences:

1. Show empathy and validate your child's feelings.
2. Provide comfort.
3. Avoid lectures e.g. "I told you so."



EXAMPLES OF NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

- If they go to bed late your child will be tired the next morning.
- If your child spends their allowance as soon as they get it they will not be able to buy something they may really want later.
- If your child leaves their favourite toy outside it may get ruined in the rain.
- Pull a cat's tail and you get scratched.

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

If natural consequences are not possible or safe you should use Logical Consequences. These consequences should be enforced by the parent/adult in charge and should be linked to cause and effect.

For example, if the child refuses to put their toys away and parent trips over them.

The **Natural Consequence** is that the parent may have twisted their ankle.

The **Logical Consequence** is that toys are removed for a set amount of time then the child is required to put them away upon return. The child should then start learning cause and effect e.g. I don't put my toys away when asked and I will not be able to play with them for a while.

When thinking of Logical consequences remember the 3Rs of consequences:

- **Related** – Must be related to the behaviour.
- **Respectful** – Ensure not to blame or shame the child.
- **Reasonable** – The child and the adult must see the consequence as reasonable. Also guarantee you can carry out the consequence. If you can't then your child will not believe future consequences.

IMPORTANTLY REMEMBER to carry out this consequence with empathy and ensure your child is not hurt by the consequence (do not shame).



EXAMPLES OF LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

- If they don't turn the volume of the TV down when asked then the TV will be turned off.
- If your child stays out after curfew then curfew time gets brought forward until they can show they can come home on time.
- If they do not wear their bike helmet then their bike is removed for a set period of time.
- If your child says something horrible to their sibling they must apologise.

ILLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Illogical Consequences provide no learning experience for the child because the consequence does not directly link to the behaviour e.g. child refuses to eat dinner and the parent confiscates their mobile phone for a week. When the child finds it difficult to understand the link between the punishment and incident it can leave them with feelings of shame, which can lead to the situation escalating as the child becomes angry in attempt to reduce the shame.

EXAMPLES OF ILLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES



- The child talks back so they aren't allowed to go to friend's house.
- They don't eat their dinner so they aren't allowed their favourite toy.
- They don't put their dirty clothes in the laundry basket so they are not allowed to ride their bike.

REPAIR

It may be after some incidents a repair in the relationship between you and your child is needed. It is important to do this to model to your child that although relationships may experience a rupture, there is always the possibility of repair. When repairing your relationship try to remember the following:

- It is ok to admit you may not have reacted how you would have liked in the moment. Sometimes we can be dysregulated in the moment and need time to reflect on our actions. You may want to think about how the incident affected you and why it may have caused you to 'flip your lid'.
- Take the time to regulate before speaking with your child.
- Invite them to speak with you in a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. Use a gentle tone and you may say something like "Hey, I made a mistake earlier, could we talk about it?" or "Earlier was difficult, I'd like to check in with you and see if you're ok."
- If you realise you did something wrong then apologise. This is an important skill to model for your child. The child's behaviour shouldn't be seen as more important than your relationship.
- Use the 'two hands of parenting' and 'PACE' when having the repair conversation. Being curious about why the child carried out the behaviour will give you an insight into their feelings that triggered the event. You can then accept and empathise with their feelings, and help them put meaning to their behaviour.

There is more information about repairing relationships in our 'Understanding Shame' resource.

- This conversation can help them understand the consequences you've put in place in a way that is non-shaming as they are still feeling the warmth and care of your relationship.