

Parenting Guidelines

These comments are not directed to imply that parents are “bad” nor are the children. People are trying the best they can to be happy. However, children can’t be in charge of the home- it’s not good for anyone if they are. Children who do have control are actually insecure, angry and unhappy. People need limits and guidelines to feel safe, be well adjusted and function in the world.

1. It is essential both parents are “on the same page”. If a child can come in between parents or work parents against each other they will.
2. I strongly recommend the book/DVD 1-2-3 Magic by Thomas Phelan. It is a time out model. I also suggest the model utilized by “Super Nanny” Jo Frost. The steps for a time out/consequence are:
 - unless the behavior needs immediate direction (such as hitting, anything where anyone is in danger) give a warning/count 1.
 - if they continue count 2
 - at 3 they have the time out. Explain to the child they are on a time out because.....
 - after the time out the child may leave after you explain why they were given a consequence and they apologize. You can say something like, “You were put in a time out because you... (fill in the behavior). You need to say you are sorry and have the child do it. Accept the apology and tell them you love them.The above needs to be age appropriate.
3. Do not start doing time outs/consequences until after you have the family meeting explaining the new system. (See the book)
4. Follow through and be consistent.
5. Parents need to agree what needs to be put on a time out or what needs a more severe consequence.
6. On the other hand reward positive behavior.
7. Remember, **YOU ARE IN CHARGE**. You are the **PARENTS**. You are not their pal, buddy, and friend. If you feel guilty or bad about a past mistake, something the child is lacking, a disability not disciplining them will **NEVER** make up for life’s problems. Life is what it is. If a child says, “I hate you”, “You don’t love me” they are trying to manipulate and you still need to do your job.
9. Focus on your behavior and discipline not the faults of the other parent. You can only control what you do.
10. If a child’s behavior is dangerous for anyone call the police. The home and family must be safe. If they seriously threaten themselves or another and they have a plan they need to be taken to the ER.

11. Don't make empty threats or something you can't control. I unfortunately have heard parents threaten their children by saying they will put their child in foster care. Unless you plan on footing the bill it won't happen. Or threaten them with JV, jail, the police. If you can't control if it will happen or not then don't say it.

12. Don't blame the child. "it's your fault", "you're making me ... (crazy, drink, giving me a headache)

Note: The behavior will most likely get worse for a time

This is actually good because it means what you are doing is working. Experts say that children will act out around day 7-10. Of course, everyone is different and may do it sooner or later. Their acting out is the way they are saying "I don't like this." Of course they don't because they no longer get their way. You need to continue with the program and keep doing it. They are testing you to see if you will wimp out. If you do, the child can learn that when life gets tough they can't count on you. They also can learn not to persevere but give up. They learn not to face problems. They learn all this from you. So, when it gets worse, DO THE HAPPY DANCE!!! Its working.

A final note: You are a parent. **THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU WILL EVER DO IS RAISE THE CHILD.** It's a hard task but well worth it.

And above all else **ENJOY THEM. THEY ARE A UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL.**

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