

Consequences Big and Small

Guidelines for Consequences

Consequences can seem difficult to come up with, especially when we're angry. Taking time to brainstorm ideas can help. To make them most useful (and help in learning) some best practices include making them:

- **Task-specific** – tie the consequence to the action. If yelling is an issue, they lose a privilege (toy or something) and must demonstrate that they can control yelling to get it back. They are forced to focus on the behavior that you want
- **Time-specific** – tie the consequence to a certain, reasonable, period of time. Same example of yelling. Child must demonstrate not-yelling for 2 hours. Time can be reset if they yell during that period.

Some examples:

- Hitting a sibling
 - | loss of a toy for 2 hours AND must not hit the sibling during that time
 - | must draw a nice picture for the sibling
- Continuing to play (on device) after time is up
 - | increase 'break' time for additional time (1 minute for every minute)
- Not getting up on time (after repeated prompts to wake up)
 - | earlier bedtime
 - | earlier wake up time
 - | loss of another privilege for the time they stayed in bed

Positive Contribution¹ – in some cases it may be difficult to identify a task or time for the behavior. Sometimes they can simply 'restore the balance' of good and evil by contributing to the home in some way.

- Create a list of chores (ideally NOT daily or weekly chores), with point values based on time it takes, difficulty, or unpleasantness
- Designate which behaviors would lead to a chore (talking back, refusing to follow a direction or instruction)
- When child demonstrates the behavior, adult simply announces that the child 'earned a chore' and marks it on a prominent place
- Child is responsible for completing the chore by a specified time or day.

Wash mirrors	1
Sweep Kitch/DR	1
Vacuum LR & Hall	2
Dust LR & Hall	3
Clean a toilet	2
Clean bathroom sink	1
Clean bathroom floor	2
Scrub tub	3
Scrub Kitchen floor	4
Prep a meal	5
Wash a load of laundry (includes sort, wash, t-fer to dryer, empty, fold)	4
Iron shirts	1/shirt
Wash bags 3 bags	1
Clean under kitchen counters	3/area
Clean under DR counters (both)	2
Vacuum Fit	2
Wipe/dust window sills (whole house)	3

¹ Concept adapted from Iowa State University's Strengthening Families Program