



The Keys to Effective and Healthy Discipline



When kids need discipline, we need to have an entire toolbox of *Effective and Healthy Discipline* tools at our fingertips. These tools need to be easy to use and used consistently when teaching our children how to be happy and successful people. Our discipline tools need to follow the “4 Fs” of *Effective and Healthy Discipline*. Our tools must be:

- **Firm:** Discipline tools need to be clear and *should not be “soft peddled”* in the attempt to be nice. Remember, we are trying to build a connection between behaviors and consequences. We do not want to be vague or unclear when dealing with our children – we want them to notice us and to learn the lesson.
- **Fair:** We should always “*make the punishment fit the crime.*” In other words, if the infraction is small, the punishment should be small. Remember that we are not trying to inflict pain, nor are we “trying to make them pay.” Rather we are simply attempting to teach.
- **Friendly:** Avoid yelling and negative tones. Try to keep your voice calm. Remember, kids will match your tones – if you come at them in an angry way, they will probably respond in the same manner. Always remember your goal is to teach, not to “vent” on the kid who needs discipline.
- **Frequent:** Remember that discipline is an important teaching tool, and we need to discipline every single time our child misbehaves. Inconsistent discipline can be confusing and can cause more problems than it solves. The goal of discipline is to teach – not confuse!



USING CLEAR AND CONSISTENT RULES



The first step to using healthy discipline is to provide *Clear and Consistent Rules*. When *Clear and Consistent Rules* are agreed on by all adults in the home and are explained to kids in ways they will understand, everyone in the home will be happier, healthier and more successful!

Clear and Consistent Rules make life predictable, comfortable and safe. Unclear and confusing rules make life stressful and unpredictable, and can make your home life harder than it has to be!

Take a minute and think about the rules in your home. Then list them on the lines below.

for Parenting ^{House Rules} APP Users Only!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Please go on to the next page.



CLEAR AND CONSISTENT RULES – PART 2



Please take a moment and think about the rules you listed on the last page. When we are making *Clear and Consistent Rules*, we want to consider three important things:

Things to Consider When Making Clear and Consistent Rules

1. Do all people in the home understand the rules?
One way to know whether or not you have *Clear Rules* is to determine if everyone in the home *understands* the rules. You might want to ask yourself if the rules are so clear that relatives visiting your home would be able to know what is expected of them if they were successfully following the rules.
2. Are the rules agreed upon by all adults in the home?
When creating *Clear Rules*, make sure all adults in the home *understand* and *agree with* the rules before trying to enforce them. If some of the adults in the home disagree with the rules, then kids will naturally take advantage of that, and perhaps be able to *divide and conquer* the adults in the home. When adults disagree about the rules, *Consistent* enforcement is very difficult and kids may easily “play” adults off one another.
3. Are the rules enforceable?
Make sure that you are able and willing to enforce a rule before you explain it to your kids. *Consistent* rule enforcement helps kids to develop the *habit* of following the rules and the *expectation* that parents and caregivers will *regularly follow through!*



Please go on to the next page.



CLEAR AND CONSISTENT RULES – PART 3



When attempting to create *Clear and Consistent Rules* in your home, there are several pitfalls you want to avoid. Some common mistakes we make as parents are listed below.

Common Mistakes Preventing Clear and Consistent Rules

Mistakes	Impact of Mistakes
1. The rules are not clear.	<p>Confusion and increased stress occur when the rules are not understood by everyone in the home. Confusion creates situations that are not predictable – this is very stressful! Healthy learning depends on predictable rules!</p> <p>Avoid vague rules like “be good” or “be tidy” unless you define them very clearly. Point Charts are very useful ways to define tasks and rules in the home.</p>
2. Adults disagree on the rules in the home.	<p>As we said above, when creating <i>Clear and Consistent Rules</i>, make sure all adults in the home <i>understand</i> and <i>agree with</i> the rules before trying to enforce them. Don’t allow marital problems or difficulties between the adults in the home to create more difficulties for kids with ADD/ADHD. When adults disagree with the rules, <i>Consistent</i> enforcement is very difficult.</p> <p>If you are an adult and disagree with a rule, it is best to discuss your concerns with the other adults in the home when the kids are not around.</p>

Mistakes	Impact of Mistakes
3. The rules are applied differently by different adults in the home.	<p>This often happens – even when the adults in the home don’t realize it or intend for it to happen. When the rules are applied differently, kids will often “play” one adult off the other, or will attempt to manipulate situations to their advantage. Doing such things is natural for kids; it is also natural and necessary for adults in the home to prevent such things from happening.</p> <p>As we mentioned above, try to avoid letting issues or anger with other parents in the home impact the way you apply the rules for your children. Marital and relationship issues between adults need to be addressed when the kids are not around, and should never be allowed to boil over into the ways in which the rules in the home are applied.</p> <p>Don’t try to be a “nice” parent – your children need you to be a consistent and predictable parent if they are going to be as happy and as healthy as possible.</p>

A final thought on *Clear and Consistent Rules*: The development of *Clear and Consistent Rules* will often lead to the prevention of many difficulties experienced by kids with ADD/ADHD who struggle with *SHOOTING FROM THE HIP, PUTTING ON THE BRAKES and MISSING THE IMPORTANT THINGS*. The use of *Clear and Consistent Rules* should also lower your overall family stress level and increase the overall success of your family.

On the following pages, we discuss some *Effective and Healthy Discipline* tools and ways to build an Effective Discipline Plan for children with ADD/ADHD.