



Shoalhaven Managing Children Program (SMCP)

16. Consequences change behaviour

Most of the things we do have consequences, either good or bad. You can use consequences, both good and bad, to help your child learn to do the right thing.

Natural consequences. Many of the things have natural consequences. You can use these to help your child learn and think about his or her behaviour - e.g.:

- If your child refuses to eat a meal and demands something else, you can use natural consequences and say: "All right, if you don't want to eat it, you can go hungry. There's nothing else."

Planned consequences. The most important one of these is *Praise (See Tip 13 - Changing problem behaviour 1. Praise and encourage cooperative behaviour)* for cooperative behaviour.

You can use other planned consequences for good behaviour. One way of doing this is with a Behaviour Chart. This is a planned consequence for encouraging desirable behaviour. It is a really useful strategy once your children reach age four or five and they get excited by earning stars. Younger children just won't understand it.

Choose a reward your child really wants, a desirable behaviour you really want, and make a chart to record when the child shows that behaviour. Record your child's good behaviour on the chart with gold stars, smiley stamps etc., and praise your child each time he or she earns one. The child has to earn a set number to earn the main reward. The chart records the child's progress toward the main reward and ensures you reward each step of the way.

As well as planned consequences for desirable behaviour, you can make planned consequences for undesirable behaviour. These are often used in conjunction with family *Rules (See Tip 6 - Family Organisation)*. Choose a consequence (e.g. missing TV, going to bed early) if your child does not behave acceptably. So you can use good and bad planned consequences to get your child to keep a family rule, e.g.:

The rule says: "Put your toys away when you finish with them."

- If your child keeps the rule, record a star on the behaviour chart and praise the tidy room. (planned good consequence)
- If your child breaks the rule, you have to tidy the toys away and your child can't get them back for 24 hours. (planned bad consequence)