AGES 3–12 EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

Consequences vs. Punishment



WHAT THIS IS

Discipline means teaching. Consequences teach a skill. Punishment aims to make a child feel bad, and often teaches fear instead.

HOW TO USE IT

1. Compare the two columns.
2. Rewrite one punishment as a consequence.
3. Use the checklist before you respond.

EXAMPLE

"Punishment: 'No dessert for a week!' Consequence: 'You wrote on the wall, so we'll clean it together.'"

PUNISHMENT

- Often harsh or unrelated
- Comes from anger
- Focuses on blame
- Can create fear or shame

CONSEQUENCE

- Related to the behavior
- Calm and predictable
- Focuses on learning
- Builds responsibility

Check before you respond

- ☐ Is it related to what happened?
- ☐ Is it respectful and calm?
- ☐ Is it something I can follow through on?
- ☐ Will it help my child learn a skill?

A behavior I want to change	Related, calm consequence	Skill I want to teach

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