

The Delayed or “Anticipatory” Consequence

By Jim Fay

Immediate consequences work really well with rats, pigeons, mice, and monkeys. In real-world homes, they typically create more problems than they solve.

Problems with Immediate Consequences:

1. Most of us have great difficulty thinking of an immediate consequence in the heat of the moment.
2. We “own” the problem rather than handing it back to our child. In other words, we are forced to do more thinking than our child.
3. We are forced to react while we are still upset.
4. We don’t have time to anticipate how our child will react to our response.
5. We don’t have time to put together a reasonable plan and a support team to help us carry it out.
6. We often end up making threats we can’t back up.
7. We generally fail to deliver a strong dose of empathy before providing the consequence.

Take care of yourself, and give yourself a break!

The next time your child does something inappropriate, experiment with saying, “Oh no. This is so sad. I’m going to have to do something about this! But not now...later.”

It’s even okay to say, “I’m so angry about this right now that I better calm down before I talk with you about it. I make better decisions when I’m calm.”

The Love and Logic® Anticipatory Consequence allows you time to “anticipate” whose support you might need, how your child might react, and how to make sure that you can actually follow through with a logical consequence. This technique also allows your child to “anticipate” or think about a wide array of possible consequences.

This technique gains its power from basic conditioning. When we consistently follow, “I’m going to have to do something about this. We’ll talk later,” with empathy and consequences, “I’m going to have to do something,” becomes a consequence in and of itself...an “anticipatory” consequence.

*People who are really successful implementing this skill
Purchased Parenting with Love and Logic*

