

## Consistency is Key to Successful Discipline

Consistency is key to successfully teaching your child right from wrong when disciplining them. It keeps small misdeeds and bad behaviors from later becoming bigger misdeeds and worse behaviors. You have to stand firm and mean it when you say, "Turn off the television now" or "no dessert after dinner because you didn't touch your dinner." Consistency teaches your child there are defined consequences for misdeeds and inappropriate or unacceptable actions or behaviors. Inconsistency when disciplining makes you directly responsible for your children's misbehavior and doesn't teach them how to be responsible for their actions.

It's also that each partner is consistent with the discipline. If one parent is too strict and the other is too lenient, the child will key into that and try to manipulate the situation to his or her advantage. Parents must agree on disciplinary action in advance and make a commitment to one another to be consistent in implementing and following through with the consequences. This can be especially difficult if the child's parents are separated or divorced. Though you may not be together anymore, it's imperative that you parent on common ground. Openly and honestly discuss these parameters with your former spouse and your child in advance, so that if discipline is needed, the consequences of such misbehavior are well understood in advance. Any disagreements between parents should be discussed out of the child's earshot. Consistency is about being strong and standing firm, even when doing so is extremely difficult or exhausting. It can sometimes be hard to come home after a hard day at work only to find a hard night of parenting in front of you. Your child will consistently test the boundaries and 'push the envelope' with you to see if there's any play in those consequences. By standing firm you are showing there is not and that you expect them to do nothing less than take responsibility for their actions.