

#### IV. Phonological/Phonemic Awareness for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

*Use Natural and Logical Consequences: Punishment focuses on the misbehavior, does not teach more appropriate behaviors, and may cause misbehavior to worsen. The use of natural and logical consequences that occur immediately and relate to the behavior can result in a change to more appropriate behavior.*

This is a concept that often is difficult for participants to understand – they tend to think that this is “not enough.” We live in a society (and in an area of the country) where “punishment” is considered “discipline.”

So, we have to help people to understand the benefit of consequences and how to use them as a tool to help children learn from inappropriate behavior and manage their own behavior. This is a positive guidance strategy that you will need to circle back to on numerous occasions.

First, help participants see that there is a difference between consequences and punishment:

- Consequences relate to the behavior – punishment seldom does.  
Example: A child throws a block. Punishment – child has to sit in “time out” for however long the teacher directs. Consequence – child must move from block center and loses the opportunity to work in the block center that day.

This consequence relates directly to the behavior and, when used consistently, helps the child to learn that in order to work in the block center he/she must follow rules about how to use the blocks.

- Consequences occur as soon after the behavior as possible. It is important to impose the consequence as soon as possible – young children have short memories (as busy teachers often do, too). The common elementary school punishment of losing recess and the old standard in families “wait till your father gets home” may be imposed long after children have moved on and forgotten their inappropriate behavior. There is little opportunity to related the punishment to the behavior and use this as an opportunity to teach appropriate behavior.

Second, help them to see that consequences are something that follow into adulthood. I often give the example of my son and his first checking account. He was working a part-time job while going to school and his paycheck was deposited directly into his checking account. The bank issued him a check card which he used with reckless abandon. All was well until one Friday he went to get money from the ATM and discovered that he had \$7.28 in his account. How could that be? His paycheck was deposited just that morning. Upon going to the bank he learned that he had been using the check card without checking his balance – he didn’t have money in the account! But, instead of rejecting the check card when it was used, the bank allowed him to use it and imposed

service charges each time it was used without enough money in the account! So, his Taco Bell purchase of about \$6 actually cost him \$35 when the \$29 service charge was added. This was a rude awakening. (The outcome – he decided at that point in his life he was better off operating on a cash basis and cut up the check card!)

We all probably have stories where we, or someone we know, has experienced the consequences of our actions. We are doing children a great disservice when we don't teach them this!

So, what are the consequences in the classroom:

- If you push or shove to get ahead in line, then you go to the end of the line.
- If you misuse materials in the classroom, you lose the opportunity to use them for a time.
- If you interrupt while someone else is talking, you will be ignored.
- If you take materials from someone who is using them, you must leave the area without using the materials.

These are just a few examples, but there are many more. You may want to engage your participants in brainstorming some ideas for consequences.

Reminder: This is appropriate for older toddlers and preschoolers. This is not a concept that can be easily understood by infants and young toddlers.