

AGREEMENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

PARENTING CHALLENGES ★ PAGE 1 OF 1

AGREEMENTS: One way to get out of doing a chore is to argue that you were told to do the chore: "You did not tell me to do two chores, you only said one!" The way to stop this problem is to make an agreement with your child. An agreement is a verbal contract.

"Since I am not always as clear as I would like to be, I want you to repeat what you are going to do and by what time you will have it done." The child says, "I heard what you said." Calmly, you respond, "There is a long and a short way to do this. If you choose to tell me what you are going to do and by what time you will have it done, that is the short way. Otherwise, we'll go for the long way. You are at choice."

"I'm going to wash and vacuum the car and I will have the job done by noon."

"Thank you. Should you choose not to have the job completed by noon, you will not be driving the car for the entire weekend. Please tell me what the consequence of not completing the job on time will be."

"I heard you."

"There is a long way and a short way to do this....."

"I will wash and vacuum the car. I will have the job done by noon. If I CHOOSE not to do it by noon, I will not be using the car all weekend."

"High five."

CONSEQUENCES are the natural result of a choice. They are not punishments. If the consequence is given with lots of anger, if the consequence is too big for the problem (take the skateboard away for a month instead of a day), and if the consequence is unfair, the child will have difficulty learning the lesson at hand.

1. Wherever possible, have the consequence match the problem. If the child leaves the skateboard out over-night take the skateboard away, not the television.
2. Don't give a consequence when you are really angry. You will tend to give too big of a consequence (which then becomes a punishment) if you are really angry.
3. Involve the child in the choice of a consequence whenever possible. "What do you think needs to be done in order to help you learn this lesson?" If a child suggests too large of a consequence say, "Maybe that would work another time; let's take your skateboard away for a day this time." Don't invalidate the child's choice or the child won't want to participate next time.

Consequences are tricky. The point is to learn the lesson. If the lesson has been learned a consequence becomes un-necessary. Sometimes, the consequence will not match the problem. We had weeds that out-grew our flowers, rugs that forever needed to be vacuumed, furniture that needed dusting--and those were consequences that I gave to make the point that I mean what I say.