4 Types of Consequences

To make discipline easier, it helps to divide consequences into four types: **Natural, Relevant, Related** and **Significant**. These consequences are in order of effectiveness, from most to least. Consequences allow children to learn by making decisions and experiencing the natural or social outcome of those decisions. The key to the effectiveness of consequences is that they be given with respect and empathy, or sadness. Whenever possible, allow the consequence to teach the lesson and say nothing when the child realizes what they have learned.

**NATURAL CONSEQUENCES**: those that allow the child to learn from the natural order of the physical world. Consequences that occur as an act of nature and not as an act of mankind. This is the most powerful and effective consequence. When possible, let the natural consequence be their teacher.

*E.g.* If a child stays up too late, he will be tired the next day. If a child goes without food, she will be hungry.

*This type of consequence cannot be given by us, only blocked.*

*E.g.* Instead of a child going hungry when they forget their lunch, we run their lunch by their school.

**RELEVANT CONSEQUENCES**: those that are directly related and relevant to the misbehavior and move a child **closer** to the desired behavior.

*E.g.* the child who is continually late getting up in the morning and ready for school, has to practice getting up and ready many times when he comes home from school, also missing play time with his friends due to the practice.

**RELATED CONSEQUENCES**: those consequences that are not directly relevant but have a “kinship” or relationship to the problem behaviors.

*E.g.* A child who has set a fire at school has to learn about fire safety, paint the fire zones, and give a presentation to his classmates.

**SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES**: those consequences that are not directly related to the misbehavior, but motivate the child to perform the appropriate behavior by withdrawing or preventing certain things the child wants.

*E.g.* Time Out, or restricting time playing computer games.