

Eleven Things to Do Instead of Spanking And a Few Suggestions If You Feel You Must Spank

Dr. Jon Jantz

1. **Ignore.** Ignore behavior that: will not harm them; bad habits, whining, bad language, tantrums. It is hard to do nothing. However, this lack of attention takes away audience they are seeking.
2. **Suspend privileges.** Match the suspension of privilege to the action as closely as possible-e.g., fighting over TV brings loss of TV time. Suspend privilege for short periods -long suspensions only build resentment, and the child forgets the original wrongdoing, reducing the effectiveness of the lesson to be learned.
3. **Logical consequences.** Let the action do the "talking": e.g., abusing the use of a toy means the toy is taken away for a period of time, crayons on the wall are washed off by the "artist," or the amount of time by which a curfew is missed is subtracted from the next outing.
4. **Rearrange space or place.** Be creative in the elimination of problems. Have baskets and low hooks to make room clean-up easier, avoid misplacement of school notes or homework by having a special table or counter for materials, make chores easier to remember by having a chart for who does what and when.
5. **Redirect behavior.** If one behavior is a problem, channel the energy into another, positive action. Have paper available to avoid crayoning on the wall; give them a ball to throw instead of throwing sand. If they are having trouble taking turns, have them use another toy, or let them help an adult to use up some of the need for power.
6. **Grandma's rule.** When ...Then option - when you pick up the toys, then you can have the TV on; when you come home from school on time, then you can have a friend over. Caution: you need to tie what you want with what they want to make this work.
7. **Fines.** In some families, imposing fines (.01, .05 or .25) for bad habits, rules violated or forgotten responsibilities, does work. Ideally, the "kitty" of money goes for a family outing.
8. **Work detail.** Creative use of energy to "make up" for rule violations is especially effective for children 8 years and older. A list of jobs that need to be done is posted, and the child chooses one or more jobs to "work off" the problem that was created.
9. **Time Out.** Use time out for dangerous and harmful behaviors - biting, aggressive hitting, purposeful destruction. Follow these guides:
 - Keep time out to 1 or 2 minutes.
 - Have them sit or go to a boring place.
 - Tell them what they did wrong and what they are supposed to do instead.
 - Use an egg-timer - saves sanity!
 - When time out is over, notice something they are doing right as soon as possible and comment on it.
10. **Praise.** Be specific about praise you give a child for the good things they've accomplished, e.g. "Wow, all the towels are hanging up where they belong in the bathroom, beautiful".
11. **Just say "No."** Get down to the level of your child, make eye contact and say "No, we don't do that at our house."
12. **If you believe you must spank,** I recommend that you always warn your child in advance that a specific misbehavior could result in a spanking. Then, when a spanking is warranted, escort your child to a private location to avoid public humiliation. Administer one or two spanks to buttocks only. Calmly review the reason for the spanking with your child. Tell your child that you dislike the behavior but still love him/her. Some parents like to offer a hug at this time.

Information provided courtesy of
Cottonwood Pediatrics
Dr. Jon Jantz, Ericca Berry, Dr. Sarah Houssayni, Dr. Bryan Mann
700 Medical Center Dr., Ste 150
Newton KS 67114
316-283-7100
www.cottonwoodpeds.com