

||CHECKLIST||

by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator



Discipline

10 things you must do to get cooperation from kids

Discipline is easy when you have easy kids. But some kids, regardless of their age can be tricky.

I've spent much of my professional life helping adults get cooperation from less than cooperative kids. I have learned that effective discipline is mostly about good communication and making sure you have all the bases covered. Leave out a couple of steps and your attempts to get cooperation can easily be ineffective.

Effectiveness when managing children is largely about attention to detail. That is, attending to the minutiae of communication – the little things that matter.

It is also about being very consistent with what you do. Consistency means using a similar approach for the same poor behaviour rather than using different methods. Consistency means both parents in a dual parent relationship agreeing to the same approach. Consistency means sticking to a process that should not change according to our moods.

Attention to detail and **consistency of application** are the two keys to effective discipline.

Discipline is a process that when followed leads to cooperation. Here is checklist of **10 things you must do to get cooperation from kids**:

- ✓ 1. **Get their attention.** Want some cooperation then you need to get children's individual attention first. Move closer to your child rather than further away, but don't move so close that you are intimidating. Lower your voice rather than raise it to get attention.
- ✓ 2. **Make eye contact.** Make sure your kids are looking at you before you deliver any instruction. When this happens rarely must you repeat yourself. Try it. It really works.
- ✓ 3. **Choose the timing.** If you or your child are upset, angry or just plain excited either get some calm or wait until the situation is calm before speaking. When you or they are over-stimulated you can speak until you are blue in the face and they won't listen.
- ✓ 4. **Put your instruction in positive terms.** Tell them what you want rather than what you don't want. That is, tell them what to do, where to do it, how to do it, and when to do rather than "Don't ..." Two reasons for this. You put ideas



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into some kids' heads and many boys only process the last thing they hear. ("Don't play on the couch" becomes a great possibility for some).

- ✓ 5. **Be specific.** Generalities such as 'I want you to be good when we visit nana's place' or 'Don't be late home' can be a waste of breathe with some kids. Be specific about the behaviours you want. For instance, tell kids two or three ways to behave at nana's and exactly the time you want them to be home.
- ✓ 6. **Check the message is received.** This checking can take many forms. One simple way is to get kids to repeat what you say if you are unsure they have understood.
- ✓ 7. **Set a 3 R Consequence.** If children are less than cooperative then avoid repeating yourself as it leads to parent deafness. Set some type of consequence. Make sure it fits the 3 R's and you can't go wrong. That is, it is **Reasonable** (you are grounded for a year is NOT reasonable), **Respectful** (they and you maintain your dignity) and **Related** to what they have or haven't done (e.g losing toys for a day if not packed away is related).
- ✓ 8. **Set your antennae up for cooperative behaviour.** Make sure you are on the lookout for approximations of cooperative behaviour. Sometimes with some difficult children we tend to look for the bad rather than the good. If this is you, reset your antennae and tune into their good stuff. You'll get more of it!
- ✓ 9. **Recognise cooperative behaviour.** Make a fuss of their cooperative behaviours. Take a multi-sensory approach to magnify the effect – smile (Visual), touch or hug (tactile) and say how well they have done (verbal).
- ✓ 10. **Restore the relationship.** When kids mess up and you get angry make sure you restore your relationship. We all do it in our own ways. It could be an apology, a game, a smile or shared treat. Let them know that while you may dislike the sin, you do love the sinner.

I have worked with many parents and professionals to improve their behaviour management skills and I have learned that the key to change is repetition. Go through this checklist every time you want some cooperation from your children (i.e before, during and after) and you will find after a month it will become routine for you. Then you will have a great process to get some cooperation from your kids regardless of their age or temperament.