

Consistent verbal redirection and consequences

Yvette:

Hello. I have a 2-year-old daughter, and she has been having pinching problems recently at both school and home. She pinches children at daycare for no reason; it is never related to sharing a toy. She just goes up and pinch them. She openly admits as to why the other child is crying. She says that it's because she pinched them. She also knows the whole way home from daycare that she's in trouble and will go right to the timeout chair when we get home. I don't know how to get this behavior to cease. Any advice would help. Thanks.

Heather

Heather:

This type of behavior is not uncommon in this age group. According to our medical director, Dr. Philip Scribano it's just a phase and requires consistent verbal redirection followed by a consequence. Consistent consequences are key. He also suggests that you and the daycare teacher decide on consequences that can be administered at the daycare rather than waiting until your daughter gets home.

Dr. Scribano says that a 2-year-old will have difficulty "associating a punishment at home as the consequence for behavior at the daycare."

If your child's behavior does not change, you need to change the consequence. For example, if timeouts are not working, then perhaps staying in from recess or withholding a privilege to play with a certain toy might be better consequences.

Dr. Scribano also suggests that you identify whether her pinching is directed at a particular child or any child who is available. By doing so, you may be able to determine the child's motivation. Is the motivation a random, annoying habit or aggression directed at a particular child? The good news is that with consistent redirection and consequences, the phase will end.

Yvette

Yvette:

My son is 13, and he has chores. What is the best way to keep him focused on his few chores? I believe that chores are necessary even if they are very minor. Thank you.

Nancy

Nancy:

I agree with you; chores are

important. Each member of the family has to participate in keeping the house clean. It also teaches him responsibility and vital skills for the day he is living in his own home. Regarding his focus, remind him that doing his chores is a prerequisite to privileges. In order to hang out with his friends or engage in activities, his chores need to be done and they need to be done timely and properly. Be clear in your expectations of him, and hold him accountable for completing the task.

Yvette

Yvette:

I have a son who is just about to turn 2, and for the most part he is a happy, funny, well-behaved child. However, every once in a while at daycare and at home, he will become aggressive (hitting and the occasional bite) to demonstrate that he is not happy with something that's going on. Often, he's hitting surfaces when I'm trying to discipline him. My husband and I do not like this behavior at all and often remove him immediately from the situation and take him to timeout. Lately, I think he's enjoying timeout. I have only spanked him once to try to get his attention. This was after he hit me and his 4-week-old brother while I was feeding the baby. Nothing seems to be getting through to him. How do I tame this behavior?

Poynter Family

Poynter Family:

It is not uncommon for 2-year-olds to become aggressive when they don't get their way. It's a phase that will pass with consistency and verbal redirection. When talking with your son about his behavior, get down to his eye level in order to get his attention, hold his hands while you speak to him, and explain why he cannot continue the particular behavior. Be clear with him about his behavior then proceed with the timeout. Consider changing the location of the timeout and/or taking away a favorite toy or activity. Remember the consequence has to immediately follow the behavior. Be patient. With focused attention, this phase will pass.



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