

# Alternatives to Punishment

- 1. Look for underlying needs**  
*Give your child something to play with while waiting in line*
- 2. Give information and reasons**  
*If your child colors on the wall explain why he is to color only on paper*
- 3. Look for underlying feelings**  
*Acknowledge, accept, and listen to feelings*
- 4. Change the environment**  
*If your child repeatedly takes things out of the kitchen cupboards, put a childproof lock on them*
- 5. Find acceptable alternatives**  
*If you do not want your child to build a fort in the dining room, tell her where she **can** build one*
- 6. Demonstrate how you want your child to behave**  
*If your child pulls on a cat's tail, **show** her how to pet a cat*
- 7. Give choices rather than commands**  
*Decision-making empowers children; commands invite a power struggle.*
- 8. Make small concessions of little or no consequence**
- 9. Provide for a period of preparation**  
*If you are expecting company for dinner, be specific about how the behavior you expect*
- 10. Let natural consequences occur (when appropriate)**  
*A child who does not hang up a wet towel and bathing suit will find them still wet the next day*
- 11. Communicate your own feelings**  
*Let children know how their behavior affects you (e.g. "I get so tired of cleaning up crumbs.")*
- 12. Be playful; turn a conflict situation into a game**
- 13. Defuse the situation with laughter**  
*Laughter helps resolve anger and feelings of powerlessness*
- 14. Negotiate**  
*If it's time to leave the playground, reach an agreement on how many times your child may go down the slide before you leave*
- 15. Engage in mutual conflict resolution**  
*Discuss ongoing conflicts with your children, state your own needs, and ask for their help in finding solutions.*
- 16. Revise your expectations**  
*Take into consideration that young children have intense feelings and needs, and are naturally loud, curious, messy, willful, impatient, demanding, forgetful, self-centered, and full of energy.*
- 17. Take a parental time-out to regain your sense of composure and good judgment**

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