

# Consistent Parenting: How to Unlock the Secret

“Being consistent is the hardest thing of all,” many parents tell us. And it’s so true—it’s easy to lay down a rule and then let it slide when you’re tired or in a hurry.

Consistency is one of the main requirements for kids to learn how to predict things. In other words, I can predict that two and two equal four. Can I predict how my mother is going to act if I throw a tantrum? Can I predict how my father will react if I’m late for school? Can I predict how my parents are going to act if I don’t do my homework?

Consistency is a key learning tool for your child, because when something is consistent, he can rehearse it and incorporate it inside of himself until it becomes a part of him.

For kids, inconsistency produces anxiety.

Let’s look at it this way. What if one day you don’t clean your room and your mother yells and screams at you to “get in there and pick things up”? And what if the next day, she’s in a hurry so she picks it up for you? And then, what if two days later she yells at you again? And then on Saturday, she picks it up for you because company is coming over. What are you learning?

The other thing that happens is that they don’t know how their parents are going to react; they’re effectively learning how to live with anxiety and chaos. As a result, different characteristics develop in different kids. Some become aggressive and hostile, while others become compliant and passive. All of them learn to deal with unpredictability, which again, creates anxiety.

## Why Is Consistency the Hardest Thing for Most Parents?

I understand that parents do get worn down; often they’ll try to be consistent, but if they don’t see change right away, they give up. Personally, I think giving up after a few days or weeks is one of the biggest mistakes you can make as a parent. Changing a behavior takes a long time and it takes consistent application of new principles and ideas in order for kids to incorporate them on the inside. And until then, your child needs a parent to structure his life and set limits on him, because he’s a kid—not a little adult.

## What You Can Do to Become More Consistent

Rely on Simple, Concrete Ideas: I would ask parents to consider the following and supply me with an answer:

- What time is bedtime?
- What time is hygiene time in the bathroom?
- What time is homework time?
- What are the rewards?
- What are the consequences?

All of these rules were written down on a piece of yellow paper, and then the parents began to incorporate them. I advised parents to read this list out loud to themselves every morning.

### Setting Down the New Rules

Expect resistance, depending upon the age of your child. If they're five or six years old, expect tantrums. If your children are older, expect arguments and door-slamming. Although it might not feel like it at the time, these are all signs that your new techniques are working. Your child might push back, but stick to your guns.

After you start to successfully implement the new laws in your home, you can begin to talk to your kids about the changes. "So from now on, **curfew means curfew**. If you come in two minutes after curfew or one minute after curfew, there will be consequences. If you come in on curfew or before, there will be a reward—and the reward is that you get to go out again next Saturday night. Your room has to be clean by this time. Homework has to be done by this time. Your grades have to be maintained at this level in order for you to drive or to go out on the weekends at night."

Expect to be tested. In fact, whether your child is four or fourteen, expect to be tested. Above all, don't give in— the testing will diminish in time.

The other thing you need to ask yourself is, "Are my expectations realistic? Am I being consistent about the right things?"

The benefits of consistent parenting are that your child will internalize your rules and values over time and learn to do things with simple reminders rather than **conflict**.

For more information, go to:

<https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/consistent-parenting-unlock-secret/>