

How Parents can Support their Children when they get “In Trouble” at School



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Discipline is very personal to each parent. In addition to applying rules at home, parents are sometimes asked to help address discipline issues at school. They are usually made aware of behavioral difficulties involving their child via a phone call, an incident report or a meeting with school staff. Institutions keep parents informed with many goals in mind: involving them, providing them with the necessary information to hold their child accountable for their choices, and developing a common understanding of the child's needs. For some parents, it can be quite upsetting to be made aware of their child's wrongdoing(s) whereas for others, it is not. Some feel completely able and equipped to address problems present at school. Others may not know what to do to respond to the situation and feel stressed and upset. They may have a tendency to question their child's contribution to the incident, feel incompetent or responsible.

Below are simple guidelines on how to respond when informed of school discipline problems.

Revisiting the code of conduct with the child at the beginning of the year is always a good idea (can usually be found in the school's agenda)

If you are made aware of a specific incident:

1. Inquire about and revisit the incident with your child;
2. Acknowledge your child's feeling and summarize his or her account of the situation;
3. If you do not have sufficient information or your child's account of the problematic situation is dramatically different, request more information from the school;
4. If necessary, provide written clarification to the school if you feel there has been a misunderstanding (focus on the factual information detailing the who, what, where and why of the situation);
5. Revisit the incident once again with your child in the light of the additional information;
6. Explore the needs underlying the inappropriate behaviours (see below);
7. Help your child take responsibility for his or her contribution to the problem and to acknowledge and understand how he or she broke the school/class rules (refer to the school's code of conduct);
8. Help him or her focus on what he or she (rather than others) can do differently next time – what he or she has control over to prevent it from occurring again;

9. Coach the child to express his or her opinions and feelings appropriately, peacefully and constructively to resolve the situation in question or future situations.

The difference between Minor and Major incidences

Most ETSB schools have established a repertoire of infractions considered minor and others, major. For example, name calling another student in an isolated incident may be considered minor whereas punching one may be major.

It is suggested that parents address isolated minor incidents as described above and that they guide their child through restitution for their actions as they see fit.

For more information about restitution go to these suggested sites:

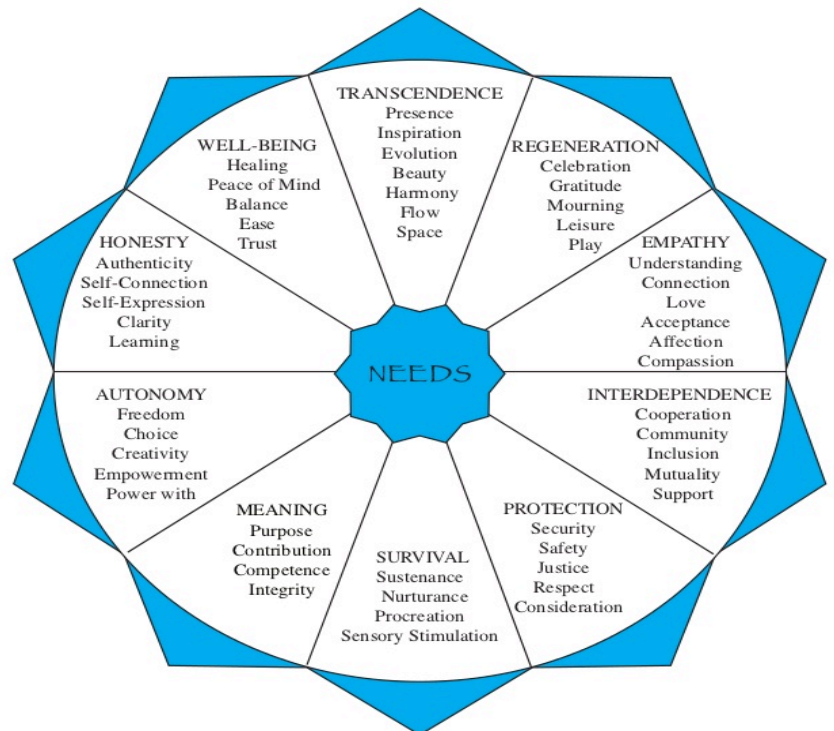
Go to google.ca and type: 7 Reasons Why Restitution is an Effective Child Discipline Strategy. Click on 1st link AND go to google.ca and type: How-To-Use-Restitution-To-Discipline-Your-Child. Click on 1st link

As for major incidents, parents can do the same and, in addition, consider removing a privilege as they see fit.

For more information about: <http://discipline.about.com/od/decreasenegativebehaviors/a/Taking-Away-Privileges-To-Discipline-Children.htm> for details) .

Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information.

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Needs: Resources required to sustain and enrich life.
 Needs are universal.
 Needs make no reference to any specific person doing any specific thing.

Key Distinction: Need vs. Strategy