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SETTING LIMITS STRATEGIES FOR YOUR STUDNETS

OFFER TWO CHOICES

This is *the* crucial strategy for students at the “defensive” behaviour level

The aim is for the student to feel that he / she is in control....present two behavioural options to the student as a choice he can make...the trick is to try and ensure that you are happy with either choice.

BEWARE OF STUDENT CHOICES

A “choice” between (A) something *you* want (eg, completing a task) and (B) a consequence (eg. no play, or Time Out), is not a “fair” choice in the eyes of a student.

For the strategy of two choices to work, **both** options must be acceptable to the student. Always offer two acceptable choices....the consequence come in to play if neither of the two is chosen.

Use “you are in-control” terminology...

Students often want to make sure no-one else is telling them what to do. “It’s up to you what happens next” is the kind of language to use. Once they have been given **no** choice, they are likely to become more defiant and more irrational, and refuse to back down. We need to change the words we use to defuse the situation by giving students the message that they **do** have a choice (then they perceive that they are incontrol, and are then more likely to make an acceptable choice)

Eg. “It’s up to you what happens next... here are the options...have a think about it and let me know after **you** choose”.

Encourage awareness that if they do not choose either of the two options, then there will be a consequence.

Eg. Say ...“I can see you don’t want to finish this task, but it needs to be done.

Examples of choices:

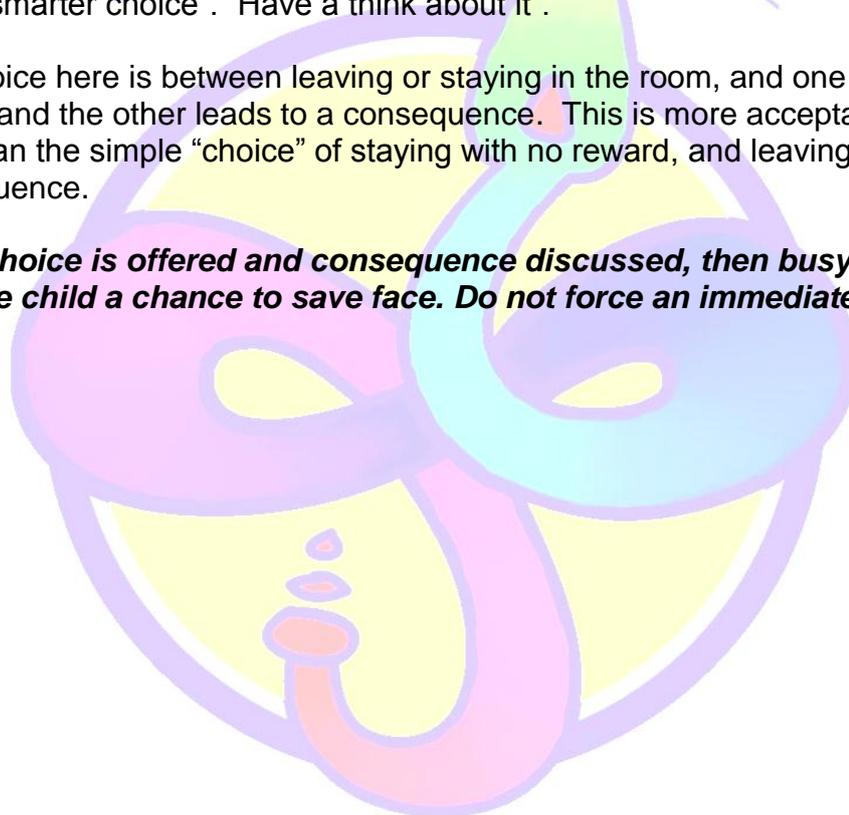
- ✓ “You can choose when to do the task....now, or after the maths lesson. If you decide not to choose either of these options, then you will have to go to go to lunch time detention to finish it. Have a think about it and let me know what you decide”.
- ✓ “The maths activity sheet needs to be done. You can choose to do all of it now, or just the even numbered questions now, and the others later. If you decide not to choose either of these options, thenappropriate consequence”.

Another option.....Offer a choice + reward, Vs alternative choice + consequence.

Eg., If the student is threatening to leave the room, say... “well, I can’t really stop you, but if you choose to leave the room you know you will have XXX consequence, whereas if you choose to stay you know that you can have some free time on the computer when you finish your maths, and that would probably be the smarter choice”. “Have a think about it”.

The choice here is between leaving or staying in the room, and one leads to a reward and the other leads to a consequence. This is more acceptable to the child than the simple “choice” of staying with no reward, and leaving + a consequence.

Once choice is offered and consequence discussed, then busy yourself to give the child a chance to save face. Do not force an immediate answer.



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