

FOLLOW THROUGH/CONTINUAR HASTA EL FINAL POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

We all agree that healthy limits and boundaries are important, and we are usually pretty good at coming up with rules and consequences. The difficulty comes when we have to enforce what we say. Here is a common example: *"If you don't pick up the toys, they are going in the garbage."* Toys remain scattered across the floor and parents just can't make themselves put the toys in the garbage.

Talking about limits but not actually keeping them is just not helpful to children. Not following through leads to uncertainty, disconnection and even anxiety for both parents and children. Children usually know when parents mean what they say and when they don't. But, why is it so hard for parents to follow through with consequences?

Some parents believe that giving children what they want will show them that they are loved. Some parents feel guilty, no one likes to see their kids in tears because of enforcing consequences. And yet, some parents think that it is a lot easier to give in, it's hard to follow through with consequences when giving in seems to stop the tantrum right away. The reality is that, not following through, does children a huge disservice.

How to follow through with limits in a kind and firm way?

1. Be Kind/Se Amable:
Validate your child's feelings and let your child know you heard them.
2. Be Clear/Se Claro:
Offer a brief explanation so your child can understand your reasons.
3. Be Respectful/Se Respetuoso:
Accept all the frustration, tears and disappointment that may follow.

Follow through works best when parents AND children set the consequences together. Going back to the example above, if your child doesn't pick up the toys, you can both agree that you will pick them up and put them in your closet for two days. Your child will probably get mad, you can remain calm and follow through. When you return the toys, ask, " *What was our agreement?*" / "*¿Cuál fue nuestro acuerdo?*"

Be consistent, be kind and skip the lectures. Following through, when done in a caring and loving way, helps children build trust and understand the impact of their actions.