

MYTHS: they seem true, but are not

- ✓ If I can figure out WHY he/she acts like he does, then I can stop his misbehavior. (knowing “why” most often will not let you alter the behavior. Therefore, set expectations for appropriate behavior and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Then be consistent and follow through.)
- ✓ My child’s happiness is my responsibility (many parents become slaves to this idea; so we provide entertainment and squash their ability to be resourceful and create their own happiness.)
- ✓ He/she must know the rules exactly before we give him a consequence (kids understand the rules pretty early and so repeating them becomes “the lecture” which can damage communication and the parent-child relationship. Consequences should be 100% predictable for everyone, little to no negotiation [the more challenging the child the more consistency is required. And yes, that is demanding, draining,...but worth the effort now. “Later” is too late.]
- ✓ He/she has to discharge his anger somewhere, so it is okay if he/she yells at me after school. (children must learn to cope with their anger, pent up frustrations from “behaving” all day in school. A parent whipping post, dumping ground will backfire and cause a loss of respect for the parent and for them as an authority figure. Kids need to learn to manage their feelings, not have freedom to explode whenever.)
- ✓ I can’t do anything because over at his/her father’s (mother’s) house they let him/her get away with anything. (although this complicates life, your rules are yours. Do not bend them based on your frustration or guilt.)
- ✓ I don’t know what he/she can and can’t do because of his/her disability, or what he/she can control or can’t control. I just don’t feel comfortable giving him consequences. (if you make your child a “promise” does he/she ever forget it? Probably not. Despite the disability, kids need to be held responsible or else the situations will become even more difficult to manage. Better to err in favor of holding them responsible than to let them slide. Life will not let them slide.)
- ✓ If I repeat it enough times, it will just sink in and he/she will get it. (repeating becomes a lecture. Lectures are tuned out. Lectures are words when action is more persuasive.)
- ✓ He/she needs to take responsibility for his actions. (of course he /she needs to be responsible for their actions, choices. You may wait a long time for them to “take” responsibility; so short cut this, just hold them responsible. They won’t like it, but it is the right thing to do.)