Red zone

Moral transgressions

- hurt someone physically
- attack someone’s self respect
- harm something
- take without permission
- mislead (break trust)
- break contract (break trust)

Response: Always unacceptable

Tools: Prevention Guidance

Yellow zone

Conventional transgressions

- manners
- clothing
- cleanliness
- chores

Response: Situational

Tools: Prevention Guidance

Green zone

Acceptable behavior

- playing in sandbox
- playing sports
- painting
- taking meals

Response: Permit ¹

Notes:

¹ Any behavior can become a red or yellow zone transgression (e.g., throwing sand in another child’s face while playing in the sandbox)

Behavior zones
Change your attitude
- Change your thinking about the misbehavior
- Allow minor misbehavior

Change situation
- Change the surroundings
- Change the activity
- Physically redirect

Nurture child
- Make deposits in relationship
- Show interest in what your child does
- Provide real affection
- Enjoy each other’s company
- Move physically closer
- Provide reassuring routines
- Provide transitions
- Demonstrate the desirable behavior yourself
- Tell stories to make a point
- Give specific instructions
- “Catch” child being good
- Give progress report
- Prepare child for difficulty

Make deposits in relationship
- Provide Security
- Teach values and behavior

Teach values and behavior
- Provide real affection
- Enjoy each other’s company
- Move physically closer
- Provide reassuring routines
- Provide transitions
- Demonstrate the desirable behavior yourself
- Tell stories to make a point
- Give specific instructions
- “Catch” child being good
- Give progress report
- Prepare child for difficulty

© 2010 Charles A. Smith
This chart is intended for use in the Responsive Discipline online course.
Does the misbehavior stop?

- Yes: Expect restitution
- No: Does the misbehavior stop?

- Is the misbehavior in the RED zone?
  - Yes: Does the child reveal shame?
    - Yes: Natural consequences
    - No: Express strong disappointment
  - No: Is the misbehavior in the YELLOW zone?
    - Yes: Return to Guidance Chart
    - No: The behavior is GREEN zone so PERMIT

- Does the misbehavior stop?
  - Yes: Expect restitution
  - No: Does the misbehavior stop?

- Did the child reveal shame?
  - Yes: Natural consequences
  - No: Express strong disappointment

- Are natural consequences likely?
  - Yes: Did the child misuse something?
    - Yes: Expect restitution
    - No: Return to Start
  - No: Did the child harm a person?
    - Yes: Expect restitution
    - No: Return to Start

- Did the child misuse something?
  - Yes: Expect restitution
  - No: Return to Start

- Did the child harm a person?
  - Yes: Expect restitution
  - No: Return to Start

- Did the child break a trust or contract?
  - Yes: Expect restitution
  - No: Return to Start

- Is restitution possible?
  - Yes: Expect restitution
  - No: Substituted restitution

- Does the misbehavior stop?
  - Yes: Return to Start
  - No: Does the misbehavior stop?

1 A restitution made to someone or something other than the person
Important
Are you ready to invest your authority and stand behind the limit?

Fair
Are you being fair with your child; can the child do what you expect?

Clear
Does the child understand what you mean, are you specific?

Positive
Does your child know what to do, not just what not to do?

Consistent
Can your child expect the limit and your enforcement to be the stable over time?

Enforceable
Do you know when the limit is disobeyed?

Dynamic
Does the limit evolve over time to accommodate the child’s age?
Being dynamic does not mean the limit is inconsistent. Being consistent does not mean never changing. Once a limit changes to adjust to the child’s age, then it should be stable.