Natural and Logical Consequences

Author—Amber Kreischer, guest blogger and doctoral candidate


Children are in a continuous state of learning how to manage their emotions, their bodies, and their thoughts. Because of this, it is common for children to have outbursts, make mistakes, and test boundaries. The question is: What can we do to help them learn from these events and help them change their behavior for the better? Two options are to use “natural” and “logical” consequences.

No matter our age, we all face consequences for our actions. Often, people argue that children who grow up ‘without consequences’ will never learn how to behave in society. The implied message behind this statement is that adults need to plan or manipulate the consequences that children experience in order for them to have an effect. This is not always the case.

Many times, teaching children “natural consequences” is an effective behavior management technique. It requires no intervention at all on the part of the adult, other than thoughtful discussion with the child regarding what happened. As the name suggests, these types of consequences occur naturally and can be strong motivators for children to reflect on and change undesirable behavior. If a child throws a toy in anger and the toy breaks, the natural consequence is that the toy is now broken. Immediately replacing or repairing the toy would not allow the child to learn from what naturally resulted from their actions. Similarly, perhaps your child is one of many whose bedroom gets messier by the second. Upon stepping on an object on the floor, their pained foot and broken object are natural consequences of choosing to have a messy room.

What is particularly powerful about natural consequences is their lifelong relevance. These are aspects of life that people must manage on a regular basis. Discussing these naturally-occurring outcomes with children benefits them both during the immediate situation as well as in the long run.

A related technique involves the use of “logical consequences.” This technique requires caregivers to think of and employ consequences that logically connect to the given misbehavior. For example, at meal times...
children sometimes have a habit of bouncing around in their chairs. When a child spills their drink, it logically follows that they would be required to clean it up, rather than having an adult swoop in and clean it for them. My son had a habit of screaming in restaurants when he was a toddler. At first, we shushed him as much as we could, noting glares from other tables. Once I thought to use a logical consequence, his behavior quickly changed. In response to his loudness, we began to calmly remove him from the dining area while telling him that we could not scream in restaurants and we would return to our table when he was finished. It was evident that he learned that the behavior of screaming was not appropriate for restaurant environments, and after 2-3 times of receiving this logical consequence, he used an “inside voice” every time we went out to eat.

It can sometimes be difficult to think of natural and logical consequences in the moment. Consider some behaviors that your child exhibits often. What are some ways that you could allow them to learn from the logical and natural results of their actions?

Medical Costs and Taxes
Author—Joyce Lash, Field Specialist II—Families

Medical costs are often misunderstood and missed on tax returns. The most common misconception, which I hear as a volunteer preparing taxes at the VITA sites, is the belief that the full dollar value is going to be used to reduce income. There is a threshold that you have to pass before any expenses will be counted. Ten percent of your adjusted gross income is the threshold. You can estimate what your threshold will be by looking at last year’s 1040 line 37: if it shows an amount of $40,000, then there is no need to report your medical expenses if they are less than $4,000.

I also find that not everyone knows what is an allowable expense. Over the counter drugs and expenses that were paid with funds from a Flex account or HSA don’t count. On the other hand some expenses are overlooked: mileage to and from a medical appointment, meals and lodging are the most common. The allowance per mile is $.19, not huge, but it can add up if you live in a rural area and are referred to a specialist or clinic in another community. Lodging and meals at a hospital are allowed for parents and other adults when essential for medical care. If the lodging is not at the hospital you are allowed $50 per person, but not meals.

Start now, as a new year has begun, to keep a log of medical expenses, including a record of trips, even if it turns out that you aren’t able to use them on your tax return. No one knows what the coming year holds – a 12 month period can include emergencies and unexpected costs. At the end of the year it will be better to have the data on record than to have to dig for the information.

For a complete list of allowable expenses check out IRS Publication, Your Federal Income Tax Guide* (medical expenses are included in Chapter 21).


A Look at 10 Food Trends for 2017
Author—Marlene Geiger, Program Specialist I

Likely you have noticed that food offerings, recipes, restaurant menus, and grocery products have changed a lot in the last ten years. Health issues, dietary needs, convenience, consumer awareness, and waste reduction initiatives are just some of the factors that have driven changes in the culinary market.

If you like to keep up with food and nutrition trends or practices, here are some ‘expert’ predictions of what we will likely see more of in 2017. In their ‘crystal bowl’ they see:

Sunflower protein becoming the protein powder mainstay. Sunflower protein is easier to digest than other protein powders and is soy- and dairy-free making it nearly perfect for any diet.
Watermelon water rivaling coconut water for hydration and antioxidants. Watermelon water offers a refreshing taste and is packed with lycopene, potassium and natural sugar making it a great post-workout cooler or alternative to alcohol.

Butter making a comeback. In light of scientific studies that point to the dangers of artificial butters and margarines, butter contains no chemicals and takes less to satisfy the appetite. In small amounts, butter is now considered a healthy food.

Natural sweeteners replacing sugar. Honey and natural syrups will take the place of processed sugar in many prepared foods.

Soups rivaling smoothies as the complete meal. Besides the social element of sitting down and slowly eating soup, soups offer more fiber and whole foods that are often lost in juicing. The soup trend is also touted as part of the minimalism social movement.

Natural fats favored over low-fat. “Good”, non-saturated fats in small portions like those found in avocados and nuts provide essential nutrients for energy and brain function and are replacing the ‘low-fat’ trend of many years.

Exotic all-fruit concoctions becoming the new dessert. These new desserts are offering combinations of Asian and Indian fruits that may be new to the American palate and with them come added nutrition, less sugar, and less saturated fat.

Bowls replacing plated meals. Again, a product of the minimalism movement, bowls offer an entire, simple meal in a single receptacle at home or in fine restaurants—one bowl, one meal. Recipes and combinations are popping up everywhere.

Mexican, Caribbean, and Filipino cuisines replacing heavy and fat-laden corporate chains. Authentic food from these regions or in fusion form offer countless, lower-calorie meal ideas for those who want to eat right and not pack on the pounds.

Waste reduction (and waist reduction) becoming the norm. The food industry is committed to reducing portion sizes and to composting and donating food that otherwise would be waste as everyone ponders sustainability, the environment, and the long-term health of one’s self and the planet.

As trends come and go, it will be fun to look back a year from now and see how many of these predictions came true and how many of them will continue to gain traction. Most seem like common-sense practices to me.

**Slow Cooker—Converting Recipes**

*Author*—Justine Hoover, Registered Dietitian & Assistant EFNEP/FNP Coordinator

I love using my slow cooker for many reasons. Right now, the main reason I love my slow cooker is the timing. There are usually two or three nights each week when someone in our family needs to be somewhere by 6 or 6:30. It is really hard for me to make a meal, feed everyone, and then get three children out the door on time. These are the nights when I rely on my slow cooker. I can do the prep for a meal the night before, load the slow cooker in the morning, and then have a great meal ready in the evening.

Over the years, I have gradually converted some of my family’s favorite stove top recipes into slow cooker recipes. It can take some trial and error, especially with the cooking time, but it is worth it in the end.
Here are some pointers for converting your own recipes into slow cooker recipes:

- Choose recipes that simmer on the stove top or roast in the oven.
- Reduce the amount of liquid in the recipe by 1/3 to 1/2. You need to do this because the slow cooker creates its own liquid.

Adjust the cooking time; you can find a helpful convenient conversion chart at www.pillsbury.com by using the search term Cooking Conversions for Slow Cookers.

If you have questions or concerns about your slow cooker, contact AnswerLine at (800) 262-3804 (Iowa only) or (515) 296-5883 (out-of-state). They are a great resource for your home and family questions.

Good luck converting some of your favorites into slow cooker recipes!

**Build a Better Bowl**

Source— www.cbsnews.com/media/diet-paleo-low-carb-low-fat/9/

“Meals in a bowl” are a popular trend in the food world, providing both sweet and savory options. Look around at your local restaurants or browse through Pinterest and you will see burrito, rice, salad, and even smoothie bowls!

Bowls are a good way to incorporate a variety of food groups, but the calories can add up quickly. Consider the tips below to help you build a healthier bowl.

**Bulk up the “bowl” with fruits and veggies**

- Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories, and eating them can reduce your risk for chronic disease.
- Aim to have at least two color groups represented in your fruit and vegetable selection.

**Incorporate a whole grain**

- Whole grains pack a nutritional punch by providing fiber, B vitamins, and phytochemicals (compounds produced by plants that may help prevent disease).
- Easy whole grain options include brown rice, oatmeal, whole grain pasta, kamut, quinoa, or bulgur.
- For ideas check out our Whole Grains publication at store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/FAM12.

**Choose a lean protein**

- Protein in your bowl means you will stay full longer.
- Eggs, lean meats, tofu, beans, Greek yogurt, and nut butters are great go-to options.

**Top wisely**

- Select toppings low in added sugar and sodium, such as dried fruits with no added sugar or plain nuts and seeds.

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Fruit Smoothie
Serving Size: 1 cup  Serves: 1  Cost/serving: $1.09

Ingredients:
• 1 banana
• 1/2 cup berries, frozen
• 1 container (6 ounces) nonfat strawberry yogurt

Instructions:
1. Blend all ingredients well in blender.
2. Pour into your favorite glass and enjoy!

Tips:
• Be sure to wash your hands and fresh fruit before preparing.
• Freeze your smoothies in plastic cups and take them in your cooler for picnics
• Use one cup of frozen or other fresh fruit instead of bananas and strawberries.

Berry and Green Smoothies
Serving Size: 1 cup  Serves: 8  Cost/serving: $0.76

Ingredients:
• 2 medium bananas
• 2 containers (6 ounces) nonfat vanilla yogurt
• 3 cups leafy greens, washed (kale or spinach)
• 1 package (16 ounces) frozen berries
• 1 cup nonfat milk

Instructions:
2. Add berries to blender. Blend until smooth.
3. Add milk to blender. Blend until smooth.
4. Serve immediately or freeze in individual servings.

Tips:
• Add up to 1 cup more of nonfat milk if smoothie is too thick.
• Put frozen smoothies in the refrigerator for at least 12 hours to thaw them before serving. Shake well to mix ingredients before serving.
• This is a good recipe to use over-ripe or frozen bananas.

Orange Smoothie
Serving Size: 1 cup  Serves: 2  Cost/serving: $0.68

Ingredients:
• 2 cups orange juice
• 2 teaspoons sugar
• 2/3 cup instant nonfat dry milk
• 1 teaspoon vanilla

Instructions:
1. Combine all ingredients in covered jar and shake well to blend.
2. Serve immediately.

Tips:
• Freeze your smoothies in plastic cups and take them in your cooler for picnics.