

# LIFE Lessons – Cut it Out!

Allison Rees – lifseminars.com

Do you interfere with the natural flow of your children's learning opportunities by giving them lectures, punishments and bailouts? If you are doing this, you really need to *Cut It Out!* We've all heard of natural consequences and many of us have seen our kids out in public wearing their pajamas, but are we really getting the true meaning of this form of discipline? (Reminder: the word *discipline* is derived from the Latin word *discipulus* meaning "a learner" a *disciple* of life's lessons.) A child needs to experience the natural sequence of what happens as a result of his actions. If he plays rough with a toy and it breaks, the toy no longer works and the child feels the frustration of that. That is learning.



Let's imagine a child is playing roughly with his toys and breaks one. He's upset about breaking the toy and he cries. The parent sees that the toy has been broken and lectures the child, "How many times have I told you to play nicely with your things? (blah, blah) Get to your room this instant!" Now we are dealing with the parent's anger and the life lesson has been taken over by these negative emotions and the child's reaction to them. To add to this, the child has been sent to her room. How is this related to breaking a toy? Then, the parent calms down, feels guilty and offers to buy the child a new toy. Poof, gone! Bail out! The life lesson is over! Take this scene and apply it to many other areas of your child's life right through to the teen years with such things as messy rooms and homework.

**Of course we don't allow natural consequences if there is a safety issue!**

**Learning happens with life experience.**

**Parents provide support, structure and encouragement.**

- A supportive statement would be, "How sad! You loved that toy!" Now the child can learn from experience without the interruption of the parent's anger.
- Structure provides the child with opportunities so a regular allowance can provide the income for the child to save for a new toy.
- Encouragement reminds a child of what he is capable of and lets him know that you believe in his ability to deal with life's issues.

