

What happens when you are inconsistent with presenting consequences?

1. When the child knows you will only follow through sometimes, he will learn you are someone he does not always have to listen. You are someone he can take advantage of because sometimes you will do nothing even if he behaves badly.
2. The child learns even though people teach him it is important to follow rules, they can be broken. He can break them depending on who is with him.
3. The child will test people frequently by breaking the rules because he doesn't know when you will give consequences. The child will also test people he doesn't recognize because he doesn't know if they will give consequences or not.
4. The child's responses to your instruction will be inconsistent since sometimes he can respond incorrectly and there aren't any consequences. He will think why he has to try hard if sometimes you do not care. At the same time, why try hard if he responds correctly and you sometimes do not give him a positive consequence. In order to gain consistent compliance, your responses to his behavior have to be consistent.
5. Gaining trust from someone has to be earned. If you are not consistent in your responses, this will affect how much he trusts you. This trust can carry over to other situations in which he is depending on you to give him something he wants. For example, if you tell the child you will bring him to the park, he might keep asking you several times to confirm since you don't follow through sometimes.