

## Job Card Grounding

Job Card Grounding is a discipline program in which a youth is held accountable for unacceptable behavior but is provided with an opportunity to perform constructive appropriate behavior as a way to 'redeem' him or her self and receive positive feedback from parents. Job Card Grounding requires the child to earn his or her way off grounding, rather than simply waiting for time to pass.

### GOALS

1. Provide parents with a predetermined, general, and effective method for responding to a range of inappropriate behaviors.
2. Help the youth learn that there are consequences associated with inappropriate behavior.
3. Teach appropriate behavior; help the youth learn that constructive, appropriate behavior (i.e. completion of jobs) will lead to positive results.
4. Relieve the parent of the responsibility of monitoring grounding or other extended disciplinary actions.

### PREPARATION

1. Develop a list of at least 20 or more jobs which need to be done regularly in your home. Jobs on the list should include the following features:
  - a) Not part of the youth's regular chores
  - b) Will take 15-30 minutes to complete correctly
  - c) Currently being done by parents or another member of the household (or not at all)
  - d) Within the youth's physical capabilities
2. Write a description of each job on a separate index card. The description should include enough detail to make it clear to everyone how the job is to be completed. For example:

Vacuum the car: Empty all papers from the ash tray. Wipe dashboard and ash tray with a damp paper towel. Remove floor mats from the car. Remove any trash from under the seats. Use portable vacuum to vacuum all carpets, all seats, rear deck, and all upholstered surfaces on the doors. Vacuum the floor mats and put them back in the car. Return portable vacuum to the hall closet. Throw used paper towels in trash.
3. Identify a 'gripe time', a specific daily time when you will be available for your youth to talk to about any issue (including complaints about Job Cards) without fear of earning additional Job Cards. Make sure you are available at the scheduled time.
4. Choose a time to explain the Job Card Grounding program to the youth.

### PROCEDURE

1. If a rule is broken or regular chores or homework are not completed by the required time, the youth is assigned one to three Job Cards, depending on the seriousness of the violation

- a) The youth randomly selects the Job Card(s) from among those the parent has prepared. Fan the cards out face down and tell youth he or she has earned a job card and must pick one; if the youth chooses not to select the Job Card(s), the parent selects them for the youth.
- b) Once the job card has been taken by the youth (or parent), the youth remains “grounded” until the job has been completed.
  - a. During this time, parents have three responsibilities, all of which are critical:
    - i. Absolutely no attention: once the job card is pulled or taken for them, completely ignore any other behavior until the job has been completed. When I say nothing, I mean the absence something. Nothing, no matter what is said, done, etc. as they are going to try to get you angry, upset, perturbed, enough to talk or become angry at them.
    - ii. Blocking access to privileges: Once the job card is pulled, I want life in the rest of the home to continue on as usual. For the child, your job is to simply monitor enough as to prevent their access to any privilege (this includes time alone in their room) until the job has been completed.

### DELIVERING JOB CARDS

When a rule is broken, implement Job Card Grounding as soon as possible. Work to maintain a calm, matter-of-fact approach to delivering Job Cards.

1. Identify the problem behavior
  - a) Focus on specific behaviors
  - b) Focus on the present situation only, do not bring up past difficulties
  - c) Do not talk about motives (i.e. do not ask why the youth broke the rule)
2. Deliver the Job Card in a calm, matter-of-fact way; no yelling or nagging.
3. Identify the alternative, appropriate behavior; what the youth should have done instead.
4. If possible, practice the appropriate behavior.

### SUMMARY

1. The youth breaks a rule or fails to complete a chore by the expected time or to the expected standard.
2. The youth is immediately grounded from all privileges and is assigned one or more Job Cards.
3. The youth is eligible to earn back privileges after two hours, but grounding ends only when the youth has corrected whatever led to the grounding and completed the Job Card(s) in an acceptable way.