Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

- Discipline is about developing and creating appropriate behaviors, not just managing the ones which are already there. It’s about instilling values and positive attitudes, teaching pro-social skills and training children how to work within a structure of rules and limits.

- Discipline cannot be done from a distance.

- Most of the time when we punish children, we actually don’t need them punished. We need them to behave correctly.

- Discipline is about preparing children for all the choices they will be making and ensuring they are ready to handle them.

- Discipline isn’t what you do when children misbehave; it’s what you do so they won’t.

- Discipline is about giving children what they need, not what they deserve.

- Discipline communicates that the only way you will behave is the right way.

- Discipline is a set of beliefs.

- Behavior is situational; people are capable of learning behavior which applies to a specific place or occasion.

- Behavior is now the only major area of child development where we actually tolerate deterioration over time.

Here are 4 questions drawn from grades one, three, five, and eight. Quickly match them.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 x 18 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2 + 1 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>(47 x 39) ÷ 16 + 24 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>26 + 88 =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a student entered grade one able to do the difficult question in square C, and by grade eight could only answer 2 + 1, you would be concerned about the possibility of a serious health problem. How else could the student go backwards in his learning?

I this is so obvious, then what has happened to our behavioral expectations for our children?

Behavior is now the only major area of child development where we actually tolerate deterioration over time.

We rationalize this deterioration with a series of excuses like,

“Kids will be kids.”

“The hormones are running.”

“Look at the homes they come from.”

The fact is that hormones and poor home situations affect mathematics as well, along with every other subject in school. But we change our teaching techniques, not our expectations. So, let’s go back to expecting the students in grade two to behave one year better than they did in grade 1. Then, teach them to do so. Carry this concept all the way up through a school and the oldest students will be the best behaved students in the school.

80% of the students already meet this expectation. It’s the other 20% who make everyone look bad. Behavior management gave them the option of deteriorating as long as they were willing to live with the consequences of their actions. Underachievement was never intended to be a child choice, whether in academics or behavior.

Discipline isn’t what you do when children misbehave. It’s what you do so they won’t.