

## Grounding

Grounding is the most serious form of punishment used in this program and is reserved for the most significant misbehaviors. Use grounding with only one or two misbehaviors during the first week. Choose those behaviors that are not responding very well to behavioral contracts or the use of penalties.

Warn the teen in advance that if a specific misbehavior occurs, the consequence will be grounding, or “house arrest.” This means that for a specified period of time, the teen will have **no access** to anything that the parents define as a privilege.

Grounding must follow the following guidelines:

1. One or both parents must be in the house to enforce the grounding. This may mean that the grounding is postponed until later in the day or later in the week.
2. The period of the “house arrest” lasts anywhere from 2–3 hours to no more than 2 full days. The length of time will depend on the seriousness of the misbehavior as well as the availability of one or both parents to enforce the grounding.
3. During “house arrest,” the teen may perform an onerous work detail such as washing windows, sweeping out the basement, and so forth. He will not be paid or rewarded for this job.
4. There may be some items in the house that parents decide are not under their control but truly belong to the teen and which they cannot legitimately withhold from him (for example, an iPod purchased with the teen’s money from a part-time job). This scenario will compromise the effectiveness of grounding and may be justification for using a penalty approach instead.
5. Similarly, an older teen (16, 17, or 18 years old) may have a driver’s license and car, and may simply walk out of the house, get into the car, and drive away from grounding. Grounding is not appropriate for teens at this developmental level of maturity, and parents should focus instead on penalties, withholding those valued privileges over which they do have control.