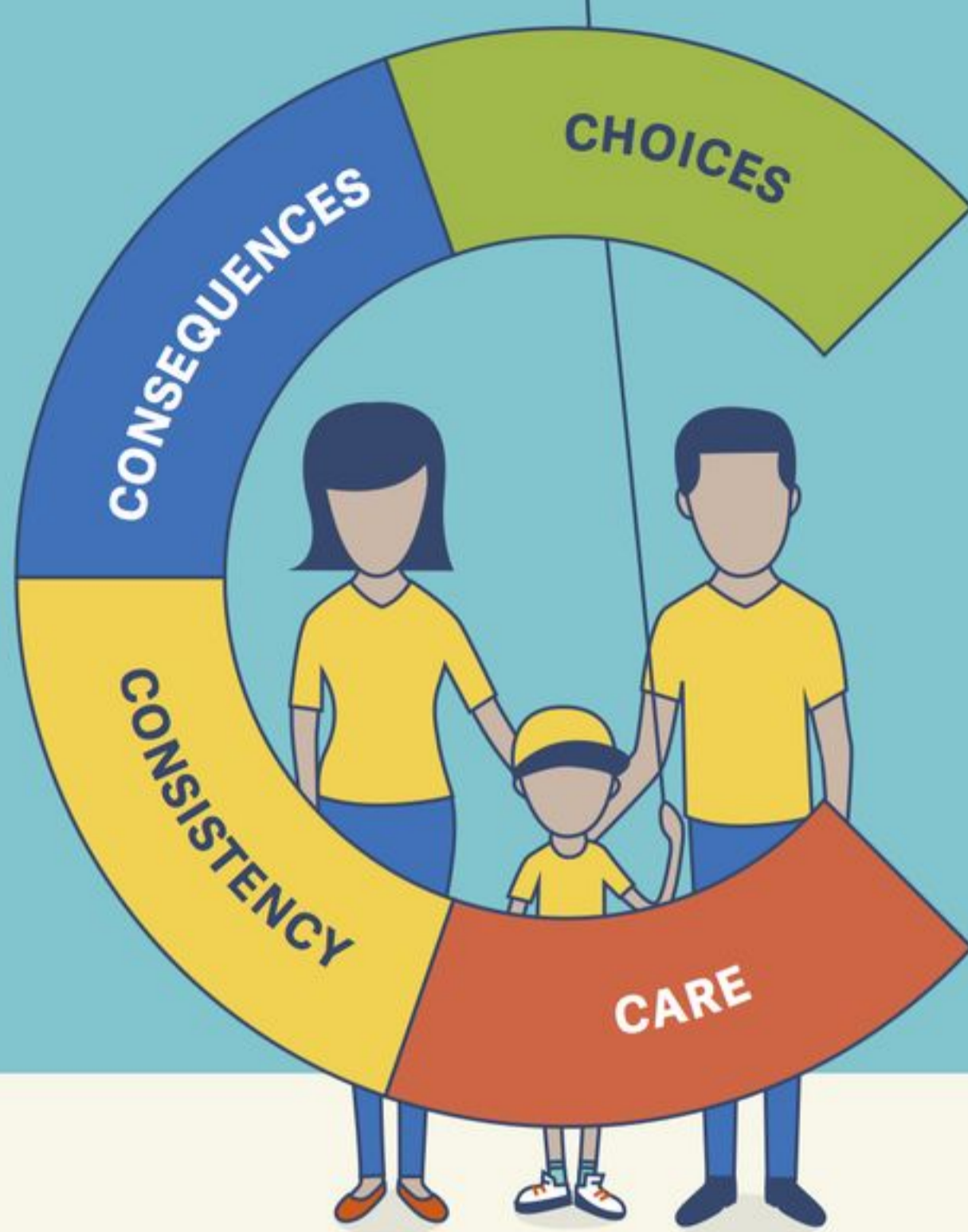


The Four Cs of Parenting



Choices

Providing your child with choices that fit reasonable constraints allows her to practice decision-making and build a sense of autonomy and growing independence. But you must remain firm about which options are available. An example: "You can either choose to clean your room before you go out to play, or you can clean your room after you play, but will have to come inside 30 minutes earlier. What would you like to do?" You have given her the opportunity to choose how she will complete her work, but within limits that are acceptable to you.



Consequences

Consequences can be either good or bad, but it is important that your child grasp that consequences are a result of his choices. Providing consequences that make sense will allow your child to understand how his choices will influence outcomes. For example, "You can either choose to speak respectfully right now, or you will need to take some time in your room."

Consistency

Mean what you say and say what you mean. This principle helps young people gain a stable sense of how to interact with other people. Although your child will eventually encounter people who will be emotionally or behaviorally inconsistent with her, she needs you to offer the kind of consistency that creates a positive standard. It will support disciplinary action when she knows you mean what you say. Note: Parents should always be on the same page.



Care

No matter what you do, your child must sense that you are acting out of love. It is important to remind him that you are acting because you love and care about him, especially in moments of conflict. A good example is, "I would not be a good mom if I allowed you to think it is alright to hit other children."

