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Managing Your Child's Behavior at Home

The Child Study Team would like to welcome Mrs. Rosa Gomez who is a Fordham Graduate School Psychology Intern working with us this year.



Parent-child relationships are the most rewarding, yet can be the most difficult. Most difficulties in parent-child relationships arise when parents are not sure how to effectively manage their child's behaviors. Defiant behaviors are not uncommon among children—from toddlers to adolescents. However, such behaviors become problematic when it interferes with the overall functioning of daily life. Children with behavior problems can have a negative impact on their parents as well themselves. In light of this, there are ways to help your child change the behaviors and arrive at a positive outcome for everyone involved.

What can Parents do?

- **SPEND TIME** with your child daily doing a fun activity. ***Be creative: this time can be spent while dinner is in the oven, a load of laundry is drying, or right before bedtime.*
- **TALK** with your child. Listen attentively without correcting or criticizing.
- **IGNORE** minor attention-seeking misbehaviors (whining, temper tantrums). Pay *lots* of attention once your child stops.
- **EXPLAIN** your expectations with short & direct phrases (start homework by 5pm, take a shower before bed). Consider the timing of the explanation (during commercial breaks) to ensure you have your child's attention.
- **REWARD** when your child exhibits the positive behaviors (verbal praise, a hug, stickers, extra TV time, later bedtime on weekends for older children).
- **COMMUNICATE** with your child's teacher. Share techniques that you use at home. Establish specific school expectations with the teacher & reward your child.
- **DISCIPLINE** your child with a "time out" or loss of privileges to deal with the negative behaviors. Also, provide opportunities for your child to earn positive reinforcement (verbal praise, rewards). ***Follow-through is important. "Giving in" undermines the purpose of the consequence!*
- **TAKE CARE** of yourself! Engage in relaxing and enjoyable activities when you can (warm bath, walk, exercising, talking to a friend, laying down in a quiet room for a few minutes). You cannot take care of your child unless you take care of yourself.

let's celebrate
SPRING

A blue banner with white text and a sunburst graphic. Below the text are several colorful flowers (yellow, white, and pink) and a small sunburst.

How to Create a Behavior Plan at Home

A positive behavior plan focuses on recognizing a child's appropriate behavior and rewarding them for it. There are many types of positive behavior plans to consider depending on your child's age, including behavioral contracts, a chart, or a token system.

When beginning the process of creating a positive behavior plan, it is important to take into consideration the age and reading level of your child. A contract works better with older children and teens. A picture chart is more appropriate for younger children who need visual cues. A token system requires basic counting skills. Tokens could be points, check marks, chips, gems, tickets, etc. The tokens can then be redeemed for something that child wants and would be motivating to work toward.

Identify a few behaviors (about 3-5) that you would like to improve in your child. Start with a few basic goals for younger children, such as sharing toys. For older children the behavior plan might focus on remembering to do chores, completing homework and exhibiting good manners.

Decide how to reward the child for good behavior. Get input from your child so the reward is meaningful. If the child reaches a certain number of "stars" on a chart or tokens on a particular day, then the reward should be given. Rewards can be inexpensive toys from a treasure box, collectible cards, stickers or whatever motivates your child. Some children may also be motivated by engaging in a special activity with parent(s), and this is also a great way to spend some quality time with your child (i.e. going to a movie, getting ice cream, taking a family bike ride).

It is important to give your child the reward or token immediately after recognizing a good behavior. It is equally as important to reiterate to your child the positive behavior which was demonstrated, as well as provide an abundance of verbal praise.

Review and praise the child's progress throughout the day. Encourage your child to count their tokens and remind them how many more will need to be earned to obtain the reward. This will serve as a source of continued motivation.

Lastly, it is *crucial* to be consistent every day. Children thrive on structure and predictability. The behavior plan works because it clearly defines the parent's expectations and the rewards for meeting those expectations.

Helpful Resources To Consider:

For FREE printable behavior charts:

<http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com/>

<http://www.goalforit.com/behavior-charts.html>

<http://www.kidpointz.com/printable-charts/behavior-charts/>

Other:

http://www.ehow.com/how_2085601_create-positive-behavior-modification-plan.html#ixzz2MbVWSnQs

www.aboutourkids.org: NYU Child Study Center

