



Parent Guide to Behavior Management

Positive Reinforcement (Positive Consequences) – FOCUS ON BEHAVIORS YOU WANT TO SEE!!!

- Positive reinforcement is **intentional** and needs to **immediately** follow the behavior you desire. As soon as possible, give your child praise or a reward. That helps to strengthen the connection between the positive reinforcer and the behavior.
- Your child needs to understand exactly what behavior earned that reward.
- Pay attention to whether your child engages in the behavior you want. If yes- keep using that reinforcer! If not, maybe it's time to change the reinforcer.
- The size of the reinforcer should match the effort needed for the behavior. Did your child do something incredible? Give them a big reward! Did they do something small? A trip to Disneyland may not be warranted.

“Grandma’s Rule”

- “Grandma’s Rule” says First eat your vegetables, then you can have a cookie. First do your homework, then you can have computer time. First _____, then _____. Easy, right?
- Grandma’s Rule is a way to let your child know two things: 1.) what the expected behavior is, and 2.) what positive reinforcement they will receive.
- Using consistent “First _____, then _____” wording helps even young kids understand what’s going on and helps them perform the desired behavior. Reminding them of the good thing that’s coming can make it easier to do the necessary not so fun thing.

Specific Behavior Praise

- When you give your child verbal praise, make sure they know exactly what they are receiving the praise for! What did they do that was a good job? Do they know?
- When you praise your child, you want to see a specific behavior increase in the future. But does your child know what behavior? Do they just have to guess?
- Instead of always saying the same old “Good job” how about “Good job sharing your toys”. Or “I like the way you used your fork correctly” or “Thank you for following directions”. Adding that one little phrase can make a **HUGE** difference!

Offer Choices

- Offering choices is an easy way to prevent problem behavior. Instead of constantly saying no, stop, please stop, please please please stop, and STOP NOW, how about telling them what to do instead?
- Give choices between appropriate responses or activities. What CAN they do to stay out of trouble and maybe actually even earn some positive reinforcement?

For example:

Keep your hands to yourself. You can walk away or ask nicely for a turn.

You must do schoolwork first. You can start with you Math work or your Reading work.

Yelling at your brother is not a choice. You can speak nicely to him or go have some time away from him.

Consequences (Negative Consequences)

- The results that naturally or logically follow a behavior. Consequences — positive or negative — affect the likelihood of a behavior recurring. And the more immediate the consequence, the more powerful it is.
- Don't overreact. A huge consequence can be defeating for children and they may give up even trying to behave.

Helpful Behavior Tips to Remember

1. **Be aware of the situation:** Consider the environment and emotions — hunger, fatigue, anxiety or distractions can all make it much more difficult for children to control their behavior.
2. **Adjust the environment:** When it's schoolwork time, for instance, remove distractions like video screens and toys, provide a snacks, set up an organized place for kids to work and make sure to schedule some breaks — attention doesn't last forever.
3. **Make expectations clear:** You'll get better cooperation if both you and your child are clear on what's expected. Sit down with him/her and talk about what you want them to do. Even if s/he "should" know what is expected, telling them exactly what you want them to do in the beginning of a task helps decrease misunderstandings down the line.
4. **Provide countdowns for transitions (younger children):** Whenever possible, prepare children for an upcoming transition. For example, say, 10 minutes left before they must come to dinner or start a different task. Then, remind them again, when there are 2 minutes, left. It is important to transition immediately when the time is up (say what you mean, mean what you say).
5. **Let kids have a choice:** As kids grow up, it's important they have a say in their own scheduling. Giving a structured choice — "Do you want to take a shower after dinner or before?" — can help them feel empowered and encourage them to become more self-regulated (calm, focused).
6. **Model the behavior you want to see.** If you want your child to treat others with respect, you do the same. If you want your child to be an honest person, set an example of honesty for them.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lXDwgOo-7U>