

KEEP

Supporting Foster & Kinship Families



Foster/Kin Parent Handouts
Standard Model

These handouts have been formatted to enable double-sided printing.

Revised December 2021

Foster/Kin Parent Handouts List

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Welcome and Overview—Summary

1. Group Purpose and Guidelines

A. Purpose

KEEP groups have a few main purposes.

Support

Parenting can be complicated and a tough job under the best of circumstances. We know foster children are coming into your homes from troubling situations. We can support each other by:

- a) sharing successes and positive experiences,
- b) talking about difficulties and frustrations, and
- c) discussing ways to solve problems.

KEEP is Trauma-Informed

Numerous studies show that a safe, predictable, and nurturing home environment, along with positive parenting, can help reverse the effects of trauma. KEEP is a trauma-informed model that promotes positive attachments. In KEEP, we focus on skills parents can use to provide safety and predictability along with support and encouragement for the children in their homes.

New Skills

Parenting skills that you have relied on with your own children may not work with the challenging behaviors that some kids have. We will be looking at new skills you can use to reduce your stress.

B. Guidelines

We hope the idea of getting support and learning new skills is exciting to you. We also hope that everyone will feel comfortable enough in the group to share experiences and give support to each other. In order for everyone to get the most out of our time together, it's necessary to establish a few basic guidelines.

1. Confidentiality—what is said in the group stays in the group (including children's names).

2. No put downs.
3. Listen to each other and offer encouragement and support.
4. Share talk time, give everyone a chance to talk.
5. Be respectful of cultural differences.

2. PDR

There is a telephone interview that you will be doing on a regular basis. It is called the Parent Daily Report, or “PDR” for short. The questions will ask you about yesterday—from the time your child got up to when they went to bed.

The PDR is...

- a tool to keep track of child behavior
- a tool to record progress and challenges

1. How is it useful?
 - a) It helps us provide additional support for you as we learn more about what you’re experiencing.
 - b) It provides us all an overall picture of your child’s behavior that can help determine patterns and other important information.
 - c) It helps us catch challenging behaviors when they are small, which is a much easier time to work on them.
2. The most important thing to remember about PDR is that there are no judgments being made about your parenting. There are no right or wrong answers to PDR. It’s just about what you’re experiencing.
3. Once a week one of us will call you to get the PDR data. This will take about 5 to 10 minutes.

3. Four Key Roles of Foster/Kin Parents

As we all know, parenting can be a complex job, especially being a foster or kin parent. The curriculum that we are using in this group has been used with many groups. There has been quite a bit of research on KEEP, and it has been shown to be very effective. Based on our experience, we’ve found that foster and kin parents have many roles. We will focus on four of the main ones.

1. You are your child’s most important **Teacher**.
 - a) You teach your children how to be successful.
 - b) You teach them what is important.

- c) You teach them what is real.
 - d) Foster/kin parents are often teaching skills at different levels than they would have taught their own children.
2. You are also sometimes a **Detective**.
- a) You identify each child's strengths.
 - b) You observe their positive and challenging behaviors and interactions.
 - c) You find out information to help your child problem-solve difficult situations.
3. You play the role of a **Referee**.
- a) A referee makes rules.
 - b) A referee makes the game safe to play for everyone—this involves discipline.
 - c) You set limits when you need to.
4. You are also a **Protector**.
- a) You provide warmth, nurturing, and care.
 - b) You help and support children through difficult situations.
 - c) You provide love and support, and you watch over your child's development and relationships.

4. Home Practice

This week the home practice is about encouragement. We will be learning more about how we all view encouragement. During the week, fill out this sheet and bring it back next week.

GROUP GUIDELINES

Confidentiality: What is said in the group stays in the group.

No put downs.

Listen to each other and offer encouragement and support.

Share talk time; give everyone a chance to talk.

Be respectful of cultural differences.

Parent Name: _____

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Child Name: _____

Group: _____

Parent Daily Report (4–12)
Did your child do any of the following behaviors yesterday?

0 – Did not occur		1 – Yes, but not stressful		2 – Yes, and stressful	
CHILD BEHAVIOR	SCORE	CHILD BEHAVIOR	SCORE	CHILD BEHAVIOR	SCORE
1	Anxious or worried	19	Lie		
2	Argue	20	Nervous or Jittery		
3	Back talk	21	Not mind		
4	Competitive	22	Pout		
5	Complain	23	Runaway		
6	Cry	24	School problems		
7	Daydream	25	Skip meals		
8	Defy	26	Skip school		
9	Depressed or Sad	27	Sleep problems		
10	Destructive	28	Sluggish		
11	Fearful	29	Soil		
12	Fight	30	Steal		
13	Hyperactive or short attention span	31	Swear		
14	Inappropriate sexual behavior	32	Tease or provoke		
15	Interrupt	33	Throw tantrum		
16	Irresponsible	34	Wet		
17	Irritable	35	Whine		
18	Jealous	36	Yell		

RATE YOUR DAY

1 – 10

September 2020

Four Roles of Foster/Kin Parents

TEACHER

Parents are the most important teachers.

You teach how to succeed, what is important, what is real.

Parents might teach skills at different levels to different children.

DETECTIVE

You identify strengths.

You observe their behavior.

You find out information to help solve problems.

REFEREE

You make the rules.

You make the game safe to play.

You set limits and follow through.

PROTECTOR

You provide warmth, nurturing, and care.

You help and support children through difficult situations.

You watch over your child's development and relationships.

HOME PRACTICE: ENCOURAGEMENT PROFILE

A. Write three encouraging statements you might say to your child.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

B. How much is encouragement part of your parenting?



C. What type of encouragement do you use with your children?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ___ Compliments | ___ Participation in your activities |
| ___ Allowance | ___ Physical touch: hug, pat on back |
| ___ Special treat | ___ Occasional small rewards |
| ___ Other | ___ Nothing special most of the time |

D. Sometimes it is difficult for me to be encouraging because:

The Importance of Cooperation—Summary

1. Cooperation and Minding

One of the main things we want to encourage is cooperation.

Why is it important to teach cooperation?

Being cooperative will help your child be accepted by others. Generally, peers, teachers, and other adults like kids who are cooperative. Kids who are cooperative and accepted by others tend to...

- Feel good about themselves,
- Have confidence to try new things, and
- Be better prepared to meet new demands.

What exactly is cooperation?

Cooperation is a skill and you can teach it, but first let's agree on what it is. Generally, it is the same thing as minding. You can think about most challenging behavior as not minding, and most cooperative behavior as minding. If you have a set of rules in your house, minding would be following those rules. If you ask your child to do something, minding would be doing it. Minding is simply doing what you are asked to or expected to do. When your child minds, they are being cooperative.

How long should it take for your child to mind?

If you ask your child to set the table, how long should it take for them to mind? If your child responds to your request—the first time—within 10 to 15 seconds, that would be minding. If you had to ask more than once or it took longer than that, then they would not be minding.

How do you ask your child to do something?

Most of us don't think much about *how* we ask children to do things. When you are trying to teach your child to mind, there are a few things you can do that will increase your chance of success.

1. **Get their attention.** Make sure they are paying attention to you before you tell them to do something. You can do this by calling their name or getting

them to look at you. If you aren't sure you have their attention, you won't really know if they heard you.

2. When possible, **don't ask them to do something when they are deeply engaged in an activity**. For example, if they are watching their favorite TV show, it is going to be hard for them to stop and do something else. It isn't always an option to wait, but when it is something that can wait until the show is over, they will probably be more cooperative.
3. **Be clear and specific**. Try to be clear about what you are asking, so there is no misunderstanding. For example, if you want them to pick up their room it would be better to say, "Pick up your toys and clothes and put them where they belong," rather than, "Get busy on your room."
4. **Follow through**. If you ask your child to do something and they do it—great, acknowledge it. If you ask your child to do something and they don't do it, don't keep repeating yourself over and over again. This only teaches them not to listen to you the first time. Give them a consequence for not minding. At a later session, we'll look at some consequences you could give.

How often should you expect your child to mind?

If you rated your child's rate of cooperation on a scale of 0% to 100%, what would it be? Studies show that, in general, kids mind about 70% of the time. Expecting your child to cooperate all of the time will only make everyone frustrated.

2. Encouragement

Now that we understand why minding and cooperation are important, we'll look at ways to encourage those things in children. You probably already do a lot of encouraging without even thinking about it. When you say things like:

"When you finish your homework, then you can watch TV."

"When you pick up your toys, then I'll read you a story."

Using a "when-then" sets your child up for success. You are encouraging your child to cooperate by offering a reward if they mind. This is an informal agreement.

Another way to encourage minding is to catch your child being good, and then notice and praise it. Some people like to think of this as giving hugs with words. You are using words to make your child feel good about what they are doing. An example of this type of encouragement would be if you ask your child to do something and they do it, you say "That was terrific that you minded me right away." You noticed their positive behavior.

This "catch 'em being good" stuff is easier said than done. Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to pay attention to what is challenging rather than what is going well?

It's very natural to get in the habit of focusing on challenging behavior. Unfortunately, like any other habit, when you do it enough you get really good at it, and you start noticing more and more challenging behaviors. Imagine how you would feel if you had a supervisor or teacher who only talked to you about what you were doing wrong. Do you think you would be very motivated to improve?

Of course we all notice when kids do really great things, but how often do we let them know we notice the cooperative things they do day in and day out? It can take practice to learn to notice and praise the ways kids are already cooperating.

At first, it may feel... awkward, unnatural, uncomfortable, or forced. Keep practicing; it gets easier and more natural. Pretty soon you will do it without even thinking about it. It will become a habit, and all that encouragement and "hugs with words" will really motivate your child to behave that way more often.

3. Home Practice

This week, we want you to practice catching your child being good. There are some tips for praising your child to try out this week. Also, start to identify what your child is already doing well and what you'd like your child to learn to do better.

Try to notice the little things, like when your child:

Said please without being asked

Said thank you

Was on time for school

Got dressed without a fuss

Was petting the dog or cat gently

Smiled

Volunteered to help without being asked

Said something nice to someone

Washed hands when asked

Played quietly

Covered mouth when sneezed or coughed

Finished homework

Helped sibling with homework

Said excuse me

Fed the dog or cat

Made the bed

Put clothes in the hamper instead of on the floor

Ideas for Behaviors to Encourage

Minding

Playing quietly

Sharing

Being polite (Please and Thank you)

Trying something new

Using manners

Offering to help

Being cheerful

Being sweet

Thinking of others

Catch 'Em Being Good

Tips for praising children

- **Be specific** about what your child did well. Rather than just saying “Good job!” say, “You poured the kitty litter without any spills. Good job!”
- **Praise each small step** that contributes to achieving a larger goal. Example: “You made a good start on cleaning your room by picking up your clothes.”
- **Find some aspect of a task that your child did well and comment on that:** “Hey. You started your homework on time. Good for you!”
- **Don't require perfection** before you praise.
- **Use positive facial expressions;** a smile can go a long way.
- **Use positive voice tones.**
- **Use non-verbal encouragement** such as a thumbs-up or high-five.
- **Avoid sarcasm.** Praise that encourages does not hurt.
- **Don't add a negative comment on the end of praise statements** (“Good job on the dishes. Why can't you do that all the time, like your brother?") A simple praise statement is more effective.
- **Praise soon after the positive behavior.**
- **Base praise on your child's behavior,** not because you feel guilty.
- **Use the when/then principle.** When your child starts following your direction, *then* they receive the praise.
- **Catch children in the act** of doing something well and praise it.

Home Practice

What My Child Does Well

For example: Makes their bed and takes out the trash each day.

Remember: Describe the behavior, be specific, and keep it short

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

What I Want My Child to Do Better

For example: Brush their teeth, take care of the cat, not interrupt, mind more often.

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

Teaching New Behaviors—Summary

1. Clear Expectations Increase Cooperation

Last week we looked at informal agreements and noticing the ways your **child is already minding as a way to encourage that behavior**. This week, we will talk about how to use formal agreements to encourage these changes. Remember, clear expectations are important for helping your child be successful.

2. House Rules

House rules help establish a safe environment and provide structure that makes children feel secure. Having a specified set of rules enables you to be clear about your expectations.

- Be clear and specific;
- Keep the list short (a list of 5 rules is recommended); and
- Include the most important things.

3. Using Incentives

Keep in mind that one of our ultimate goals is to set kids up for success. One way to do this is to teach them the things they don't know or aren't doing well. Encouragement is the most powerful method of teaching. There are lots of ways to encourage a child. We've already talked about verbal praise and recognition being an effective way to encourage. You can also encourage your child by using incentives like stars and points as well as other rewards.

Incentives can be privileges or rewards. They are only given after the behavior occurs. Don't make the mistake of giving the reward before the behavior—that would be a bribe. Bribes corrupt. Incentives encourage. They tell your child that they matter and that their effort was noticed and appreciated.

Incentives don't have to cost any money. Not all incentives work with all kids and families. Look for things that fit your family. As you get to know your kids better you will probably have a good idea of what kind of incentives really motivate them.

4. Formal Agreements—Step by Step

It is really important to help kids be as successful as possible when you set out to improve a behavior or teach a new one. Be patient; remember that to teach or learn a new behavior or reduce a challenging behavior takes time, consistency, and lots of practice.

- What is the behavior that you want to change or improve?
 - a. If it is a chore or routine, what are the steps to completing the chore or routine?
 - b. If it is a behavior, what exactly is the behavior? If you are thinking about a challenging behavior, how would you say it positively—what do you want your child to do?
- List three or four incentives that can be used, and at what point in the process the chore, routine, or behavior will be rewarded.

5. Home Practice

Think about what you want to improve and complete the worksheet for those behaviors. Do as many of these as you want. Next week, we will pick one or two and make some charts to use while you work on those behaviors.

The Numbers Game

1 61 42 74 14
13
41 81 70 22
9 45 18 62
17 21 86
89 49 34 2 30
37 5 69 38 50 66
85 29 78
25 65 6 90 10
33 46
53 57 82
73 77 54 26 58
15 79 39 76
31 71 32 16
3 8 40
47 83 55 80 24
7 27 52 56
67 72 4
51 75 11 12 28
19 43 36 88
87 23 20
44 48
35 59 63 68 64
60 84

Examples of Privileges and Rewards

- Choosing a special TV program/cartoons
- Pick from a grab bag of small items
- Video game time
- Gum or candy
- Privacy time
- Staying up half an hour later
- Having access to their cell phone
- Having a friend spend the night
- Keeping bedroom light on after bedtime
- Riding a bike
- Go fishing or hiking
- Go to friend's house
- Computer time
- Being taken out to a movie
- Going out with parent for ice cream
- Going to park alone or with parents
- Baking or cooking with parents
- Shopping with parents
- Choosing dessert
- A special activity with a parent (taking a walk, playing a game, reading a story, craft project, etc.)

Other Ideas:

Steps to Improving Behavior or Teaching a New Behavior

1. Describe the behavior so that it is specific and you can clearly picture what is happening:

Effective: The child leaves clothes all over the floor.

Ineffective: The child is irresponsible.

2. If it is a chore or routine, break the behavior you want your child to learn down into small, attainable steps.

Cleaning your room means: Clothes in the hamper. Books on the bookshelf. Bed made. Toys on the shelf.

3. If it is a challenging behavior, describe a pro-social opposite. What do you **want** your child to do? For example:

The pro-social opposite of not minding could be: Minding

The pro-social opposite of yelling could be: Using an inside voice

4. Praise success at each step toward a goal.
5. Be generous with praise. Don't wait until the goal is achieved.
6. Pair praise with rewards, such as points, stars, or kid bucks.
7. Use incentive charts. Children love them, and charts help parents follow through.

SAMPLE WORKSHEET: TEACHING A NEW BEHAVIOR

A. What I'd like my child to improve:

Chris being more responsible about getting to school.

B. What are the steps to improvement?

1. Being up by 7:15 am
2. Being dressed by 7:30 am
3. Eating breakfast
4. Having all school supplies gathered by front door
5. Leaving house by 8:00 am

C. What can I do to encourage this behavior?

1. Check each day that Chris does these things.
2. Offer verbal encouragement daily.
3. Provide a small incentive each day that he does 4 out of 5 of the steps (e.g., 30 minutes of computer time).

WORKSHEET: TEACHING A NEW BEHAVIOR

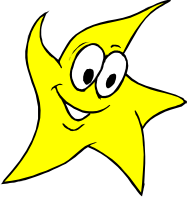
A. WHAT I'D LIKE TO IMPROVE:

B. WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO IMPROVEMENT?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

C. WHAT INCENTIVES CAN I USE TO ENCOURAGE THIS BEHAVIOR?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



USING FORMAL AGREEMENTS

Charts or other written agreements are a way to provide kids with positive attention for positive behavior. Parents find them helpful for teaching a new behavior or activity, or for learning a new routine like:

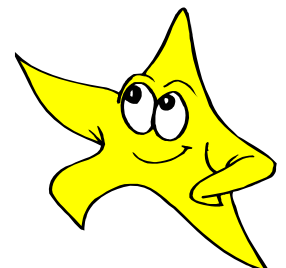
- Doing chores
- Improving a specific behavior (minding)

When you write it down and keep track of your child's progress on a chart, it is a good tool for teaching and encouraging.

Charts can help produce long lasting change.

Tips for making charts successful:

- Be generous with praise.
- Use incentives that feel comfortable for you.
- Use praise and incentives together, e.g. "You minded really well today. Let's play Uno."
- Don't expect perfection. Most children don't make their goal every day. Focus your attention on the successes.
- Remember to review the chart every day and follow through with incentives and praise.



Using Charts and Incentives—Summary

1. Using Charts

You probably have very busy households with a lot going on all the time. With so much going on, it is easy to get distracted and forget about the behaviors you are trying to change or improve. Charts are a really good way to stay on track and not lose sight of what you want to do. Using a chart is a lot like using an organizer. Your child can see clearly what you want them to do and when they should do it.

When you are setting up a new chart, think SMART.

S mall Steps	What are the steps involved?
M easurable	What does it look like when it is done?
A chievable	Is your child able to do it? Is it realistic?
R eward	What reward will be motivating?
T ime	When does it need to be done?

Remember...

1. Charts help you remember to encourage the behavior you want to see more of.
2. You are in control of the chart.
3. Charts are a tool to help you use contingent reinforcement.
4. A successful chart includes a behavior that your child is already doing well, as well as a behavior that you would like to see your child doing more of or better.
5. You can revise/change what is on the chart.
6. It might take a few days for a child to experience success with a chart.
7. Some parents prefer another kind of reward system like a marble jar.

2. Introducing Charts to Children

When you are ready to tell your child about using a new chart, you will want to choose the right time and place. It wouldn't be a good idea to do this at a time when they're having a bad day already. Choose a time when there are no distractions, no friends over, and no screens/phones. Other tips for introducing charts:

1. Focus on the positives.
2. State your expectations clearly.
3. Ignore negative statements.
4. Tell your child where the chart will be displayed.

3. Obstacles to Overcome

Sounds so easy, doesn't it? It would be—if we were all perfect. But, since we are all humans, you can bet there will be a few challenges.

- What to do if your child doesn't earn the reward:

Often, parents feel bad or responsible when this happens and want to give them the reward anyway. It is important to stay consistent and not give the reward if it is not earned. Use praise for the effort they have made, and be positive about their ability to make the reward next time.

- What to do if your child earns the reward one day and not the next:

You might feel like they aren't trying hard enough, and it might make you discouraged or angry. Try not to give any attention for failing to earn the reward. What you pay attention to is likely to be what you get more of. If you pay attention to the failure, you will probably get more failure. Stay positive. Express confidence that your child can do it next time. "You didn't make it today, but I bet you can tomorrow."

- What to do if your child has worked and made some effort but not enough to get the reward:

Give praise and stars for the steps they have accomplished and an encouraging statement like, "I'll bet you'll make it tomorrow—you are trying very hard."

- What to do if your child is not responding or says it is stupid:

Follow through anyway and ignore their negative talk.

- What to do if your child has so many challenging behaviors that it is hard to find things to encourage:

In this case, it may be best to start off with one thing they are already doing well and another that they aren't doing well. For example, you may start off with a chart for getting up in the morning (which they are doing pretty consistently) and one for minding within 10 seconds (which they are not doing well). This way you build in some attention to positive behavior.

It is natural to focus on the challenging behavior—we all do it. While you are teaching your child, you are also practicing learning a new behavior yourself. Ignoring some behaviors and giving attention to positive behaviors will take practice to be consistent.

Remember, children will focus on what you focus on. If you only focus on the challenging behavior, you will probably get more of it. Be sure to give lots of encouragement too. There are studies that show that the best way to change a child's behavior is to really tip the balance of positive to corrective statements. We recommend that for every corrective statement or challenging behavior you focus on, you give 5 positive or encouraging statements.

Fine Tuning: After you've been using a chart for a little while, and especially if you aren't happy with your child's progress on the chart, it is a good idea to step back and ask yourself a few questions.

- ✓ Did I check the behavior often enough? Does this have to happen once per day or more often?
- ✓ Was the behavior broken down into small enough steps so my child could be successful?
- ✓ Did I encourage what had been accomplished?
- ✓ Did I provide an incentive if it was earned?
- ✓ Does anything need to be added or dropped to make the chart/agreement better?

4. Home Practice

Introduce the incentive chart to your child and use it.

Clara's Bedtime Chart Example

Name: Clara

Responsibilities	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:30pm: Wash your hands and face	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Brush your teeth	★	★		★	★	★	★
Put on pajamas	★	★	★			★	★
Pick out a book to read with parents			★		★	★	★
8:00pm: Lights out	★	★			★	★	★
Stay in bed		★	★		★	★	★

Privileges:

When Clara stays in bed at night, she gets to pick her cereal in the morning. She can earn stickers when she completes the other responsibilities.

When Clara stays in bed at night for 5 days (non-consecutive), she can choose from a list of larger rewards on the weekend. Examples of larger rewards:

- Watching a favorite movie
- Going out for ice cream
- _____

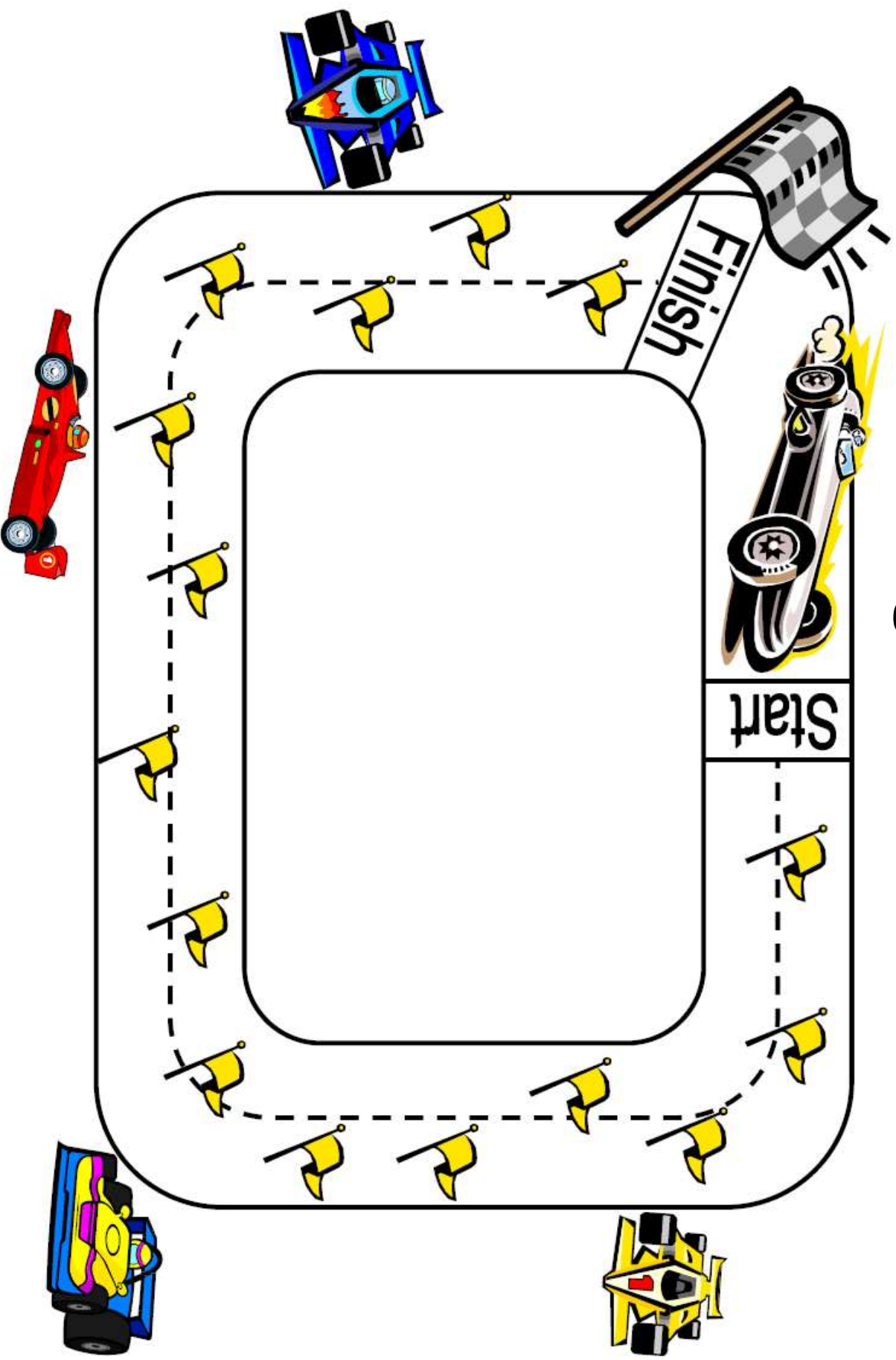
Explanation:
 In this example, because Clara's parents want her to stay in bed at night, she can earn a daily reward of picking her cereal and can also earn a weekly reward when she stays in bed 5 out of 7 nights. At the same time, her parents want to encourage her when she completes other bedtime routines, so she earns stickers.

Behaviors:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Privileges:

Minding Racetrack



DAILY AGREEMENT

WHEN YOU _____

BY _____ **O'CLOCK,**

YOU CAN _____

UNTIL _____ **O'CLOCK.**

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

BEING A GOOD FRIEND

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Sharing					
Letting other kids play with your toys.					
Taking Turns					
First your friend uses it, then you use it, and then your friend uses it.					
Losing Gracefully					
Congratulating others when they win.					

LOOKIN' GOOD

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Brush Teeth					
Morning: ___					
Evening: ___					
Take a Bath/Shower					
Use soap					
Rinse off					
Wash Hair					
Use shampoo					
Rinse Well					
Wash Hands					
After using bathroom					
Before meals					

MINDING

MINDING IS DOING WHAT YOU ARE TOLD TO DO WITHIN 10 SECONDS

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

IF YOU EARN ____ STARS, YOU CAN PICK:

SIGNED:

DATE:

DAILY CHART

Name:

Date:

Chore or Behavior & Description	Time	Points or Stars Earned	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.

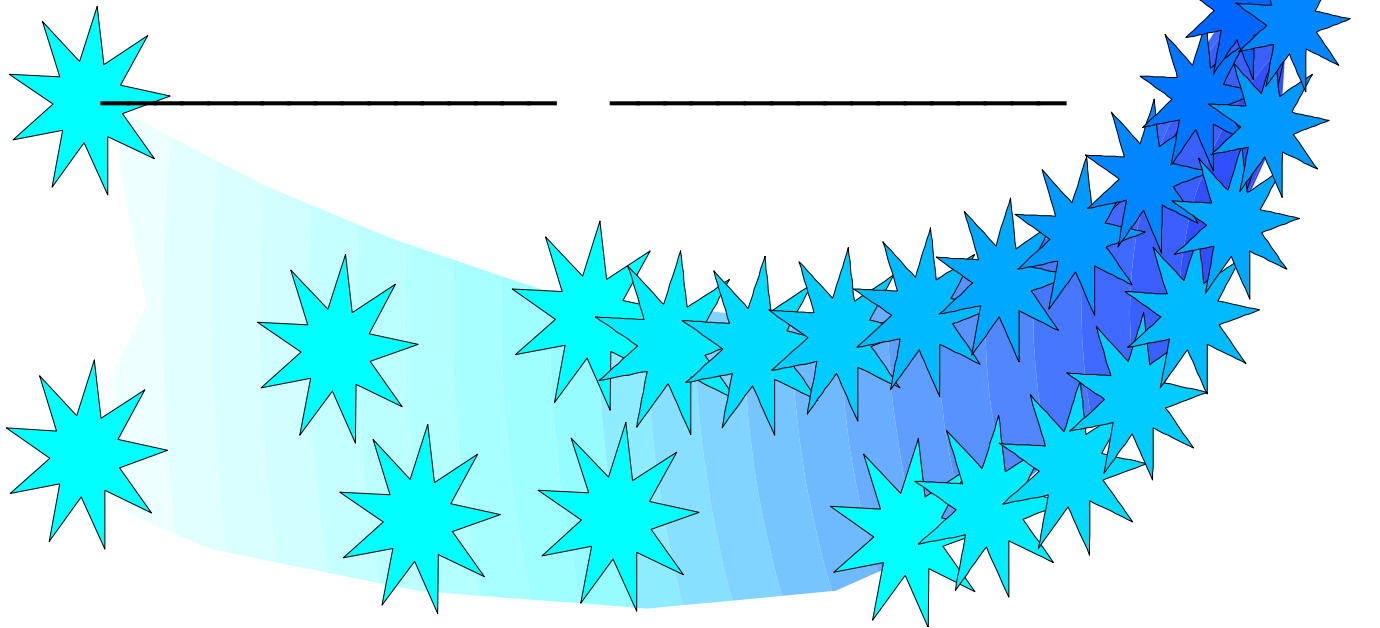
INCENTIVES

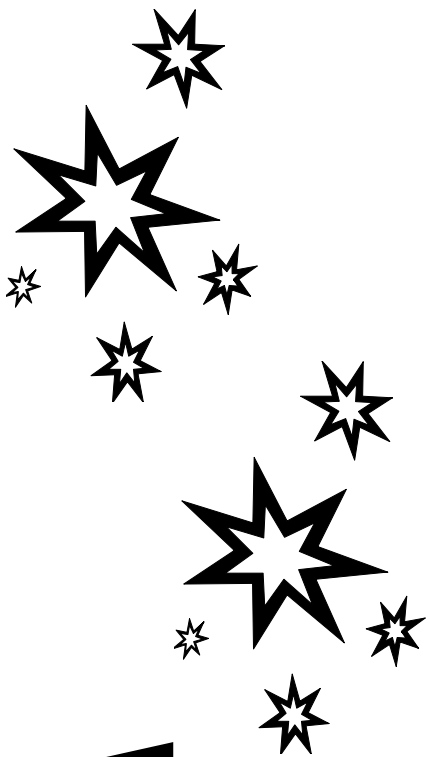
Star Chart

Chore / Behavior	Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
		○	○	○	○	○	○	○

STARS EARNED TODAY: _____

REWARDS TO CHOOSE FROM:





When I do:



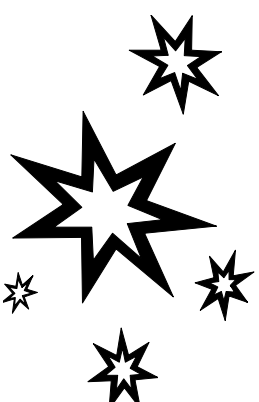
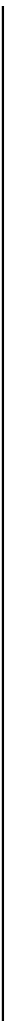
Then I can:



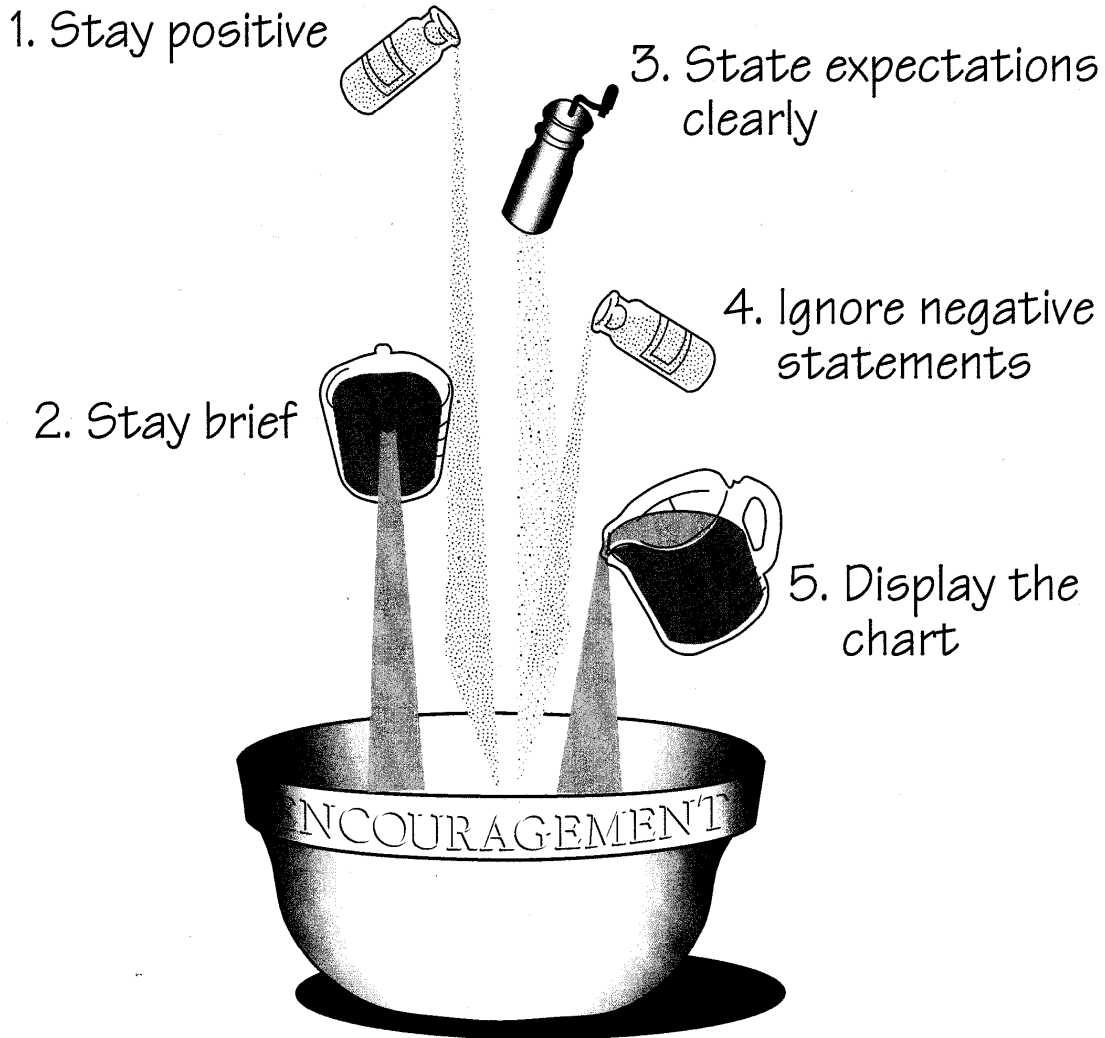
Signed:



Date:



Ingredients for a Successful Chart Talking About Points and Stars



A key for using points and stars is to be
as consistent as possible

Fine Tuning Charts

- 1. Did I check the behavior each day?**
- 2. Was the behavior broken down into small enough steps so my child could be successful?**
- 3. Did I encourage what had been accomplished?**
- 4. Did I provide an incentive if it was earned?**
- 5. Does anything need to be added or dropped to make the chart/agreement better?**

Setting Limits—Summary

1. Purpose of Setting Limits and Using Discipline

So far, the focus has been on how to encourage children to behave the way we want them to. The key to dealing with challenging behavior is the right combination of encouragement and discipline. Keep in mind that discipline discourages challenging behavior, and encouragement promotes positive behavior. Now, we are going to shift gears and think about how to set limits and use discipline.

Setting limits is an important part of being a parent. When children know what the limits are, they feel safer. As you know, many kids in foster care have had all kinds of experiences that may make them feel insecure or unsafe. They may have experienced lots of disruption and instability. It is especially important for kids with these histories to start to feel safe, and by setting limits you will begin that process. That doesn't mean they won't test the limits. They will. It is important to be clear about what the limits are, be firm when they test the limits, and use effective discipline to enforce the limits. Through your consistency, your child will begin to feel safer.

In addition to helping your child feel safe and secure, discipline teaches children acceptable ways to behave by discouraging challenging behavior. Most kids learn acceptable ways to behave through their everyday experiences.

Sometimes small misbehaviors appear too small to warrant discipline. Why does anyone want to be so picky? You might think you are over-reacting. At the same time, those small things can add up quickly, and that's when things can escalate. For example, a towel on the bathroom floor one day might be no big deal. But after picking up wet towels for 3 or 4 days, you might get irritated. So, instead, taking a small privilege for a small behavior can be effective and avoid an escalation.

Some kids have learned to whine, nag, argue, and not mind to get what they want. In addition to not being very acceptable, these kinds of behaviors put kids at risk for other problems. Kids who have a lot of these kinds of challenging behaviors tend to get in trouble more, and people tend to shy away from them more. So, using limits and discipline (and lots of encouragement) can help teach your kids positive behaviors.

2. Overall Discipline Strategies

Remember, the best time to catch challenging behaviors is early, when they are small and when you are calm. The behavior escalation curve shows the teachable moments.

Another important thing to keep in mind as you discipline your child is to limit the amount of talking or lecturing that you do. Often, when parents lecture, kids aren't listening or they argue, parents get upset, and you both go up the escalation curve. Talking too much about challenging behavior also puts the focus, and your attention, on the challenging behavior. Talking is reinforcing and can have the opposite effect than you intended. It is more effective to use one of the discipline tactics we will cover and then consider the issue over and move on. Save the talking to reinforce and encourage!

If you think about your parents, you can probably remember times that they gave you a "look" or used guilt to discourage challenging behavior. This might not work with kids in foster care. Children with delayed development, poor social skills, or difficulty connecting with people often don't respond to social approval the same way other kids do. So, if you try to use the "look" that your parents used, they probably won't respond the way you did or the way that you want them to. However, they WILL respond to tangible rewards and consequences.

3. Using Time Out

We are going to look primarily at using Time Out this week. It is helpful to have a quick and easy strategy for dealing with challenging behavior. Time Out fits the bill.

Our form is short, just 5 minutes. If your child refuses to go, you remove a privilege for a short amount of time. The idea is to teach your child that it is better to go to Time Out for 5 minutes than lose 30 minutes of a privilege that they value. We'll work on this more next week.

4. Common Problems

Don't be surprised if you see an increase in challenging behavior when using Time Outs or other forms of discipline. This does not mean it isn't working. On the contrary, it is a sign that the method is working and that your child is testing how serious you are about using Time Out.

5. Home Practice

Continue using incentive charts.

Think about and prepare for using Time Out. Think about a place to go and what privileges to remove if your child refuses. Don't use Time Out this week unless you are already using it.

Understanding Discipline

Discipline ≠ Punishment

Discipline discourages behavior. Use discipline to reduce challenging behaviors. Use encouragement to promote positive behaviors.

Use small consequences. Small penalties are fair and easy to use consistently.

Act quickly. Quick response helps children connect their behavior with a consequence.

Pick your time. When you can, choose a time and place for discipline encounters.

Be contingent. Base consequences on children's behavior, not on your mood.

Be consistent. Consistent parents create consistently good behavior.

Be calm yet firm. Breathe. Count to 10. Don't match your emotions to your children's emotions. You are the parent.

Respond, don't react. Decide what you're going to do before you act.

Don't lecture. Lectures make parents feel better, but children don't listen.

Respect the child's personal space. Stay involved without getting too close.

Avoid threats. Threats teach children to push parents to their limit.

Avoid arguments. Talking to a child about challenging behavior when you are upset can make it worse. Talk later.

Don't demand promises. We all repeat mistakes. Next time the challenging behavior occurs, be consistent. Don't make children say they'll never do it again.

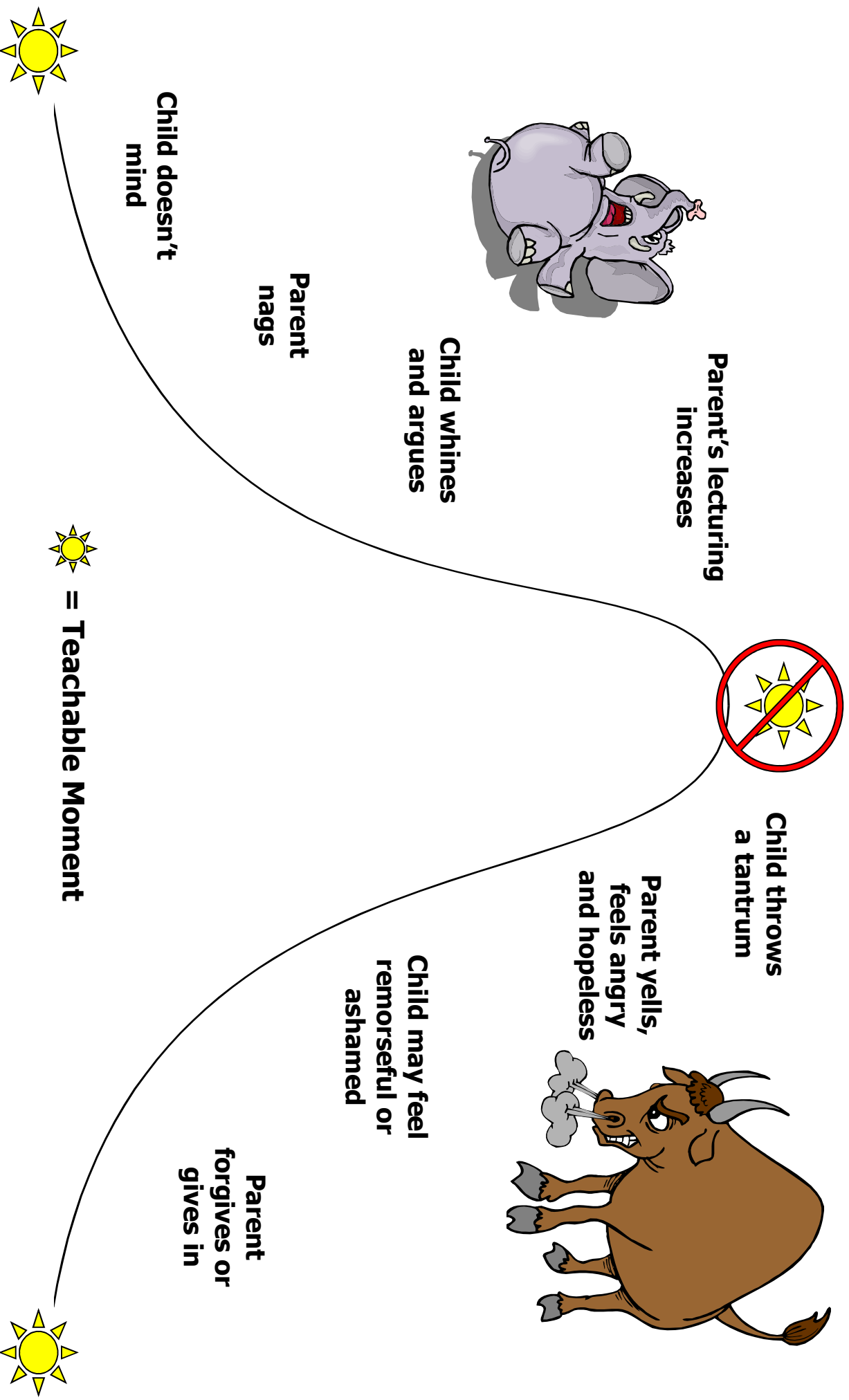
When it's over, let it go. Discipline cleans the slate. Don't hold grudges.

Present a united parenting front. Work together effectively.

Discipline is not revenge. Used effectively, discipline is a teaching tool.

Give 5 positive statements for each correction. Balance discipline with encouragement.

Behavior Escalation Curve



Preparing for Time Out

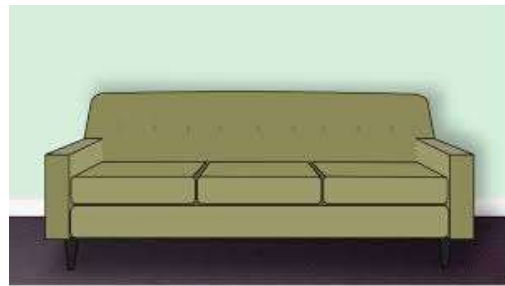
1. Select a place

Dull, safe, and away from attention.

NO



YES



2. Prepare the room

Remove fragile, dangerous, distracting, entertaining things.

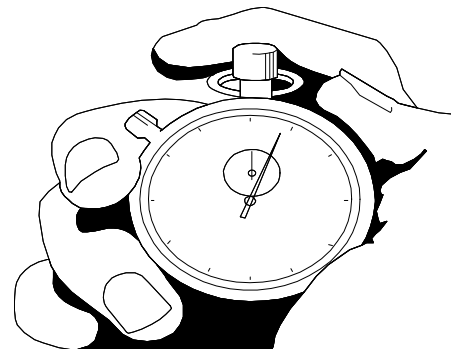
3. Plan back-up privileges you can control

Guidelines for Time Out

1. Select a place.
2. Prepare the place (e.g., remove distracting toys).
3. Explain the Time Out plan to your child.
4. Practice Time Out beforehand.
5. Be consistent.
6. Label the behavior that earns Time Out, e.g., “That’s not minding.”
7. Don’t talk to your child or children when they’re in Time Out.
8. Be calm or neutral when giving Time Out.
9. Use a timer.
10. Don’t lecture—Time Out is a quick teaching tool.

What to do when children refuse Time Out

1. Stay calm.
2. Remove privilege.



Time Out Sequence

- 1: “ (name) , do _____ now, please.”
✓ *Wait for your child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

- 2: (Child doesn't mind.)
“ (name) , do _____ now, please, or go to Time Out for 5 minutes.”
✓ *Wait for your child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

- 3: (Child doesn't mind.)
“**That's not minding. Go to Time Out for 5 minutes.**”
✓ *Wait for your child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

- 4: (Child doesn't go to Time Out.)
“**Go to Time Out for 5 minutes or no _____ (privilege) from _____ to _____.**”
✓ *Wait for the child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

- 5: (Child continues to refuse.)
“**Okay, no _____ (privilege) from _____ to _____.**”
✓ *Walk away. Do not discuss.*

Common Problems with Time Out

The first few times you use Time Out, your child's reaction may indicate it is fun. The novelty will soon wear off. Don't be surprised if, in fact, you see an increase in challenging behavior. This does not mean Time Out isn't working. Rather, it's a sign it's working and your child is testing how serious you are about using Time Out. The following are typical behaviors and reactions from children during Time Out.

1. Messes

Even when the Time Out room has been destruction-proofed, children can still find ways to make a mess. Your job is to remain calm and merely ask your child to clean up the mess before leaving Time Out. If they refuse to clean up, then it can turn into another Time Out.

2. Noisiness

Often children may go with a minimal protest, but then start yelling or making noise while they are in Time Out. What we recommend is telling your child Time Out will begin when they are quiet, and simply reset the timer when the quiet starts. The natural question that arises is *What if my child doesn't quiet down?* This brings up a bigger question of what to do when children either refuse to go or to settle down in Time Out. We recommend a privilege loss at that point.

3. "I'll do it now..."

It's common that once children have been given Time Out for not doing what they are told, they will say *I'll do it now, OK?* A good response for you to make is, *That's great, but first Time Out.* If you teach children that you will forgo Time Out because they've decided to agree, you are teaching them Time Out shouldn't be taken seriously, and you're teaching them not to mind until *you* react.

4. "I hate you."

Because you're taking control of the situation and putting a limit on their behavior, children will often be angry. They can say things that are hurtful or mean, and that can make you feel bad. Ignore statements like *I hate you.* They get you off track and create an emotional situation for both of you.

5. "Fine with me, I like Time Out."

Another equally common ploy, but one that doesn't hurt as much, is *I don't care, I like Time Out.* **The trick for you is not to measure the effectiveness of Time Out by the kind of reaction that your child has to it.** If you get involved in discussing these kinds of reactions, it prolongs the process, leads to an emotional exchange, and—most importantly—your child isn't going to Time Out.

WHAT IF?

What if my spouse/partner will not use Time Out?

Discussing types of discipline that will be used in the home is an important parent issue. When parents cannot form a united front, children often play one parent against the other, making more work for parents and less compliance for children.

What if my child says, “I don’t care,” or “I like Time Out,” or “My friends don’t do this”?

These are all common things children say. Ignore them and don’t base your discipline on what your child says. Be confident that you are using an effective consequence that, when applied consistently, changes children’s behavior.

What if I get so angry that I combine Time Out with yelling?

Time Out is a brief, mild consequence that works best when applied calmly and not combined with harsher parent reactions. Remember, if you get upset, you’re not in control of the situation; your child is.

What if my relatives feel I’m being too hard on my children when I send them to Time Out for a minor compliance issue?

Noncompliance is not a minor issue. Let your relatives know that this is how you plan to handle situations like not minding, and you aren’t looking for advice on this matter.

What if my child misbehaves outside while playing with friends, and when told to go into the house for a Time Out, they refuse?

The first thing to remember is not to set up a situation where you are arguing with your child. You can give them the option of going in for a Time Out or losing a privilege such as not going outside after dinner.

Discipline Strategies—Summary

1. Summarizing Time Out

Time Out is a quick teaching tool. You can respond to challenging behaviors immediately with Time Out. You can use it almost anywhere. It gets your child's attention and helps them to learn that you want them to mind. If you are consistent and follow through every time, your child will learn how you want them to behave.

Time Out is not hard to do, but it does require some planning. Remember to:

- Label the behavior
- Keep track of the time (use a timer or watch)
- Avoid talking
- Stay neutral
- Be consistent
- When it's over, it's over

2. Explaining Time Out to Children

It is important to explain to your child in advance how Time Out is going to work. You'll want to practice it a time or two so that your child knows exactly what to expect.

3. Privilege Loss

Let's look at what to do if your child refuses to go to Time Out. Here are some things to keep in mind about using privilege loss:

- Privilege loss is relatively short (30 minutes).
- It strengthens Time Out.

- It happens soon after the discipline interaction.
- Make sure it is a privilege you can remove without negatively impacting other family members.
- Make sure it is something you can control without a struggle.
- Don't remove: a privilege or event that was earned as a reward for positive behavior (e.g. birthday party or friend's visit); or a positive experience such as team sports participation, learning experience, or cultural experience.

4. Common Problems

If used consistently, Time Out and privilege loss can be very powerful. Like any new routine, you and your child will need time to adjust to using Time Out and privilege loss. Sometimes parents are hesitant to give a Time Out because they want to give their child another chance. They warn the child that if they don't stop doing something there will be a Time Out. It is best to avoid warnings completely. If you give one warning, you probably will give another, and then another, and pretty soon you are upset or feeling angry. Remember, Time Out is not torture, it is teaching.

5. Extra Chores

Another form of discipline that has been found to be effective is *extra* chores you give as a consequence for challenging behavior. Extra chores can be especially effective for older children. Extra chores can also be used together with a privilege loss.

6. Home Practice

Introduce Time Out and use it at least once during the week.

Explaining Time Out to Children

“We’re working on _____ (describe behavior) _____.”

When you don’t do what I ask, you go to Time Out.

Time Out means you go to _____ (name of room/place) _____ for 5 minutes.

If you don’t go, or if you argue, you will lose a privilege.

When Time Out or privilege loss is over, we’re done and can move on.

Any questions? Let’s practice how it works!”

Practicing Time Out

“I’m going to ask you to do something—don’t do it! When you don’t, I’m going to tell you to go to Time Out. When I tell you to go to Time Out, go to _____ (name of room/place) _____. Ready?”

_____ (name) _____, do _____ (task) _____ now, please.

✓ *Wait for the child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

_____ (name) _____, do _____ (task) _____ now, please, or go to Time Out for 5 minutes.

✓ *Wait for the child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

_____ (name) _____, that’s not minding, go take a 5 minute Time Out.”

Praise your child when they practice going to the Time Out spot

“Now I’m going to tell you to go to Time Out again, and we will practice what will happen if you don’t go. This time, when I tell you to go to Time Out, don’t go so we can see what happens. Ready?”

_____ (name) _____, that’s not minding, go take a 5 minute Time Out.

✓ *Wait for your child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

Go to Time Out for 5 minutes or no _____ (privilege) _____ from _____ to _____.”

✓ *Wait for the child to comply for up to 10 seconds*

Okay, no _____ (privilege) _____ from _____ to _____.”

✓ *Walk away. Do not discuss.*

Preparing for Privilege Loss

- Privilege loss strengthens Time Out.
- Privilege loss is longer and stronger than 5 minutes in Time Out.
- Privilege loss is relatively short (30 minutes, for example).
- Privilege loss happens soon after the discipline interaction.

Identify several privileges that children enjoy and parents control.

Consider whether or not you are willing and able to withhold this privilege:

- ❖ Will it negatively impact other family members?
- ❖ Can you control it without a struggle?

Examples of Backup Privileges to Remove

TABLET

PLAYING WITH FRIEND

TV/MOVIE/STREAMING VIDEO

DESSERT

BIKE

TREATS

SKATEBOARD

BOARD GAME

STUFFED ANIMAL

OTHER SPORTS EQUIPMENT

BALLS

VIDEO GAMES (take controller)

*Make sure the privilege is something you can control, and that the
privilege is meaningful.*

List of Privileges to Remove

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Understanding Privilege Loss

Privilege loss serves as a backup for Time Out and extra chores. When youngsters refuse these penalties, the parent provides a slightly stronger consequence. The use of privilege loss has the same qualities of smaller consequences: short, paired closely in time with the challenging behavior, and administered calmly.

Qualities of candidates for privilege loss:

- Small and relatively short
- Stronger than the original penalty
- Easy for parents to control
- Not something earned through positive behavior (e.g., not team sport practice or game)

Parenting tricks to strengthen privilege loss:

- Have several back-up privileges for difficult situations:
 - ❖ *If your child is watching TV, can you turn it off without a physical conflict?*
 - If the answer is yes, carry on.
 - If the answer is no, remove a different privilege.
- Ignore “I don’t care” statements.
- It can feel mean to remove a privilege. Remember, your child had the chance to take a smaller penalty.

Barriers to Effective Discipline

The following is a list of typical barriers to effective discipline.

1. *"I don't set limits until I'm really mad."*

What to Do: If you wait until you're mad, you'll be feeling rather than thinking. Try to use discipline at the first sign of challenging behavior.

2. *"When I get mad, I just start yelling, and my children don't listen."*

What to Do: Your children are hearing your anger rather than the correction you're trying to provide. Take time to calm down—take a deep breath, count slowly to 10, or even walk away for a few minutes—then come back and set a limit in a neutral tone of voice.

3. *"I often give more than one consequence." (For example, removing a privilege and sending to room.)*

What to Do: This can happen when parents are upset and the challenging behavior has gone on for a while. Remember: catch problems early!

4. *"I find myself reacting and not knowing what to do."*

What to Do: By consistently using Time Out, you have a plan of action each time your child has challenging behavior.

5. *"Sometimes it's just not worth the hassle, and I let the behavior slide."*

What to Do: Because of being tired, stressed, upset, and just being human, none of us are 100% consistent in our discipline. A reasonable goal to strive for is to be consistent at least 80% of the time.

6. *"I threaten consequences but don't follow through."*

What to Do: The danger of using threats is that parents often feel they are doing something when they threaten. Don't threaten—set a limit.

EXAMPLES OF LONG AND SHORT EXTRA CHORES

Short Chores

1. Clean kitchen sink or bathroom sink
2. Sweep floor
3. Clean mirror in bathroom
4. Empty dishwasher
5. Fold one load of laundry
6. Vacuum carpet in one room
7. Dust one room
8. Wipe down one wall
9. Sweep front or back sidewalk
10. Clean tub or shower
11. Clean out a kitchen cabinet
12. Wipe down kitchen cabinets
13. Scrub floor
14. Polish furniture
15. Water plants
16. Clean out garbage can
17. Pick up litter in yard
18. Take out garbage

Long Chores

1. Wash dishes
2. Bring in firewood
3. Wash windows
4. Clean mold off tiles in shower
5. Clean baseboards
6. Scrub the outside of pots and pans
7. Rake leaves
8. Pull weeds
9. Clean out the refrigerator

List of Extra Chores

Description:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

Balancing Encouragement and Limit Setting—Summary

1. Review: Fine Tuning Limit Setting

We reviewed key points about using setting limits. The best time to catch challenging behaviors is early, when they are small. Time Out paired with privilege loss can be a powerful strategy for dealing with challenging behaviors. Here are some reminders about how to use Time Out and privilege loss effectively:

- Stay neutral and avoid lecturing—talking too much puts the attention on the challenging behavior
- Be consistent—avoid giving warnings
- Remove privileges that are meaningful and that you can control without a struggle

Setting limits is an important part of being a parent. When children know what the limits are, they feel safer. Remember, it is normal for challenging behavior to increase as your child tests how serious you are about using Time Out and other forms of limit setting.

2. Review: Fine Tuning Incentive Charts

We also reviewed the key points of charts. Charts are a tool for you to stay on track with behaviors you are trying to change, and they make your expectations clear for your child. Charts also help you remember to encourage your child as they make progress! Here are some good questions to ask yourself after using a chart for a few weeks:

- Did I check the behavior often enough? Does this have to happen once per day or more often?
- Was the behavior broken down into small enough steps so my child could be successful?
- Did I encourage what had been accomplished?

- Did I provide an incentive if it was earned?
- Does anything need to be added or dropped to make the chart or agreement better?

Remember, parents are in charge of charts, encouragement systems, and limit setting strategies, and can change them up if/when needed. Keep in mind that children will focus on what you focus on. If you only focus on the challenging behavior you will probably get more of it. Be sure to give lots of encouragement too.

3. Balancing Encouragement and Limit Setting

Some children have a hard time minding. Teaching children to mind can be like teaching a new skill. There are some steps to help you teach your child to mind or do something new. You'll notice that now we will use encouragement and limit setting together to teach something new or make improvements. Let's look at a few examples.

Let's say you want your child to put their dishes to the sink when they are finished with their meal. You've told them to do it, but it just isn't happening on a regular basis.

1. Sit down with your child and tell them that you want them to take their dishes to the sink after every meal.
2. Let them know they can earn a sticker for each time they put their dishes in the sink. Decide how many stickers they have to earn in order to get a special privilege (later bedtime, special treat, etc.).
3. Let them know that when they forget to do it, there will be a consequence (less TV time, earlier bed time, etc.).
4. Set your child up for success the first few times by reminding them at the beginning of the meal of the new rule about their dishes when they are done.
5. When your child follows through, acknowledge and praise them.

Remember, it will take time and patience to teach your child to behave in a new way. You wouldn't expect your child to learn to ride a bike or play a new game with just one explanation, so be patient while they are learning to behave differently. If you are consistent with a good combination of encouragement and limit setting, you will see results.

Sometimes, when you are working on a big change that is difficult for your child, you may have to encourage efforts or small steps toward the goal. The end goal may be too big for your child to get all at once.

Let's say your child has a habit of talking back and giving you surly looks when you ask them to do something. Your child does what you ask, but you want them to do it without talking or making faces. Since this is something your child does without even thinking, it is going to be hard to change overnight. You've gone through the steps and have come up with incentives and consequences, but your child is having a hard time earning the rewards. You may have to reward them for what you may think is partial success. Let's say your child still grumbles at you, but doesn't make an ugly face at you. Reward that effort. Look for and acknowledge behaviors that they are doing well.

4. Home Practice

Try to teach your child a different way to behave using a combination of incentives and limit setting.

Steps to Minding

1. Identify the Positive Behavior

What do you want your child to do?

2. Set up a Rule

Tell your child the reward for minding.

3. Set your Child up for Success

Remind your child of the rule when needed.

4. Give Encouragement

When your child minds, notice it and encourage it.

- ✓ Encouragement
- ✓ Praise
- ✓ Reward

5. Set a Limit

If your child does not mind, give the consequence.

- ✓ Give a Time Out
- ✓ Remove a Privilege

Power Struggles—Summary

1. Power Struggles

Difficult child behavior can wear down the most skilled and caring parents. Avoiding power struggles is important. When adults don't engage in power struggles, you teach your child that you are not going to focus on the negative stuff on their terms. But as we all know, staying out of power struggles is easier said than done. We will go over techniques that can help. But first, let's define what a power struggle is.

Power Struggle: When you ask your child to do something, they refuse or are openly defiant, and you engage in a back and forth struggle to get them to comply to your request.

2. Making Requests in Ways that Avoid Power Struggles

We've probably all been engaged in power struggles. Kids seem to have a way of pushing our buttons and getting us to argue with them.

One good way to avoid getting into a power struggle with your child is to ask your child to do something in a way that limits their choices. Don't leave it open-ended and give them the option not to do what you want them to. For example, only say, "Do you want to take a nap now?" if it really is an option for your child to say, "no, I don't want to." If it is not an option for your child to skip the nap, don't frame it like it is. If you frame your requests as an option, be prepared for your child to refuse.

It helps to avoid open-ended requests when you want your child to do something. If you want your child to do their homework, tell them that it is time to do homework now. Don't say, "Would you like to do your homework now?" or "How about if you get started on your homework now?" When making a request, state the desired outcome.

You can give your child some choice, but be sure you ask the question in a way that all of the responses are acceptable to you. For example, let's say you want your child to

start their homework sometime in the next hour. You could say, “You need to start on your homework. You can either do it now, or you can wait a little bit, but you have to start before 5:00.” You did not give them the option of not doing it—only the option of when to start.

3. The Behavior Escalation Curve and Teachable Moments

Be aware of good times and harder times to address challenging behaviors with your children. We call the ends of the behavior escalation curve, when emotions are under control and stable, “teachable moments.” In the typical scene shown in the curve, there are two good “teachable moments” at the bottom of the curve and a lot of other moments above that when it would be pretty pointless to try and solve a problem. In both the uphill and downhill sides of the curve, you and your child are engaged in a power struggle, and emotions are too high to accomplish anything.

4. Walking Away from a Power Struggle

One way that parents can stop the behavior escalation is by walking away from the power struggle—without giving up on correcting their child’s behavior. Remember, you don’t have to “win” in the moment. Instead, you can give your child a clear direction and walk away from an argument. If your child doesn’t do as they are asked, you can deliver the consequence at a calmer time. Children are not likely to hear us when they are upset and moving up the behavior curve so give a consequence later at a calm, teachable moment.

5. Disengaging from Power Struggles

No matter how hard we focus and try to avoid power struggles, there will still be times we find ourselves being pulled into one. Let’s look at your options once you are in a power struggle or when you seem to be headed that way.

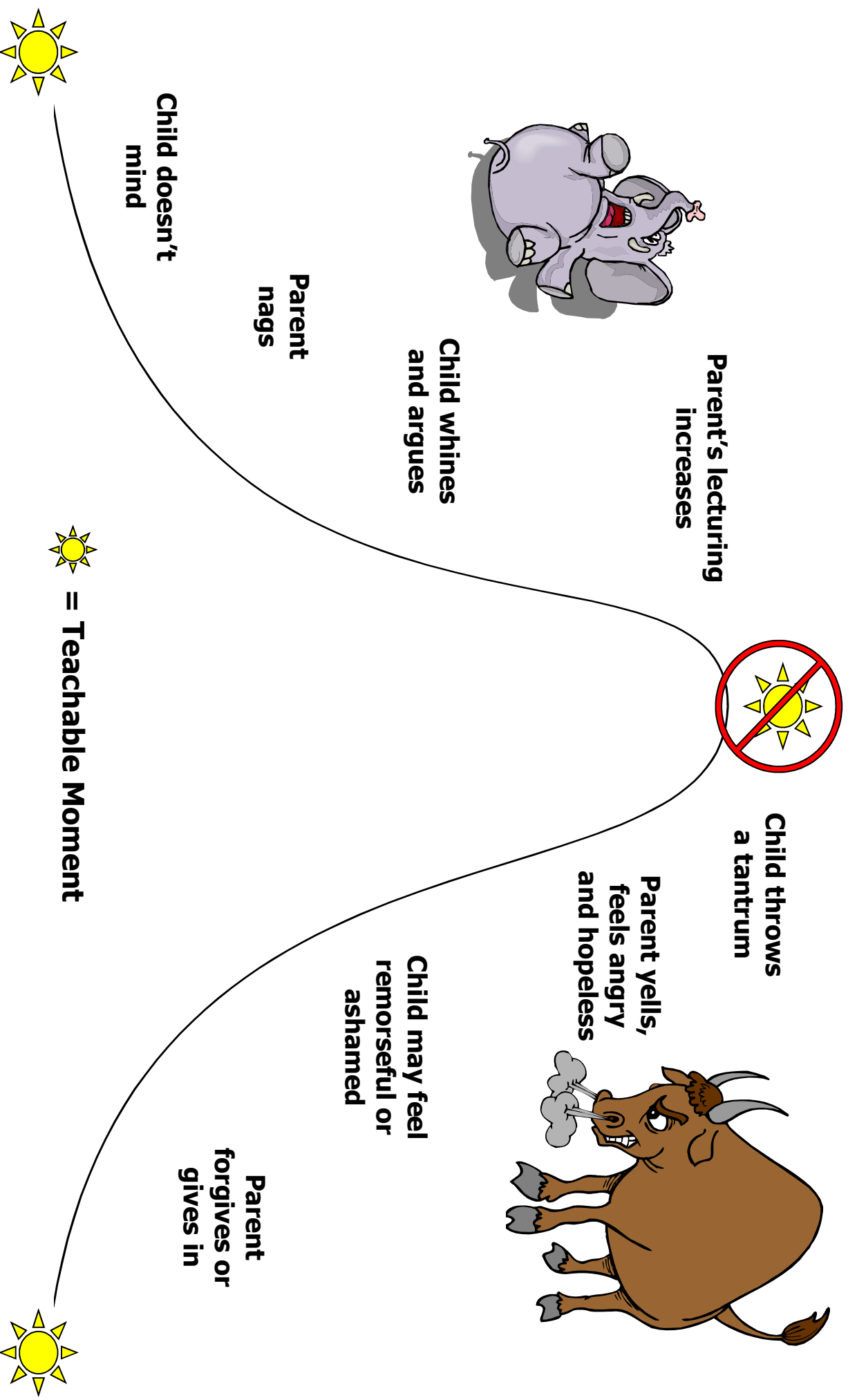
- Give yourself credit for noticing the struggle. This is often the hardest part!
- Ask your child to do something in a way that limits their choices. If you want your child to do their homework, give them choices that are acceptable to you.
- If your child argues with you, say nothing, do nothing, say “hmm.” By saying something completely neutral, you’ve let your child know you have heard them, and that you aren’t going to respond any further.
- Walk away and remove the audience. Your attention is a powerful reinforcement. This can be hard to do, but very effective.

- Give a consequence later. Remember, you don't have to "win" in the moment. Come back later when things are calm and tell your child what they did wrong and give a consequence for it.
- Do something for yourself for 5 minutes so you can regain composure. Go to your bedroom and read a magazine, have a cup of tea, etc. Do something to take the focus off the situation and give yourself a chance to get calm.
- Don't lecture—talking fuels the fire.
- Don't argue with your child. Remember, arguing about not minding is about arguing, not minding.
- Think about power struggle situations in advance and make a plan for how you will handle them. If you have no plan—you are on their plan.
- If your child follows and tries to argue with you after you walk away, find something to do and don't argue with them! Some parents turn on the vacuum or start reading a magazine.
- Don't forget to know your limits—we all have them.

6. Home Practice

Use at least one Parent Power Tool this week when you find yourself becoming engaged in an argument or power struggle with your child.

Behavior Escalation Curve



Practicing Walking Away from a Power Struggle

Remember these skills:

1. Give a clear direction.
2. Do not explain why the child needs to do the task.
3. Walk away after the second time giving a clear direction and the child refusing, and give a consequence at a calmer time.

Practice Example:

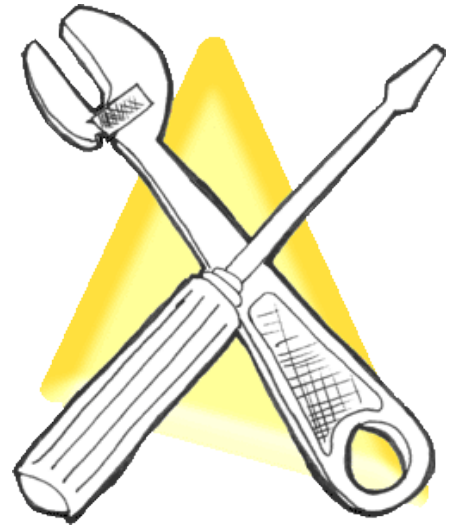
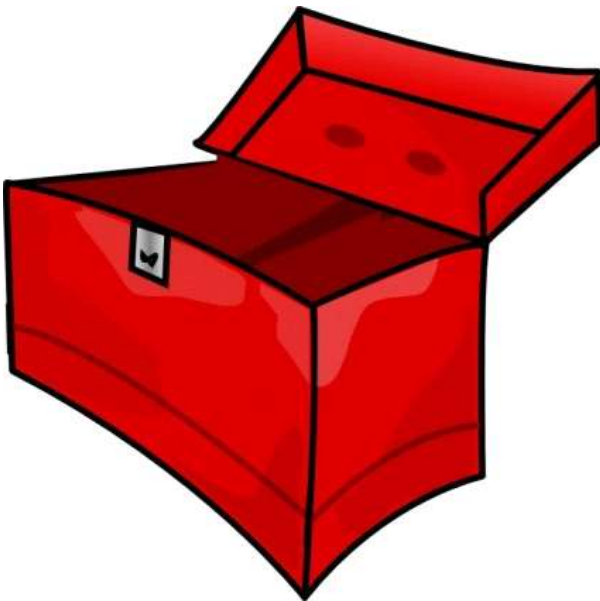
“ (name) , please go make your bed.” *(Your child might argue or say they will do it later.)*

“ (name) , go make your bed now.”

✓ *Parent walks out of the room.*

PARENT POWER TOOLS

1. Say nothing, do nothing, say, “huh.”
2. Walk away and remove the audience. The parent’s attention is a powerful reinforcement.
3. Consequences can happen later. Do something for yourself for 5 minutes so you can regain composure.



**REMEMBER:
NO PLAN IS THEIR PLAN.**

**ARGUING ABOUT NOT MINDING IS ABOUT
ARGUING...NOT MINDING.**

Pre-Teaching—Summary

1. Obstacles to Limit Setting in Public

Have you ever been in a situation where your child acts up and you feel self-conscious about your limit setting techniques or your child's behavior? What is it that makes us feel awkward in public?

- Fear of looking silly
- Embarrassment that your child “should” act better
- Fear of failing and causing a big scene
- What else?

2. Benefits of Pre-Teaching

What is pre-teaching?

Pre-teaching is a really great tool that you can use in all kinds of different situations. You are probably already doing it without even realizing it. It involves anticipating a situation that might be difficult for your child, and then practicing (role-playing) it ahead of time with them. Some really common difficult situations are:

- Sharing at a birthday party
- Meeting new people
- Stopping play and putting your stuff in the car
- Going to the store
- Others?

What are the advantages of pre-teaching?

- Pre-teaching sets your child up for success
- It makes expectations clear
- It gives an opportunity for practice
- It sets you up to notice success and reinforce it
- It gives you an opportunity to help kids be safe

3. How to Pre-Teach

The basic idea is to break skills down into small steps and list them for your child. And finally, practice the steps and reinforce them for their practice.

4. Home Practice

Try pre-teaching at least once this week.

Example of Pre-Teaching

Identify a Situation: Going to the store

State Your Expectations:

- ✓ Stay by the cart
- ✓ Use an inside voice
- ✓ If you ask for something and I say “no,” I want you to say “okay.”

Set up a Time to Teach:

Go to the store when you don't have plans to get things accomplished and practice.

Practice and Reward Effort:

State the expectations: “When we go into the store, I want you to stay by the cart, use an inside voice, and if you ask for something and I say ‘no,’ I want you to say ‘okay.’”

Choose an appropriate reward for success:

- ✓ Small treat from the store
- ✓ Sticker
- ✓ Stars on chart
- ✓ Game with you later



Pay attention to effort and praise often:

- ✓ I appreciate you staying by the cart!
- ✓ Great job using your inside voice!
- ✓ I'm proud of you for saying “okay” when I said “no.”

Super-Tough Behaviors—Summary

1. Super-Tough Behaviors

We have learned a lot of strategies for dealing with children’s challenging behaviors. However, there may be some behaviors you feel you can’t change or are especially difficult to change. Also, there may be some behaviors that really get to you, that really upset you. We call those “super-tough” behaviors. Some of the most common super-tough behaviors are:

Sexualized behavior

Lying

Stealing

Bedwetting

These behaviors can be difficult to address because:

1. We tend to feel more emotional.
2. We may be embarrassed by the behavior.
3. They are often hidden, and we find out later that they happened.
4. They can put children at risk (e.g., social, legal, or safety risks).

One of the things that makes lying and stealing so difficult to deal with is that they are covert behaviors. That is, you don’t know when they are happening or not happening. Unless you catch someone in the act, it is hard to know for sure whether they have lied or stolen. That makes it really hard to teach to, reward, or set limits around. You can’t effectively reward someone for NOT lying or NOT stealing, because you may find out later that they HAVE done those things, and you just didn’t know about it.

2. Make a Plan

The steps for making a plan with these super-tough behaviors are not that different from what you would do with any behavior you want to change. However, you may wish to

remove yourself for a few minutes because when we are upset we are in danger of making harsh decisions about discipline.

1. Track and observe the behavior: when it happens, under what circumstances, etc.
2. Identify what you want your child to do (pro-social opposite).
3. Set up a reward or limit.
4. Stay calm and matter of fact.

Let's look at pro-social opposites. In the case of lying and stealing or other unseen behaviors, it is hard to be specific about what you want your child to NOT do, and it is hard to know if they are NOT doing it. It may work better to think about the pro-social opposite of these super-tough behaviors. The pro-social opposite is what you want your child TO do.

3. Special Circumstances

For things like bedwetting and sexualized behavior, you may need to develop a plan that is very specific to each child and their behavior. It is harder to take a "one size fits all" approach with these kinds of tough behaviors.

Some ideas for addressing bedwetting include teaching and reinforcing children to tell an adult, take a shower, and change their bedding.

Some ideas for addressing sexualized behavior include making the environment safer by: having no blankets on couches, keeping doors open when friends are over, and monitoring screens.

There are also some general strategies that we can apply to behaviors like lying and stealing. We can teach children how to act in a way that shows responsibility and does not draw suspicion.

Lying can be difficult to address because often there is no physical evidence of the behavior. Avoid confronting your child about whether or not they are telling the truth. Rather, when you suspect your child might not be telling the truth, verify it.

Your child says "My teacher said that we don't have any homework today because we got it all done in class." You say "OK" and then call/email the teacher to verify the information. If your child lied, give a consequence for lying.

If you are concerned that your child is stealing, you may make a house rule: always have a note or receipt for anything you bring home. If the child doesn't have a note or receipt, the parent will hold onto the item until the child can show they bought it or it was given to them.

For lying and stealing, don't ask what you know! If you know they lied or stole, give a consequence. When you ask them, you set them up to lie.

4. Tips to Remember

Below are a few things to remember when dealing with "super-tough" behaviors.

- ✓ Stay calm. Leave the emotion out.
- ✓ Remember that it isn't personal.
- ✓ Focus on teaching a more acceptable or positive behavior.
- ✓ Set limits on the challenging behavior, but avoid paying too much attention to it. Remember, attention reinforces!
- ✓ Don't label your child a "liar," "bed wetter," etc. That only reinforces the challenging behavior. Instead, focus on the situations that support more acceptable or positive behavior.
- ✓ Telling tall tales can be a normal part of development. Making up stories may be socially awkward, but it is not worth paying a lot of attention to. Ignore it unless it is causing problems.
- ✓ Children in foster care sometimes exaggerate how wonderful their biological parents are. It's best to ignore it.
- ✓ Sometimes you may not see your child's behavior directly, but you can see enough evidence of the behavior to give a consequence. For example, if you told your child not to eat the cookies, and later you see an empty cookie plate and crumbs on your child's shirt, you can give a consequence.
- ✓ Letting your child know that you might check pockets, bags, or stories can help if there is a problem or concern. By doing the checking, you are creating a safe environment for your child.
- ✓ Avoid the temptation to set traps to catch your kids lying or stealing. It only encourages the negative behavior.
- ✓ Know when to get help. If your child's super-tough behavior is new to you, talk to your caseworker or other professional for guidance.

5. Home Practice

Continue using the chart, contract, or informal agreements that you are using.

If you identify a super-tough behavior, make a plan! Identify the pro-social opposite and set a limit. Add the plan to the incentive chart if appropriate.

Promoting School Success—Summary

1. Promoting School Success

School is a big part of every child's life. Studies show that kids who are successful at school tend to be more successful in the rest of their lives. Achieving success at school will help children feel a sense of accomplishment and boost their self-esteem. Parental attention is a powerful tool that can be used to promote success at school. You probably already do most of the things on the handout. Are there other things that you think should be added to this list?

2. Communication

Does anyone have ideas about effective ways to communicate with your child's school? How do you find out what the teacher expects of your child? How do you find out what the classroom rules are? What are the rules around homework?

It can be especially hard on kids to change schools in the middle of the year. What things have you done to make it easier?

3. Routine

It's good to have a regular routine for studying. Having a regular routine also takes the hassle out of trying to determine whether there is homework due or not. The key to success in making this a daily routine is to require that your child sit and read or do other school-like work even if they do not have homework.

4. Tracking

The forms from this session might help you and your child keep track of homework and break study skills down into small steps. Using these kinds of tools will help you stay organized.

5. Encouraging

The goal is to pay positive attention to the effort (even if it is small) that your child makes in school. Sometimes talking with them about what they are actually doing in their schoolwork is a good way to do this. Review the handouts for some tips for asking questions to get more information out of your child.

6. Home Practice

This week, plan a home study routine. Make it short and simple. Explain it to your child. Identify a small incentive if they complete it each day. You can add it to their incentive chart or use the Success Worksheet.

How to Promote School Success

You play an important role in helping your child succeed at school.

Answer “yes” or “no” to the following questions to help you think more about how you can promote your child’s school success at home.

Do I talk with my child about the importance of school? _____

Do I have a regular time for my child to do homework or other learning activities? _____

Do I have a regular place for my child to do homework or other learning activities? _____

Do I make that a quiet time and free from distractions? _____

Do I check each day to see if my child has homework? _____

Do I ask my child if help with homework is needed? _____

What else do I do?

Creating a Home Study Routine

Decide how much time is necessary each day.

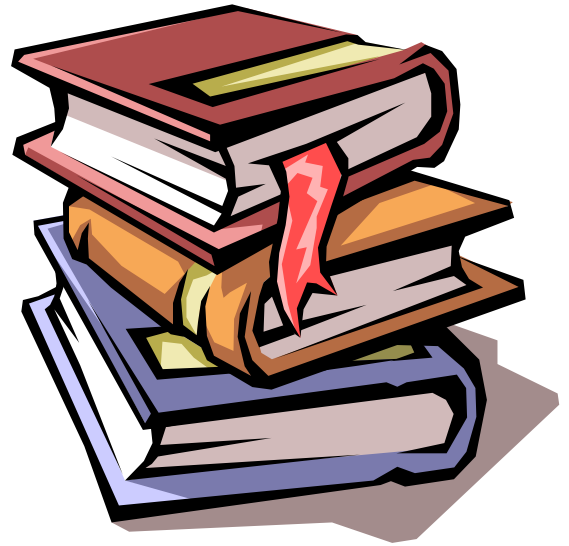
We recommend that the study time start at 15 minutes each day.

Provide a good setting for studying.

Choose a quiet place that has good lighting, a clear working space, and few interruptions. Don't allow siblings, phone calls, television, or varying schedules to interfere. Be flexible. If a study area doesn't work out well, change it after a one-week trial.

Make regular study time a priority.

Set a regular time when your child goes to the study place. At first, this may require parents to restructure the after school or evening family routines. Plan alternative study times in advance when special events will interfere with the regular schedule.



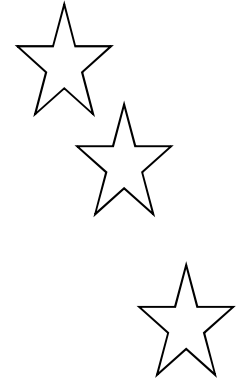
Be present during study time.

Children need constant reinforcement and guidance during their study time. This can be a time that parents and their children look forward to spending together.

Encourage study time five days a week.

In preparation for middle school, elementary school students need to practice study skills and develop positive work habits. Even when there is no assigned schoolwork, children can spend time reading or doing another school-like activity.

SUCCESS WORKSHEET



Week of: _____ Study Time: _____ Length of Study Time: _____ Study Place: _____
--

TASK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
1. Bring home schoolwork					
2. Organize schoolwork					
3. Fill out assignment sheet					
4. Show assignment to parent					
5. Work at designated study place					
6. Start studying on time					
7. Complete full study time					
8. Make progress during study time					

Guidelines for Talking with Your Child about School

Often, parents learn a lot when they listen between the lines. Children like to talk, and may want to tell you a lot of details. Remember, most of what they are saying is information about how they're thinking and experiencing life. By listening to what they have to say, you can learn many things about your child.

This format is helpful for teaching your child to provide information about school.

1. Ask a specific question.

THIS: What did you do to help make the map of your school?

NOT: How did it go today?



2. Focus with 100% attention

Make sure you have 5 minutes when you're not watching TV, cooking, or busy with another task.

3. Listen

If you want your child to talk, you need to listen. Don't interrupt and don't interpret. If you're unsure, ask another question.

THIS: Have you thought about the materials you'll need for the volcano?

NOT: Don't make a mess when you make the volcano.

Promoting Positive Peer Relations— Summary

1. Getting Started: Supervise and Observe

Friendships are really important to kids, and parents are in a great position to help children learn how to get along with other kids and be liked by them. Learning and practicing new social skills will help them to have happier and more fulfilling friendships. Knowing how to make and keep friends is something that will have benefits for the rest of their lives. However, children need to be taught how to do this.

The first step towards teaching your child the social skills they need to make and maintain friendships is supervision and observation. By supervising and observing your children with their peers you will not only keep them safe, but you will see first-hand what kinds of skills your child has and the skills they need to work on. Start out by including peers in family activities and getting to know them by having them over to your house. Watch how your child speaks and behaves toward other children, and how those children speak and behave toward your child.

2. Teaching New Social Skills

After you supervise and observe your child with their peers, you will have a much better idea about where to begin.

When you observe your child's peer interactions and see that your child needs to learn a social skill, you can follow the same steps that you would use with any other challenging behavior. First, identify the challenging behavior, then identify the pro-social opposite.

3. Pre-Teaching

Once you've identified what you want to teach, follow these steps to pre-teach your child to use the desired social skill. For example, you might have a child who is working on sharing:

- State the goal and make your expectations clear to your child. For example, "When your friend comes over, I want you to let them choose the game you are going to play."
- Practice the skill with your child. You can do this either while playing with your child or through role-playing, such as pretending to be your child's friend.
- Reinforce their efforts, even if not perfect, during each practice.

Finally, catch them "being good" (doing what you pre-taught them to do) while they are with their friends. You can either encourage them in the moment by thanking them for sharing or cooperating with their friend, or after the friend leaves, you can let them know how well they did and offer a small reward if you want.

4. Encouraging Positive Peer Involvement

Knowing your child's friends and acquaintances can help you encourage pro-social friendships and also limit potentially negative peer relationships. Some children might struggle to make friends. Parents play an important role in modeling and teaching social skills to help children build friendships with positive peers.

Specifically, parents can help children develop positive social skills that will help them to initiate and maintain positive relationships throughout their lives.

You can encourage positive peer involvement in several ways:

- Identify their positive peers and encourage contact with them.
- Practice social skills and skills for resolving conflict.
- Invite positive peers to join you for family activities.
- Encourage your child to try out different extracurricular activities.
- During the summer, keep your child busy with supervised activities that allow for positive peer involvement, such as summer camps, youth groups, and sports teams.
- Encourage older children to be mentors or tutors at school (some schools have identified mentors for other students) or through community organizations (e.g., junior camp counselors).
- You can be an example: model positive peer relationships through your own social relationships.

5. Setting Expectations for Being with Friends

In addition to helping children learn specific social skills, it is also important to create a safe and supportive environment in which children can play. Thus, it is helpful to set some clear house rules about peer interactions. These rules can apply to all family members as well. Some examples of rules you might want to use are:

- Be gentle: no wrestling or rough-housing. Kids often don't know when to stop. If they have histories of being abused, this problem can be compounded. Having a rule about no rough and tumble play helps to give your child a clear limit.
- If you play in your room with a friend, keep the door open. This keeps your child safe and helps prevent sneaky or inappropriate behavior.
- Get parent permission before exchanging games or other things. That means your child is not allowed to bring home things from friend's houses or give them their things without you knowing about it *beforehand*. This helps prevent stealing and lying.
- Use an inside voice.
- Ask for things in another room, away from friends. Pre-teach that if they ask for something in front of friends, you will say no. This keeps you from being put on the spot and agreeing to things you might not normally.

To make sure that everyone is clear on what the rules are, you can use the handout to go over the rules with all family members.

6. Home Practice

Observe your child playing with another child and answer the following questions:

- What positive skills does your child have?
- What social skills does your child need to learn? Be specific in your descriptions.

Pick a quiet time and role-play or practice the skill you want your child to use with their friends. If time permits, try to observe your child again and catch them using this skill, and praise them for it.

House Rules for Having Friends Over

- ✓ Bedroom door stays open.
- ✓ Ask permission before borrowing toys.
- ✓ Toys and belongings stay here unless given permission to leave.
- ✓ Safe play means no rough-housing.
- ✓ Ask for permission for things in private.
(overnights, dinner, snacks, etc.)

✓ _____

✓ _____

✓ _____

Stress and Managing It—Summary

1. Feeling Stressed

It is no wonder that with so much going on foster and kin parents get stressed from time to time. It is a good idea to develop some strategies for dealing with stress, as over time stress can lead to a serious case of burnout as well as physical and emotional issues. Here are a few ways to know if stress is getting to you:

- Are you tired all the time?
- Are you noticing more minor health problems (stomach or headaches, etc.)?
- Do you feel more sad or irritable than usual?
- How is your motivation level?
- Do you feel like you can never catch up—that you need more hours in the day?

2. Stress Relief Strategies

When you start feeling these ways, it is time to focus on yourself and what helps you RELAX.

Everyone's needs are different. What makes one person feel refreshed and relaxed may make another person anxious. Sometimes a 5-minute breather will do the trick; sometimes you need more of a vacation.

Here are some ideas:

- Keep a journal—write about your day, what went well, what didn't, how did you feel, what are your hopes and dreams, etc.
- Exercise—walk around the neighborhood, lift weights, stretch, ride a bike, etc.
- Set the timer for 5-20 minutes, and announce you will be in your room undisturbed for that time. Do something you enjoy: read, listen to music, sing, take a bath, etc.
- Watch a funny movie with your kids or listen to music with them.

- Work on a hobby.
- Go out with a friend or call a friend on the phone.
- Keep a magazine or book in the car to read while you are waiting at the doctor's office, school, etc.
- Learn to let the little stuff go! The spices in your cabinet do not have to be alphabetized!
- Do things that make routine tasks more efficient so that you spend less time on them.
- Don't forget to take a lunch break.
- Cook your favorite dinner.
- Skip the laundry and go to bed an hour early.

Start to develop a support network. Who do you know that can watch your kids when you need a break? Are there other parents you can swap time with? What other family do you know that would be fun to have family get-togethers with? Who do you know that you can call when you are having a bad day?

3. Home Practice

This week take time to do something for yourself. Let us know how it goes.