

## GENERAL REMINDERS

### *You are NOT alone.*

All children misbehave and break rules. They are learning about the world. Children are constantly watching what you do and learn the most from you. Remember to show them behavior you would like to see.

### *Focus on Teaching.*

Improving behavior is all about learning what TO do, not what NOT to do. Use role playing and games to teach your child how to behave in specific situations. Come up with clear rules and practice how to follow them.

### *Play every day.*

Just playing with your child every day will help your child learn new skills. It can also reduce problem behaviors. Of course, play will also strengthen the bond between you and your child for life.

### *Be positive.*

Work to increase the positive interactions you have with your child. Focus on what they are doing right and catch them being good. Try to have 8 positives to 1 negative.

### *Don't sweat the small stuff!*

Most of what children do is what we call "junk behavior". If it is not harmful or dangerous, just ignore it. Junk behavior will go away on its own as your child grows and matures.



## FUNCTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

All behavior serves a purpose. If a behavior “works” then it will be repeated.

Here are some examples of the reasons behaviors may occur, how you can tell if this is the reason your child is doing something and what you can do that may help.

PURPOSE	HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?	TRY THIS CONSEQUENCE
To get what they want	Did your child just ask for something? Did you just tell your child they couldn't have or do something?	Withhold the item/activity as you said you would. Ignore and/or use time out.
To get out of doing what you asked	Did you ask your child to do something? Did you give a direction?	Follow through with what you asked and make sure your child listens. Wait for them to comply if necessary.
To get sensory stimulation	Would your child do it if no one was around? Does your child do it because it feels good?	Distract your child by giving another activity. Find a time and place that your child can do the behavior.
To get attention	Were you doing something else when your child began misbehaving? Are they looking at you or in your direction?	Ignore as much as possible. Minimize any eye contact or talking. Use time out if necessary.





## STRATEGIES

### The When... Then Rule

This rule should be used when you want your child to do something he or she does not want to do. This works by having you state **when** s/he does what you want them to do **then** s/he can do what they want to do.

Tips:

- ◇ Always say “when... then”. For example:  
When you put all your cars away, then you can watch t.v.”  
When you put your shoes on, then we can go to the park”
- ◇ Be firm and friendly when you use the rule.
- ◇ Look at your child when you use the rule. Eye contact helps gets your child’s attention.

### Choices

Provide your children with choices. It’s good to give them a little control sometimes. It can be hard to do what others want all day long. Simple choices like what to wear, what to eat for snack, or which vegetable they want with dinner can really go a long way.

### Signals

Timers, like those on your microwave, are a great tool to help improve behavior. Use them as a signal for timeout, for how long until it is time for dinner, or even to let your child know when it is time to get off the computer. These signals help your child learn what is expected and it ensures that you are consistent.

### The Option Pitfall

Sometimes parents make the mistake of asking their children a question when there is really no option. A great example is asking, “Are you ready for bed?”. If the child answers no, then you’re stuck because you asked them a question. Use statements instead of questions in situations like these.

Instead of:

Are you ready for bed?

Will you put these toys away?

Are you ready to leave?

Try this:

Five minutes, and it’s bed time.

Time to pick up your toys.

We need to go now.