

BEHAVIORAL CONSIDERATIONS AND STRUCTURE

Behavior change in your child starts with YOU.

DON'T TAKE BEHAVIOR PERSONALLY.

Be realistic in your expectations for change. Behavior does not occur in absolutes - never and always do not apply to behavior. Don't expect your efforts to eliminate the behavior entirely. No child gets it right every time. Expect ups and downs.

A realistic goal of behavior change is that negative behavior occurs:

- 1) With decreased frequency
- 2) At lower intensity
- 3) Lasts a shorter duration

ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS IN ADVANCE. Discuss expectations with your parenting partner. Determine a sequence, a short list of behavioral expectations and make that part of the routine. Schedules, routines - preferably stated in writing - help children make sense of a world of time and expectations that are often arbitrary and inconsistent.

To establish routines or change behaviors, answer:

- WHAT DO I WANT HIM TO DO INSTEAD OF WHAT HE'S DOING?
- HOW CAN I PUT IT IN A VISUAL FORMAT SO HE DOESN'T HAVE TO RELY ON ME TELLING HIM WHAT TO DO?
- WHAT WILL MAKE IT WORTH HIS WHILE?

DEVELOP ROUTINES. Routines make the world predictable. When expectations remain constant day in and day out, children gradually develop proficiency in meeting these expectations.

Practice makes perfect.

Prioritize the expectations. Narrow the focus. Decide what is most important to work on.

Don't work on too many things at one time. Narrow the focus to 1-3 behaviors/routines that are important.

- X Include the child/adolescent in discussions of behavior. If the child is part of the solution, he feels less the brunt of the problem.
- X Seek acknowledgment. Get their attention before you give a direction.
- X Give choices, whenever possible, between 2 acceptable options.
- X Notice when they are successful.

WHAT DO I WANT HIM TO DO INSTEAD OF WHAT HE'S DOING AND WHAT WOULD MAKE IT WORTH HIS WHILE? (See list of reinforcers)

USE A VISUAL TO SUPPORT STRUCTURE. It's objective. It decreases the interaction between parent and child signaling the end of the activity. It is a way to disengage. When a timer or a calendar signals the structure, children are generally less reactive.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Be aware - punishment does not change the behavior. Punishment interrupts a behavior, for the moment, but it doesn't it does not tell them what to do instead. You've tried punishment, without much success.
 - Evaluate what you're doing based on results. If the behavior improves, the procedure is effective. If not...

- Use a question to redirect behavior - make a reference to a previously established procedure.
 - A question evokes an answer. A statement provokes a defense.

- Reinforce improvement - don't expect perfection. Improvement is success.

REINFORCER LIST

YOUNGER CHILDREN

Television (specified period)	Play at special park
Computer games (specified period)	Video arcade
Video games (specified period)	Pizza (ordered in)
Video/video game rental	Chore pass (earn out of chore)
Play outside	Allowance—or money
7-11 (Slurpee)	Fast Food
Watch TV in parent's room	Small toy/privilege grab bag
Special dessert	Extension on lights out (15-30 min)
Spend night at friend's house	Friend over for dinner
Dressing up in adult's clothes	Camping out in the backyard
Going somewhere alone with a parent	Planting a garden
Friend overnight	Control of car radio

ADOLESCENTS (any of the above, plus:)

Cell phone	Curfew extension
Cell phone privileges	Learner's permit/driver's license
Ipod, etc.	Use of car (specified purpose/time)
Screen Time (privilege to use any screen – TV, video, video game, computer)	Use of Internet (e-mail and Instant Message)
Control car radio	CD/tapes/itunes credit