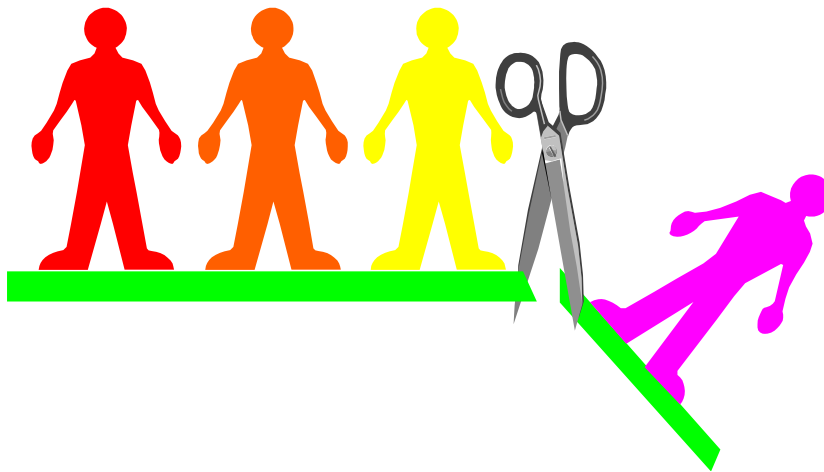


EFFECTIVE CHILD MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

How To Prevent "Bratty Kid" Syndrome



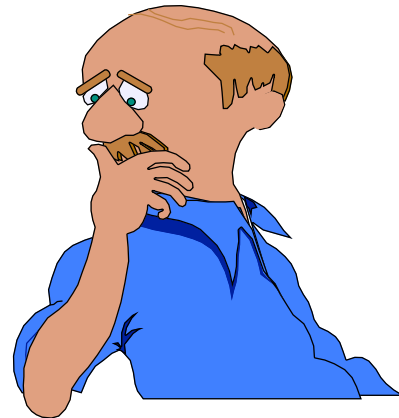
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TECHNIQUES IN EFFECTIVE CHILD MANAGEMENT for the Home and Educational Settings

*Cognitive Development as It Relates to Child Management
of Toddlers, Preschoolers, or Children with Developmental Disabilities
by D. Joe Olmi, Ph.D., NCSP*

Children 8-years-of-age and younger or with developmental disabilities are at the **preabstract level** of cognitive development. They present with cognitive limitations associated with time, distance, amount, and abstract terms such as patriotism, love, and friendship. They are unable to understand how long an hour is; how far a mile is or how many comprise a few. Language, as a means to effectively manage a child, is also an abstraction.



Consequently, attempts to manage a young child's behavior with verbal reasoning will only prove fruitless for you or frustrating at best.

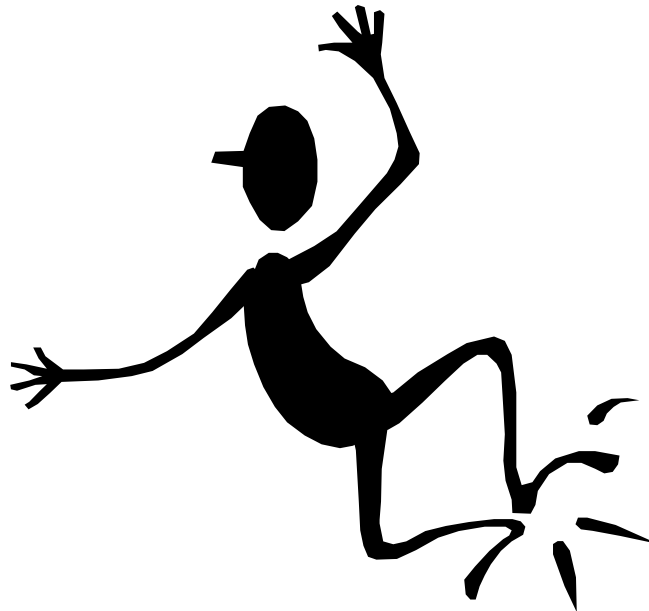
Because reasoning with young children generally does not work, it usually results in the parent or teacher constantly repeating instructions, often causing extreme frustration for the adult. The escalating frustration on the part of the parent or teacher usually turns to threats, which lead to continued noncompliance or disobeying on the part of the child. This cycle may be played out day after day in the home or classroom. As a result, the relationship between the adult and child may be damaged, in addition to lowering the child's self-concept and self-esteem.

Managing a young child's behavior is part of the educative process, and discipline involves teaching. It is important to understand that young children learn best through **repetition** and **experience**. The youngster must have the repeated opportunity to practice a task **and** the **experiences** associated with completing that task or not. We need to understand that young children require many repetitions to ensure learning.

With regard to a child's noncompliance or not obeying, parents, and teachers should view each occasion as a teaching/learning opportunity, which may take many repetitions. Additionally, if the child is compliant, there **must** be an adult response to obeying just as there is a response to failing to comply or obey. By all means, **do**

not expect young children to always do as they are told, but rather, be prepared to take action in the event that they do not. Remember, the more repetitions children have, the quicker and more thoroughly they will learn right from wrong.

The following techniques are offered in response to behaviors of children. If implemented properly, they can do much to help you manage your child and guide you in the educative process. As a result, the relationship that exists between you and your child will improve, while protecting dignity and self-esteem.



Time-In Guidelines For Parents and Teachers

Time-in is the attention you give your child or children when they are behaving okay. Physical contact in the form of contingent touch is the most important type of attention you can provide. High levels of self-esteem and self-confidence are direct products of lots of warm physical contact with family members and other important adults. In fact, without physical contact, your child may experience social and emotional problems as he or she matures.

It is also important to mention that it is very common for families and teachers to gradually reduce the amount of physical contact as children grow older. Obviously, young infants require lots of physical contact from their parents to sustain life. However, as infants get older and their physical needs change, they require less help and parents usually touch their children less.

Therefore, if you do not put forth an extra effort to keep in physical contact with your child as he or she grows you may be depriving your child of the opportunity to develop a high sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. Fortunately, there are several things that you can do to help offset these natural changes in the amount of physical contact you have with your children.

1. Physical Proximity: During various activities, place your child close to you where it is easy to reach him or her. At dinner, during key instructional times, in the car, in a restaurant, when you have company, or when you are in a shopping mall, keep your child/children near you so that physical contact requires little, if any, additional effort on your part.

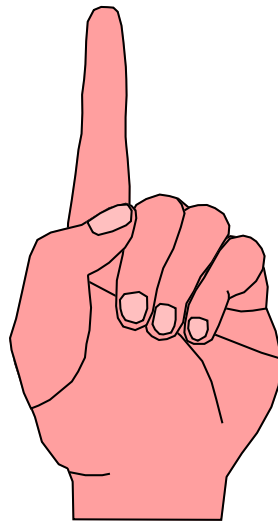
2. Physical Contact: Frequent and brief (1 or 2 seconds) touching will do more to teach your child that you love and respect him/her and communicate that he/she is behaving in an okay fashion. Discipline yourself to touch your child at least 50 times per day. Specifically, touch your child anytime that he or she is not



doing something wrong or something you disapprove of. **Touch your child when he or she is doing okay!**

3. Isolate Play: Children need to have time to themselves -time when they can play, listen to music, look at a book, or look out a window. During these times of independence you can provide your child with subtle encouragement by providing brief physical touching (pats on the head or a hug) ever so often -without interrupting what your child is doing. This will be difficult at first, but you will get the hang of it with practice.

REMEMBER: Children need lots of brief, physical contact.



Guidelines to Effective Instruction Giving For Parents/Teachers

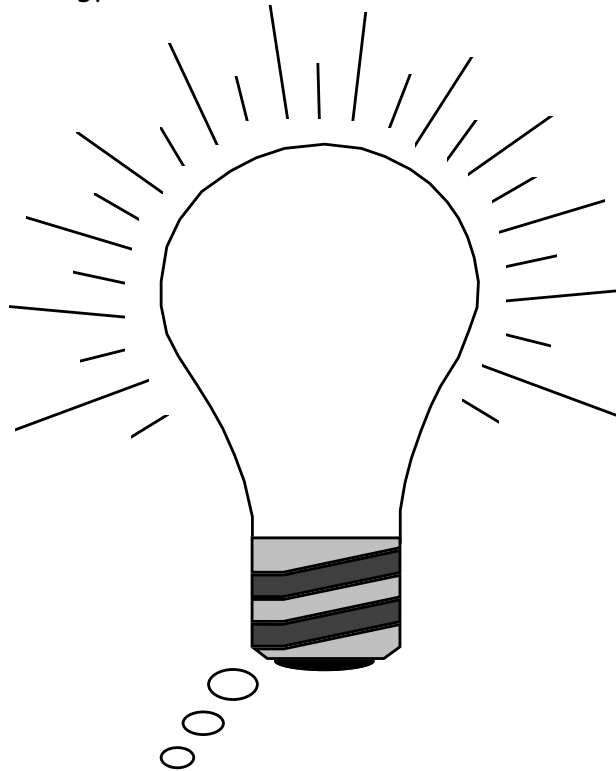
1. **Deliver instructions as directives.** Do not phrase them as questions. Questions do not relay behavioral expectations. "Pick up the book." is far more clear an instruction than "Can we pick up the book?"
2. **Deliver instructions in close proximity.** A greater compliance rate with teacher-presented instructions is associated with being in close proximity to the child before delivering the instruction.
3. **Use a quiet toned voice.** Yelling is not a requirement for compliance.
4. **Deliver the instruction with eye contact.** My first instruction in the sequence is usually "John, look at me." I must then provide time-in in response to following the instruction.
5. **Give a 5-second wait period for a response or non-response to the directive.** One must really resist giving the instruction again prior to waiting for a response. I find it really difficult for some adults not to give another instruction before giving appropriate wait-time or the child to respond.
6. **Be descriptive in the instruction.** "Clean up your desk." is a vaguely worded instruction. It does not communicate what the teacher wants to be done, nor does it communicate behavioral expectations to the child. A better way to say it would be "I need you to pick up the paper around your desk and stack your books on the desk."
7. **Use more "start" requests than "stop" requests.** A teacher will go further toward getting a higher rate of compliance if many more "start" requests



are provided than "stop" requests. Often one may tell a student what to "stop" doing, leaving the student to guess what to "start" doing after ceasing a particular behavior.

8. **When addressing inappropriate behavior, be as matter-of-fact and nonemotional as possible.** If a child gets you emotionally engaged, the child is in control.

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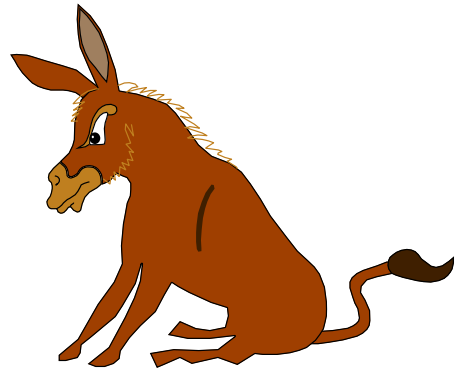
Compliance Guidelines

1. Get your child's attention before issuing a request or command. "John, look at me."

2. State the command simple and keep it to the point (short) - Example "Billy, go brush your teeth." instead of "Billy, why don't you go brush your teeth so we can get ready to go to the store."

3. Reward with praise all compliance to requests - "thank you" is fine, but be enthusiastic. **Time-in is the key!**

4. If your child does not comply within 5 seconds, or does something other than what you asked, you should guide him/her to do what you asked. For example, if you asked your child to sit down and he/she does not, walk him/her to the chair and guide him/her to sit. Only use as much physical contact as necessary to get the child to comply, and gradually fade out the contact so he/she complies to the command. **You must not become emotional when redirecting.**



5. Large tasks such as cleaning room, putting clothes away, helping in yard, etc., can be rewarded with praise and perhaps a bonus in his/her allowance or a special activity.

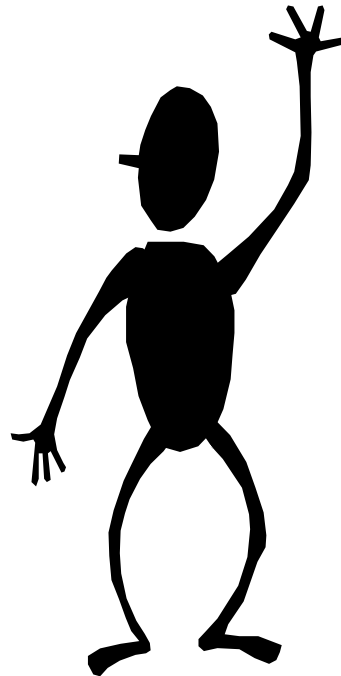
6. Basically, we want to get your child to comply because it earns your attention and respect, rather than to avoid punishment.

7. Set up a standard routine so that certain tasks must be completed before he/she sits down to dinner, before he/she goes outside, watches TV, etc. so your child may learn to comply without a specific command.

GENERAL RULE: Be sure your child earns more of your attention for compliance than he/she does for noncompliance.

VARIABLES THAT AFFECT COMPLIANCE

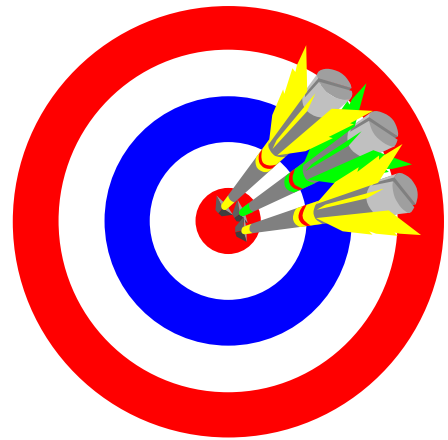
1. Question Format
2. Proximity
3. Quiet Voice
4. Eye Contact
5. Wait Time
6. Don't Nag
7. Don't give multiple requests
8. Be Descriptive
9. Be Nonemotional
10. Start Response
11. Reinforce Compliance



Time-out Guidelines for Teachers/Parents:

Procedural guidelines for the implementation of time-out are as follows:

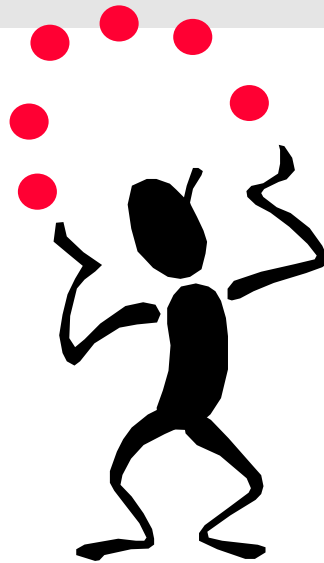
- ☐ instruction presented by the adult (teacher/parent/guardian) to the child to begin or cease an action; the child is given 5 seconds of wait-time to begin following the instruction.
- ☐ if the child fails to begin to act within the 5 second wait-time, the child is placed in a spot two to three feet away with as little physical guidance as necessary with the instruction as you are proceeding to the time-out spot, "You did not follow my instruction, time-out." or "No throwing, time-out."
- ☐ when the child is in the time-out spot, he/she is not visually attended to (no eye-to-eye contact), not touched (unless to replace in the time-out spot), and not spoken to. Contact is nonexistent, unless to replace in the time-out spot.
- ☐ when the child displays quiet hands, feet, and mouth (not making unnecessary sounds or motoric movements) a 3-5 second time-out period begins.
- ☐ after the 3-5 second period of quiet time, the child is directed, "You are quiet, out of time-out."
- ☐ upon existing time-out, the instruction is presented again, if it lends itself; or another instruction is presented within 30 seconds to 1 minute to set up time-in.



☒ child compliance with the instruction is always followed by time-in.

Note: While this procedure may seem quite simple to implement, do not fool yourself. It takes skill and practice to implement effectively.

*Guidelines developed by D. Joe Olmi, Ph.D., NCSP
USM School Psychology Service Center*

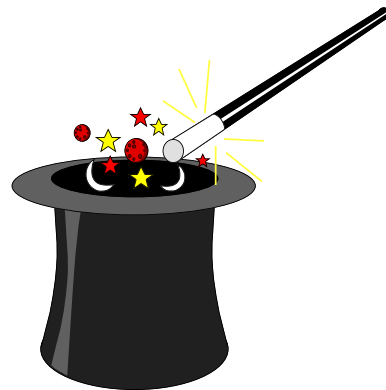


PLAYING THE CHILD'S GAME

Guidelines for Parents and Teachers

The first step in the *Child's Game* involves learning how to pay attention to your child's okay behavior when it happens during playtime. To learn this, you must practice what we call "paying attention." Later, we will show you how to use these skills when your child does what you ask. Paying attention involves the following:

1. Find a time when your child is playing with something enjoyable and that is appropriate. This can be a time when your child normally plays alone, or a special time, which you set aside each day. In either case, you are to spend at least 15 to 20 minutes each day in this type of play. The child is to select what he/she wishes to play with and you are to give **NO HELP** in this decision. This is essential; in addition, no other children should be involved in this special playtime; just you and your child.
2. Relax! Casually approach your child, watch his play activities for a few minutes, and then sit down next to your child if he or she is playing at a table or on the ground.
3. Watch your child's activities for a few moments to get some idea of what he/she is doing.
4. Begin to describe to your child what he/she is doing. This is done something like what a sportscaster at a baseball game would do-- describe the action. Another way of thinking of this style of talking to your child is to pretend there is a blind person in the room with you and your child, and you must describe to that person what your child is doing. In either case, you simply narrate your child's activities and no more.

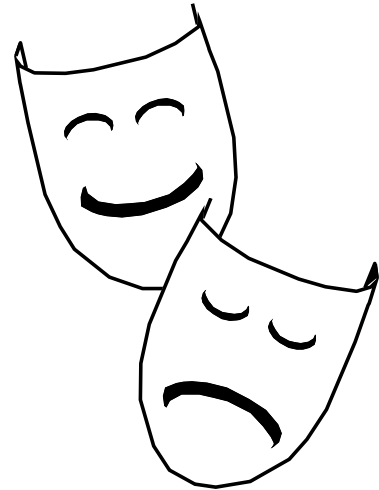


5. **ASK NO QUESTIONS AND GIVE NO COMMANDS!** During this playtime, you should avoid asking any questions. You will find this to be very difficult since most parents interact with the children primarily through questions. Questions will

only serve to provoke confrontations during this playtime. Avoid them! Also, use no commands. You are not to direct your child's activity at all unless it becomes extremely inappropriate.

6. Occasionally, provide your child with positive, genuine feedback. This should be a positive statement about what you like that he child is doing. For instance, "I like it when you and I play quietly together." **AVOID comments about what your child is not doing; for instance, "I enjoy it when you don't throw the toys around the room."** This type of comment is nagging.

7. If your child begins to misbehave, simply turn away and attend to something else in the room. If the misbehavior continues or gets worse, then leave the play area immediately. Come back and play with your child later when he/she is behaving more appropriately. If another child tries to become involved (and many siblings do when they see you paying attention to another child), direct them not to play, but tell them you will spend some "special time" with them alone later. If both parents are living at home, the one can take the other children away from the play area while the other plays with the child of concern.



8. Each parent or teacher should spend at least 15-20 minutes with the child each day.

9. If the child becomes extremely disruptive or abusive during play, then discipline the child the way that you normally would. We will show you later how to effectively discipline the child during such times.

10. The program is much easier to talk about than to do!