Raising Your Challenging Child
A Parent Training Program

- Session 1: Overview and Know Your Child
- Session 2: Time-in
- Session 3: Engagement and Understanding
- Session 4: Motivation through Positive Attention for Compliance
- Session 5: Self-motivation and Learning from Experience
- Session 6: Motivation through Rewards
- Session 7: Time-out and Ignoring
- Session 8: Empathy
- Session 9: Problem Solving
- Session 10: Ability, Accommodations and Interventions

Raising Your Challenging Child
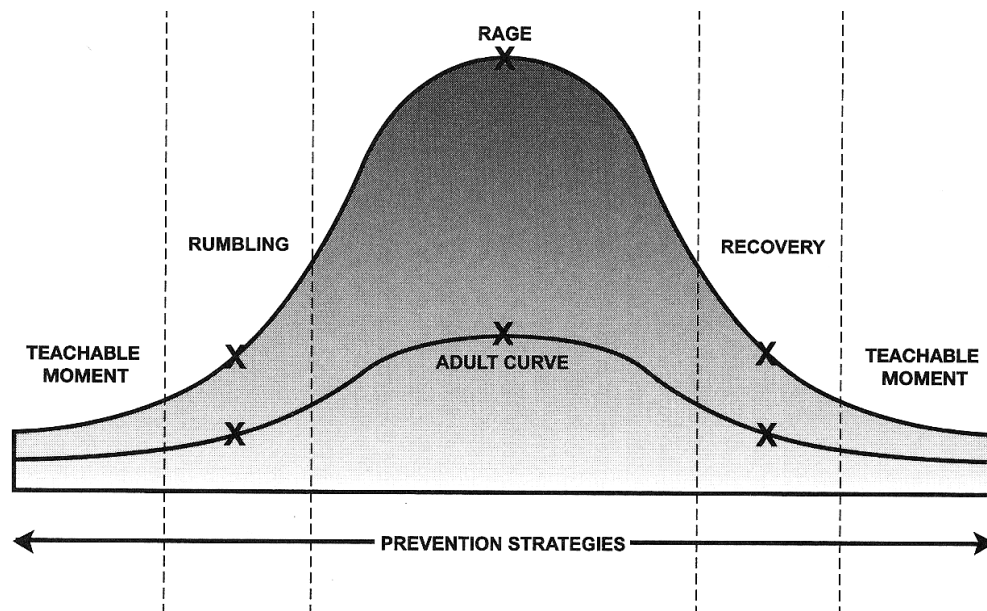## A Parent Training Program

Overview

Some children are more challenging than others. When home life is difficult, parents might blame the child. More often, they blame themselves. But a challenging child is nobody's fault. This ten session program is designed to help parents understand where challenging behavior comes from and what to do about it.

Ross Greene's Phases to Explosion

1. Phase I - is when there is an environmental demand for the child to shift gears. The child experiences frustration. This early phase of the inflexible, explosive episode is termed *"vaporlock,"* or *"brainlock,"* or *"short circuiting."* It represents the beginning of a breakdown in rational thinking.
2. Phase II - represents a *crossroads* where we can either see maintenance of good communication and resolution of the crisis, or a further deterioration in the child's reasoning abilities.
3. Phase III - is *meltdown.* This represents a disintegrative rage or neural hijacking. Intervention at this point is never productive. "Inflexibility plus inflexibility" leads to further meltdown.

Brenda Smith Myles' Rage Cycle

Russell Barkley's Power Struggles

In the all-too-familiar power struggle, the parent gives a command. The child resists. The parent repeats the command. The child defies. The parent increases the intensity of the command, sometimes adding a threat: "If you don't (*command*), then I'll have to (*threat*)!" The child digs in. Back and forth they go with escalating volleys of intensity and counter-intensity.
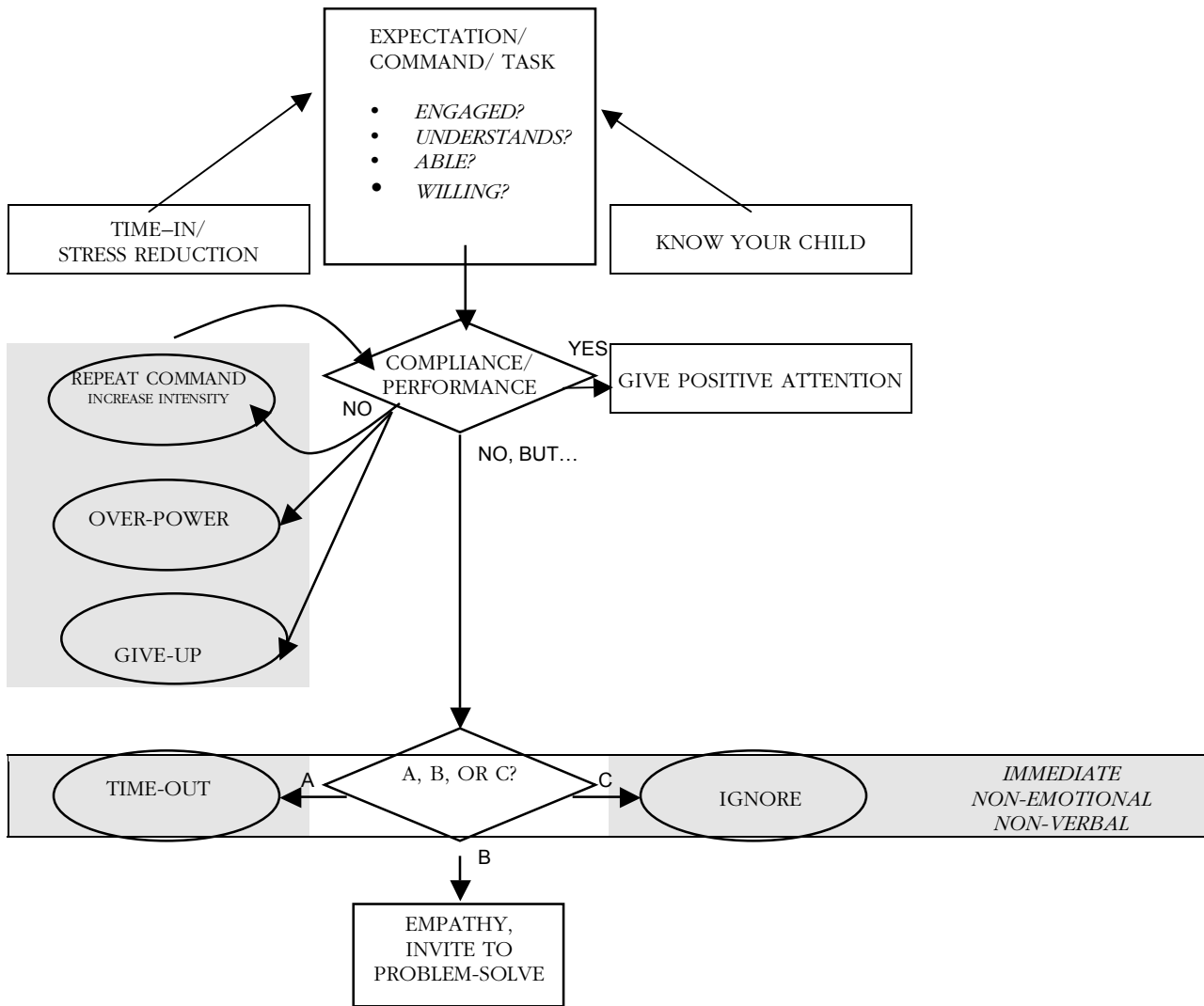
Power struggles can only end in one of two ways - and neither is desirable. Parents can *over-power* the child, verbally, emotionally, or physically. This increases mutual animosity and leaves everyone feeling bad - certainly not the kind of relationship parents would like to have. Or, when over-powering is just not worth it, parents can simply *give-up*. The parent drops the command. Peace is restored but at a cost. The parent had reasonable expectations, but they are now lowered. Whether the parent overpowers or gives-up, the child learns nothing worthwhile and the parent has lost some of the child's respect.

Reactive and Proactive Strategies

Instead of repeating requests and getting sucked into power struggles, parents have three better alternatives for reacting to non-compliance: *1) time-out, 2) ignoring and 3) empathy/ collaborative problem solving.* (See Ross Greene's "baskets" in The Explosive Child.) Time-out is used when a significant threat to person or property makes intervention necessary. Ignoring is used when there is no such threat to safety and the misbehavior is of no consequence. An empathic response leading to collaborative problem solving is always the best of the three options, but not always possible in the heat of the moment or when the child is too immature.

Time-out is very different than over-powering, ignoring is very different than giving-up and collaborative problem solving is very different than power struggles. Time-out and ignoring are immediate, non-verbal and non-emotional. Both create physical and emotional distance. The parent is in control. Overpowering and giving-up occur only after a power struggle. Both lead to more prolonged, negative and intense interactions. The parent is out of control. Collaborative problem solving proceeds effectively only if the parent and child are mutually and productively engaged. If a child says no, these *reactive strategies* are to be used instead of getting caught up in a power struggle. Careful attention to effective technique is very important.

Proactive strategies complement and usually lessen the need for reactive strategies. Proactive strategies are designed to set-up the child for success and lower the chance that he or she will say no or misbehave in the first place. If proactive strategies work well, the need for reactive strategies will change for the better.

Diagram

EXPECTATION/ COMMAND/ TASK

- *ENGAGED?*
- *UNDERSTANDS?*
- *ABLE?*
- *WILLING?*

TIME–IN/ STRESS REDUCTION

KNOW YOUR CHILD

COMPLIANCE/ PERFORMANCE

YES → **GIVE POSITIVE ATTENTION**

NO → **REPEAT COMMAND** INCREASE INTENSITY

OVER-POWER

GIVE-UP

NO, BUT…

A, B, OR C?

A → **TIME-OUT**

C → **IGNORE**

IMMEDIATE NON-EMOTIONAL NON-VERBAL

B → **EMPATHY, INVITE TO PROBLEM-SOLVE**

"*STEPS*" TO PROBLEM SOLVING:

1. **S**ay what the problem is. Define the problem situation in specific, solvable terms: Who? What? Where? When? Why? Avoid pessimistic generalizations such as "never" or "always."
2. **T**hink about all possible solutions. Brainstorm. Make a list. Anything goes; but try to be practical and preventive. Include compromises.
3. **E**xamine each possible solution. Ask, "What would happen if…?" for each of the possible solutions.
4. **P**ick the best solution.
5. **S**ee how it works. Modify if necessary.

This ten session course is designed to help parents help their challenging children.

- Session 1: Overview and Know Your Child
- Session 2: Time-in
- Session 3: Engagement and Understanding
- Session 4: Motivation through Positive Attention for Compliance
- Session 5: Self-motivation and Learning from Experience
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The concepts and strategies presented in this course are not original; rather, built upon the work of many professionals and the shared experience of many more parents. The content of these sessions is summarized graphically on page 3. At the first session, parents should complete the problem inventory on page 5 to identify their child's specific behavioral targets. At the last session, parents will be asked to complete the problem inventory again to assess progress.

Sources:
- Ross Greene, <u>The Explosive Child</u>
- Russell Barkley, <u>Defiant Children</u>
- Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas, <u>Know Your Child</u>
- Martin Seligman, <u>The Optimistic Child</u>
- Howard Glassman, <u>Transforming the Difficult Child</u>
- Brooks and Goldstein, <u>Raising Resilient Children</u>
- Daniel Goleman, <u>Emotional Intelligence</u> and <u>Social Intelligence</u>
- Mel Levine, <u>A Mind at a Time</u>
- Stanley Greenspan, <u>The Challenging Child</u>
- Stanley Turecki, <u>The Difficult Child</u>
- Brenda Smith Myles and Jack Southwick, <u>Asperger Syndrome and Difficult Moments</u>

Problem Inventory – pre-treatment assessment

Name: _____   Date:_____   Rater:_____

Circle best answer:
0= no problem; 1=little problem; 2=medium problem; 3=big problem

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Problem Situations

0	1	2	3	Getting ready to go in the morning
0	1	2	3	Riding in the car
0	1	2	3	Arriving at school
0	1	2	3	During class
0	1	2	3	In school hallways/ bathrooms
0	1	2	3	Recess at school
0	1	2	3	Lunch at school
0	1	2	3	School field trips
0	1	2	3	Pick-up at school
0	1	2	3	School bus
0	1	2	3	Arriving home
0	1	2	3	Meals
0	1	2	3	Playing with other children
0	1	2	3	When visitors come
0	1	2	3	When visiting others
0	1	2	3	In public places
0	1	2	3	With parent 1 (Name: _____)
0	1	2	3	With parent 2 (Name: _____)
0	1	2	3	With siblings
0	1	2	3	With babysitter
0	1	2	3	Doing home-work
0	1	2	3	Doing chores
0	1	2	3	Getting ready for bed (washing, bathing, teeth-brushing, etc.)
0	1	2	3	Getting in bed

Problem Behaviors

0	1	2	3	Actively defies/ refuses to comply
0	1	2	3	Loses temper
0	1	2	3	Argues with adults
0	1	2	3	Deliberately annoys people
0	1	2	3	Blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehaviors
0	1	2	3	Is touchy or easily annoyed by others
0	1	2	3	Is angry or resentful
0	1	2	3	Is spiteful or vindictive
0	1	2	3	Bullies, threatens or intimidates others
0	1	2	3	Initiates physical fights
0	1	2	3	Lies/ "cons" to obtain goods/ favors or to avoid obligations
0	1	2	3	Skips school
0	1	2	3	Is physically cruel to people or animals
0	1	2	3	Has stolen items of nontrivial value
0	1	2	3	Deliberately destroys other's property

Other problem behaviors and situations:

0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____

Session 1: Know Your Child

What is the difference between normal and abnormal? Where is the line between eccentricity and Autism? moodiness and Bipolar Illness? blues and Depression? high energy and ADHD? learning difference and Learning Disability? The former should be nurtured, respected and celebrated; the latter should be understood, prevented, and treated. Distinguishing between *normal human variation* and *disorder* is important but often difficult.

A practical approach to helping individual children shifts the focus away from fuzzy discussions about "normal vs. abnormal" to simply consider: "Is there a problem?" The emphasis here will be day-to-day function. Even if there is a biological basis for certain behavioral styles and developmental differences, this has nothing to do with the severity of impairment. Just because a child has certain weaknesses does not mean that all situations and tasks will be problematic. Maybe your child's profile fits with some personalities better than others. Maybe there have been effective accommodations. Maybe your child has been able to compensate on his or her own. The functional approach advocated here does not dwell on whether a child is abnormal and certainly not on whether anyone is to blame. We just want to determine if there is a problem and what to do about it.

The questionnaire below - "The Quick Scan" - guides parents through an analysis of their child's unique functional profile. The Quick Scan allows parents to summarize how their child is built. It provides a "here and now" description of the child's development and behavior.

THE QUICK SCAN

Child's name: _____   Age: _____

Parent's name(s): _____   Date: _____

Please circle the most appropriate number.

Quick Scan: Motor Activity level:

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
High activity			*Average*			Low activity

Quick Scan: Impulsivity

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Acts before thinking			*Average*			Thinks before acting

Quick Scan: Attention Span

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Long			*Average*			Short

Quick Scan: Regularity

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Low regularity, unpredictable			*Average*			High regularity, predictable

Quick Scan: Initial Reaction

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Slow to warm-up			*Average*			Quick to Warm-up

Quick Scan: Intensity of Reaction

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Reserved			*Average*			Dramatic

Quick Scan: Adaptability

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Very inflexible			*Average*			Very flexible

Quick Scan: Hearing Speech

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Tunes-out people talking			*Average*			Tunes-in to talking

Quick Scan: Hearing Noise

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Quickly			*Notices sounds, noises*			Slowly

Quick Scan: **Taste**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Quickly   *Notices small changes in foods, hidden tastes*   Slowly

Quick Scan: **Smell**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Quickly   *Notices an odor*   Slowly

Quick Scan: **Vision**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Quick to notice   *Visual stimuli*   Slow to notice

Quick Scan: **Light Touch**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Extremely   *Sensitive to light touch, tickling*   Not at all

Quick Scan: **Deep Touch**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Avoids, dislikes   *Physically close contact*   Seeks, likes

Quick Scan: **Movement**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Avoids   *Moving, spinning through space (swing, seesaw, rides, heights)*   Likes

Quick Scan: **Internal Bodily Sensations**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Under-reports   *Symptoms of illness, not feeling well*   Over reports

Quick Scan: **Mood Stability**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Unpredictable, unstable   *Mood*   Predictably stable

Quick Scan: **Usual Mood**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Pleasant, joyful, relaxed   *Usual mood*   Unpleasant, serious, tense

Quick Scan: **Social Awareness**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Very self-absorbed   Very tuned into other people

Quick Scan: **Self-Awareness**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Undeveloped   *Self-awareness*   Mature

Quick Scan: **Social Skills**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
With difficulty, rejected			*Makes friends*			Easily, popular

Quick Scan: **Fine Motor**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty, avoids			*Manipulating small objects*			Ease, enjoys

Quick Scan: **Writing Mechanics/ Visual-Motor Integration**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty, avoids			*Using crayons, pencils, markers or scissors*			Ease, enjoys

Quick Scan: **Gross Motor**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty, avoids		*Running, jumping, climbing, playing sports/athletics*				Ease, enjoys

Quick Scan: **Speech**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty			*Putting thoughts into words*			Ease

Quick Scan: **Written Expression**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty			*Putting thoughts onto paper*			Ease

Quick Scan: **Understanding Speech**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Difficulty			*Understanding spoken communication*			Ease

Quick Scan: **Understanding Written Language**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Delayed			*Reading skills*			Advanced

Quick Scan: **Music**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Poor			*Musical ability*			Excellent

Quick Scan: **Math**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Delayed			*Math ability*			Advanced

Quick Scan: **Spatial Relations**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Poor	*Understanding puzzles, shapes, block design, maps, directions, drawing*					Excellent

Quick Scan: **Time Awareness**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Difficulty, inaccuracy   *Estimating how long activities will take*   Ease, accuracy

Quick Scan: **Planning and Organization**

3	2	1	0	1	2	3

Difficulty   *Planning ahead / strategizing / sequencing / preparing*   Ease

Life Stresses (experienced by child)
{adapted from DSM-PC}

Circle best answer according to current impact:
0= no problem; 1=little; 2=medium; 3=big problem

0	1	2	3	Emotional estrangement from primary caregiver
0	1	2	3	Physical separation from primary caregiver
0	1	2	3	Death of parent
0	1	2	3	Death of other family member
0	1	2	3	Death of pet
0	1	2	3	Marital discord
0	1	2	3	Separation/divorce
0	1	2	3	Domestic violence
0	1	2	3	Foster care/ institutional care
0	1	2	3	Adoption
0	1	2	3	Substance abusing parents
0	1	2	3	Physical or sexual abuse
0	1	2	3	Neglect
0	1	2	3	Mental disorder of parent
0	1	2	3	Physical illness of parent
0	1	2	3	Mental or behavioral disorder of sibling
0	1	2	3	Physical illness of sibling
0	1	2	3	Addition of a sibling
0	1	2	3	Change in primary caregiver
0	1	2	3	Adjustment to a new and different culture
0	1	2	3	Social discrimination or isolation
0	1	2	3	Religious or spiritual problem
0	1	2	3	Illiteracy or parent
0	1	2	3	Inadequate school facilities
0	1	2	3	Discord with teachers
0	1	2	3	Discord with peers
0	1	2	3	Parent occupational challenges
0	1	2	3	Problems with housing or neighborhood
0	1	2	3	Problem with family's financial well-being
0	1	2	3	Lack of adequate health care, nutrition
0	1	2	3	Parent or family member with crime problem
0	1	2	3	Natural disaster
0	1	2	3	Witness to violence

Problems with physical health

Hospitalization(s)/ Surgery:

_____
_____
_____

Significant medical problems/ illnesses/ serious injuries/ disorders:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Allergies (food, drug, environmental):

_____
_____

Session 2: Time-in

Why do time-in?

Parents sometimes focus too much on their children's problem behaviors and not enough on their good behavior. The consequences are significant. First, children who do not receive regular positive attention and emotional nurturing may increase their undesirable behavior. Second, admonishing children about what they shouldn't do never works as well as praising them for what they should do. Children learn best through positive engagement. Third, unless parents regularly give attention for desirable behaviors, standard techniques for managing misbehavior will not work. Parents may have to use "ignoring" or "timeout" to deliberately create distance between themselves and their child, thereby defusing potentially explosive situations, and teaching that certain behaviors will not get much attention. These are important tools in the behavior management kit which we will discuss in detail. However, parents cannot *effectively* withdraw attention if it is not regularly provided. Parents who practice time-in religiously should not feel guilty when they have to use time-out. Fourth, the relationship between parent and child suffers if too many interactions begin as negative reaction to misbehavior. Parents and children both deserve islands in time when they can truly relax and enjoy each other's company. Time-in takes time and effort, but it is time and effort very well spent. Try to make time-in a priority in your lives.

How to do Time-in

Time-in is designed to give children positive attention just for being who they are. During time-in, parents do no questioning, no teaching and no commanding. If there are no behavioral expectations, then there will be no problems. Many parents find that doing time-in every day creates a whole new atmosphere in their home. The goal is simple: positive time together.

1. *Get one-on-one:* It is very important to do time-in without any distractions or interruptions. Create a clear zone. If at all possible, other children and adults should be out of sight, out of hearing, and out of mind. Turn phone ringers off. Or if it rings, don't answer: "I'm not going to get that. This is my special time with you."
2. *Get relaxed:* Time-in should not be done when you are in a hurry or preoccupied. Your child should have your undivided attention. That's the whole idea. This is the Zen of parenting. Take a cleansing breath. Shift gears. Forget about the past and don't worry about the future. Live in the moment. For this short time, you don't have to "parent". Leave the stress. Learn to look forward to this time together.
3. *Get into whatever your child wants to do*: This time is truly child led. Some parents announce, "It's time-in, what do you want to do?" Others have a regular activity that they look forward to doing together. Most find it is best to just join the child in whatever they are doing. Pause first to observe. See the world through his or her eyes. Reflect on what your child is doing right now. What seems to be interesting your child in this moment? Follow.
4. *Give custom-designed positive attention:* During time-in, the parent can describe out loud what their child is doing. While giving this kind of *verbal positive attention*, parents can think of themselves as narrators or broadcasters. Be specific about what you see your child doing. Focus on the activity, not the child. For example: "Hey, look at the way…" or "I like how…" Keep up a running commentary. Many children love this kind of overt praise. Other children feel that verbal feedback is phony and irritating; some just don't seem to notice it. For these children parents can give <u>non-verbal positive attention</u>. Appreciative facial expressions: smiles, winks, eye-contact. Gestures: thumbs up, "ok" (index finger and thumb forming a circle) signs, applause. Touching: gentle strokes, big hugs, high fives. For some very sensitive children, just "being there" is more than enough; letting them simply feel your attentive and appreciative presence. Your child just needs to know that you enjoy what he or she is doing. Each child enjoys different types of positive attention. Do whatever works.
5. *No questions, no commands, no teaching:* For many parents, this is the hardest part. Whenever you ask a question, give a command, or suggest a better way, you are not following your child's lead. You are expecting him or her to respond to you. Life is too full of times when your child has to answer, comply and learn. Time-in is a break from all that; not just for the child, but for the parent as well.
6. *Each child, each parent*: Parents often begin time-in because one child has behavior problems or developmental challenges that stress the parent-child relationship. However, siblings of challenging children have special needs too. Furthermore, if one parent logs more direct child-time than another,

then time-in is a positive way for the other parent to give his or her partner a break; at the same time, enriching his or her own relationship to the child. Every parent and every child should have special time-in together. Parents should take turns doing time-in with each of their children. With commitment and creative planning, this can be accomplished.

7. *Get a plan*: Each parent should try to do time-in for 15-30 minutes each day. At a minimum, parents can alternate days. Parents should think carefully about when and how to pull this off. With some children, the schedule should be previewed, with start and finish times announced. With others, the approach should be more subtle and indirect. The parent can simply "mosey-on-over" and join the child in whatever he or she is doing. Just as casually, time-in can end. Time-in is easier when there is only one child. If there are other children, time-in requires more planning. Time-in can be done with one child while others are: occupied by another parent or adult; in school or scheduled programs; asleep; or assigned specific activities that can be done independently, such as projects, reading, computer, or TV. Parents should also carefully consider where to do time-in. The space should be safe and full of child-friendly toys and materials. If it is difficult to end time-in, parents can plan a positive follow-up activity; for example, meal or TV time. Sometimes, specific start and stop times with reference to clocks or timers can be helpful. Other times, a more subtle shift to other activities works best.

8. *For the teenager*: Some parents might feel that their adolescent never wants to spend time with them. Time-in with teenagers might be at midnight, when he or she just needs you to sit on their bedroom floor. This can be a time to "discuss" something. Keeping with the spirit of time-in, remember that he or she really does not want your commentary. Just listen. Empathize. Parents can make breakfast for their teenager and just join him or her at the table. During these busy years, time-in can happen without warning or preparation. Seize the moment when it presents itself. Catch some time-in when you can.

9. *Time-in is not just for parents*: Other adults involved in the child's life - teachers, tutors, coaches, doctors - should make time to connect in ways that communicate unconditional acceptance. Obviously, such engagement must be modified to fit the setting. But the chart, the curriculum, the plan, the schedule should sometimes be put aside to allow for some special moments. Simple conversation about the child's interests, just noticing what "turns them on", a gentle touch, a hug, a smile – all subtle, all easy, all powerful.

10. *Time-in is not just for children*: Time-in is not a way of life. Parents have a duty to command, teach and question. But these jobs are easier if we build our relationships on a positive foundation. Wouldn't it be nice to have some measure of unconditional acceptance and undivided attention - with our children, with our friends, with our spouse? Couldn't we all use just a little time-in each day?

Common questions about time-in

Q: What if I *don't enjoy* what my child wants to do during time-in?
A: If you don't like sports or dolls or bugs but your child does - tough. Get into it anyhow. Make sure to carve out time for yourself too; but *this* time-in is about your child's needs, not yours.

Q: What if my child wants to do some very *passive, self-absorbed or isolating activities* such as watching TV, listening to music, playing video or computer games?
A: These activities do not work very well for time-in. When the child is just sitting there, parents do not have much opportunity to give positive attention to what the child is doing. Or the activity is such that the child does not even notice that the parent is in the room. This defeats the whole purpose. Try to do time-in around other things. However, with some children, parents have to take what they can get. If the child truly gives no alternative, we may have to default and sit along for TV shows, video games or rap music. Desperate times call for desperate measures. Hopefully, this time-in evolves into something richer. For now, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em".

Q: What if I *don't approve* of what my child wants to do during time-in?
A: Remember, this is not a time for teaching or commanding. There will be plenty of time for that later. During time-in, let it go. If there are violent themes in play, simply narrate: "That (action figure) sure is angry!" If there is cheating, simply play along as if your child has creatively changed the rules of the game. If your child is focused on winning, enjoy letting yourself be beaten. If he or she wants to use a book or chess set in ways that defy custom, that's fine. ("That pawn has magic flying powers.") During time-in, we simply abandon our preconceptions about how things are supposed to be done.

Q: What if my child *misbehaves* during time-in?
A: This is <u>very</u> rare. Children love time-in. They are doing what they want to do and getting undivided attention for it. In fact, I have never heard of misbehavior when time-in is being done right. If there is misbehavior, it is probably because the parent broke the rules and either questioned, taught or commanded. For whatever reason, if there is misbehavior, try to briefly ignore or distract. If the misbehavior is truly not ignorable, simply end time-in for that day. If the misbehavior continues once time-in has ended, deal with it as you usually would. Try time-in again tomorrow. The child is given a clean slate. Time-in should never depend upon good behavior.

Session 3: Engagement and Understanding

This session will cover two of four behavioral essentials; engagement and understanding. Sessions to follow will cover the other two essentials; ability and motivation.

The Four Essentials

1. ***Engagement:*** Overcoming non-compliance or disappointing task performance must begin with engagement. Many parents grow frustrated when they think they have their child's attention, but don't; or when they know they don't have their child's attention, but can't get it. In either case, if the child and parent do not have each other's attention, compliance can hardly be expected. Similarly, if a child does not have his or her mind on a task, it should come as no surprise when the task is not performed well.
2. ***Understanding:*** Sometimes a child is paying attention but still does not get it. Understanding depends upon engagement but engagement does not guarantee understanding. Parents may not be aware of their ineffective communication or fuzzy directions. If a child does not understand exactly what is required and how to do it, then he will not be able to perform.
3. ***Ability:*** If the child is engaged and understands but does not have the ability to do what is required, frustration is inevitable. Sometimes, parents may not realize when they are asking their child to do something that is too hard.
4. ***Motivation:*** Finally, the child may be engaged, understanding and able; but there is "nothing in it" for him or her. There is no incentive for the child to comply or perform. He or she is simply unwilling. The demand represents somebody else's agenda. To overcome such inertia or resistance, something must drive the child forward.

How to Insure Engagement and Understanding

- ***"Two-step it"/ Separate engagement from instruction:*** Before you can expect your child to understand and comply, you must have his or her attention. If we give directions before we have engagement, we don't get very far. Sometimes, it may be as simple as saying your child's name before giving a command; other times, we need to be more creative, deliberate and patient.
- ***Stop one thing before starting another:*** If the child is preoccupied, he or she is less likely to register what you are saying. Before giving a command, try to wait for a break or the completion of the preferred activity. If you need to interrupt, try not to do this so suddenly that the

child becomes irritated or angry. Sudden interruption will only make him less in the mood to listen. For example, "Tommy, in 5 minutes you are going to have to stop what you are doing. Then I'm going to have something else for you to do." Or, "Jane, there's something I need to tell you. When can I have your attention?"

- **Pick the right timing:** Respect your child's needs, preferences, and behavioral rhythms. Make requests when your child will be in the most receptive mood. A child who is very distractible might be more responsive if instructions or reminders are given just before the task is to be done, at the point of performance. A child who is inflexible or slow to transition usually needs extra lead-time and preview.

- **Get close:** Parents often shout instructions from across the room, across the house, across the yard or across the playground. If you want to be sure that your child is ready to hear you, first get in your child's space, in your child's face, at your child's physical level.

- **Use all the senses:** For most parents, talking is the most natural mode of communication; but for some children, parents may need to modify their volume, pitch, rate and style of speech. For many children, talking can be a turn-off. Every parent should know which senses represent their child's most reliable communication channels. Does your child register information best through sound, sight, smell, taste, touch, or movement? How can input be modified to insure processing? What is the best way to communicate through each of the senses? Various modes of visual engagement and communication can be very effective: facial expression, gesture, body posture, demonstration, written directions, visual schedules, to-do lists, calendars, story books, pictures, computers, cartoons, or photographs. For each child, which type and style of visual aid will be most attention-grabbing? Teaching through touch and movement may include hands-on prompting, "walk-throughs", sand, and manipulatives.

- **Be creative. Make it fun:** A sense of humor helps. For example, Dad gets down eye-to-eye with his son Tommy. "Dad to Tommy, Dad to Tommy. Come in Tommy." Dad holds one palm open over his ear, the other hand fisted to his mouth, pretending to have a walkie-talkie: "Do you read me? Over." When Tommy looks at him, smiles and answers, "I read you Dad. Over", Dad knows he's ready to listen. Some parents hand their child a real walkie-talkie while talking into the other one.

- **Use empathy:** When a child is non-compliant, parents often fall into a trap. They try to explain. They try to teach. They try to motivate. But their child still fails to respond and might even "turn-off" more. This can feel like passive resistance or open defiance. However, it may be the parents have not put themselves in their child's shoes. They might be expecting things from their child before they have established the necessary emotional connection. The best way to connect with disengaged children is to pause and consider how they must feel, then let them know – verbally or non-verbally – that we understand. (See future session on Empathy.)

- **Anticipate, plan and communicate in advance:** Make a list of unmet behavioral expectations. How many problem situations really take you

by surprise? Hardly any. In fact, most challenging child behaviors are painfully predictable. We can almost always anticipate difficult situations at least a day in advance; more often, weeks or months ahead. Think about the usual trouble spots from waking until sleep: morning routine, mealtime, classroom, homework, unstructured/free/play time, TV/video/computer time, chores, evening routine, and bedtime. The regularity of these problems exasperates many parents. However, this predictability creates opportunities to anticipate, plan and strategize. Come up with a very specific and detailed schedule. Write down exactly what you expect your child to do and when, from waking up in the morning to going to sleep at night. Anticipate every problem situation. Formulate specific rules. A parent without clear schedules and rules is like a teacher without a lesson plan or a builder without a blueprint. If you are clear on your own expectations, you will be much better able to communicate them to your child.

- **Have good reasons. Give good reasons:** Some parents feel that their children should "just obey… (Why?)…because I said so!" True, children may be too young, inexperienced or immature to understand their parents' thinking. Even so, children are much more likely to do what they are told if they understand why. If parents' commands seem arbitrary or absurd, the child's defiance should not be surprising. Lack of explanation should never be mistaken for lack of motivation. Good reasons lead to good behavior.

- **Be specific. Break it down:** Make sure that your child understands exactly what to do and how to do it. Parents may falsely assume that their child "gets it" when their job description has not been sufficiently clear. What exactly do we want done when we tell a child to, "Clean your room," "Pick up your toys," "Get ready for bed," "Do your homework." Break-down complex or multi-step tasks into their simplest chunks. Be specific. Provide details. How is the task to be done? When? Where? By Whom? Use job description cards, pictorial, photographic or cartoon-style visual schedules /sequential instructions, checklists, etc.

- **Check understanding:** Make sure that your child has registered and understood what is expected. Ask for repetition of instructions: "I just want to make sure that you understand. Could you please tell me what you have to do?"

- **Repeat as needed:** Once may not be enough. Some children really do forget. They need repetition to learn. Make sure to review instructions as necessary. If review leads to immediate compliance, then "forgetting" was "real" and not just an avoidance ploy. Detailed contracts, written and signed, posted or filed, can prevent honest misunderstandings about previous agreements.

- **Prompt as needed:** Often, the problem is not forgetting *how* to do the task but forgetting *when* it needs to be done. Many people have significant difficulties with time awareness and time management. Children and parents should learn habitual use of practical reminder strategies and devices: schedules, calendars, prompts, cues, timers,

alarm clocks, alarm watches, post-it notes, posters, checklists, electronic planners, etc.

- ***Motivation:*** Good engagement and clear communication almost always lead to improved compliance. Children are often blamed for poor motivation when adults could do better planning and instruction. Rewards and punishments should never take the place of good teaching and supervision. Most children will be motivated to do well if they are engaged, if they understand, and if they are able. The overall strategy will always be to give whatever support is necessary to ensure initial success, and then gradually fade supports to promote independence.

Session 4: Motivation Through Positive Attention

Internal vs. external motivation

Children naturally want to please and they enjoy success. Usually, if a child is engaged, understands and is able, there will be "internal motivation" to comply with requests and perform tasks. Do this, *feel* that. The behavioral reinforcement comes from within the child. However, there are times when there is truly "nothing in it" for the child. Maybe there is something about the child's profile or the task that even creates a disincentive. In these situations, "external motivation" is necessary. External motivation means increasing the child's willingness to comply or perform by attaching positive or negative consequences to specific behaviors. Do this, *get* that. The behavioral reinforcement comes from outside the child. External motivators include positive attention (discussed in this session), natural consequences and rewards (discussed in later sessions).

Normal moral development: The shift from external to internal motivation

1. ***Dependence:*** Infants constantly refer to their parents for approval or disapproval. Toddlers live for their parents' attention. The young child does not yet carry his or her own behavioral compass. He or she is consequence driven, the most powerful consequence being the parent's immediate reaction. For many reasons, many older children - even adults - continue to need external motivation, despite adequate engagement, understanding and ability.
2. ***Transition:*** As children grow, they learn what to expect from the adults in their world. They internalize an external code. By remembering a long rich history of parental reactions, they carry inside "the family rule book"; sometimes acting in accordance with it, sometimes in defiance of it, but always with reference to it. They are still driven by consequence, but now the consequences are more delayed and more abstract; having to do with internal feelings such as shame, pride, and guilt. Driven by concern for what their parents would think, they act *as if* their parents were right there.
3. ***Independence:*** As children develop, they gradually begin to consider the reasons for different demands. Without reference to the reaction of adults, they ponder the difference between right and wrong. They examine their own lives; what is worthwhile, what is necessary, what is beautiful, what is comforting. They develop their own internal code. Sometimes, this evolving code incorporates many of their parents' values; sometimes not. Sometimes, the internally motivated child acts in ways that bring personal gratification. Other times, the internally motivated child acts knowing full-well that there may not be anything in it for him or her; it might even bring

hardship; but the child does it anyway because it is right. In the end, the child will have to live with him or herself.

Risks of using external motivation

- ***Missing the root of the problem:*** Before jumping to rewards and punishments, adults should think carefully about the source of their child's behavior problem. Remember, a child's apparent lack of motivation is usually secondary to problems with engagement, understanding or ability. Sometimes parents think a child needs a system of rewards when all that is really necessary are clear expectations and regular feedback. Some children feel that nothing they do matters; that any effort is simply not worth it. Direct discussion of this "learned helplessness" may be necessary. (See session six on "Empathy" and session 9 on "Problem Solving".)
- ***Undermining natural drive:*** External motivators can undermine a child's internal motivation or natural drive. If a child is already able and willing, the last thing we should do is suggest that he or she needs an even "better reason". We should never use external motivation systems when the child is providing his or her own positive reinforcement from within. If the challenge, pleasure or rightness of the task is already enough, then we should leave well-enough alone.
- ***Prolonging dependence:*** Overuse of external motivators can interfere with the development of self-reliance and the formulation of an internal moral code. Let's say a child needs some external motivation. Let's say this works. How long should we maintain such dependence? If some scaffolding is necessary to erect a building, when should that scaffolding be taken down? How do we give children the help they need to get started, but then withdraw that help so that they can learn to succeed on their own? Furthermore, as discussed above, our goal is not just self-reliance but moral development; that is, a sense of right and wrong. Children need to learn that some things should be done even when there is nothing in it for them.

Positive Attention for Compliance and Performance

Parents can increase compliance and encourage task performance by simply giving positive attention. Everybody needs to be noticed; some more than others.

- ***Simple noticing:*** When doing a particular task does not give your child enough of a warm and fuzzy feeling inside, just knowing that mom or dad is watching might be much more motivating. There are many jobs that children will perform gladly, if they just don't have to do them alone. Sometimes all we need to do is let our children know that we are there. Work along side, pull up a chair, or pop in and out. Just lend your presence. You may not have to say a thing.

- ***Effective praise:*** Most children live for their parent's approval. Positive feedback should be given in a way that is noticeable and meaningful to

each child. Most of us are accustomed to giving verbal feedback. For example, "I like the way you are picking up your things so carefully." For many children, non-verbal feedback can be powerful. Visual communication can be very effective. For example, thumbs-up, wink, appreciative smile, or proudly make a check on a to-do list. Applause combines both sights and sounds of appreciation. Don't forget touch: high-five, hug, and congratulatory rub of the head or back. Some very sensitive children react negatively to praise that is "too exuberant;" for them, a more subtle and muted approach works better. Other under-sensitive children need their parents to be more animated and dramatic.

- ***Comment on the quality of the performance, not the worth of the person***: Doing a good job has nothing to do with being a "good boy" or "good girl". Avoid generalizations; not just negative ones but positive too. Such statements not only might harm a child's self-image; they potentially cause confusion about what exactly is being praised. Be specific. "You're doing a good job lining up the spoons next to the knives," *rather than*, "Mommy loves you!" or "You're such a big girl".

- ***Praise immediately:*** Do not wait for completion of the task. Positive attention must be given *while* the child is doing the task, not just afterwards. To fuel initiation, it is very important to give your child positive attention as he or she is getting started. This is usually when praise is most needed but least given. To sustain effort, give additional positive attention intermittently throughout performance of the task. Some parents feel that they should withhold praise or attention "until the job is done". To the contrary, the child who is complimented early and often is more likely to see difficult tasks through to completion.

Spacing and Fading Positive Attention

Spacing and fading are used to teach children delayed gratification and self-reliance. After determining their child's current level of independent functioning, parents should target the next level up, not expecting too much or too little. Over time, parents should move from providing maximum to minimum support; that is, from what is sufficient to what is necessary. At first, if there is too little help, a child may lose motivation. To get him or her started, parents should give sufficient immediate positive attention. Over time, if there is too much help, a child may become too dependent. Therefore, once her or she responds, parents should deliberately "space and fade" their support; gradually toning down, shortening and delaying the positive attention, giving only what is truly necessary, eventually withdrawing help entirely. In this way, supported success leads to independent capability.

I am not comparing children to dogs, but I have found that the following example helps many parents understand what spacing and fading mean. My dog's trainer taught me how to incrementally tone down commands while lengthening both the time between positive comments and the distance from which such feedback is given. (With children, I recommend behavior-specific

praise such as "good sitting." With dogs, general praise such as "good girl" is fine.)

- **Getting started. Immediate, close, and clear.** To insure initial compliance: loud verbal command ("Sasha! Sit, stay!"); bold gesture (arm and finger forcefully pointing to the ground for "sit" then arm extended and palm out like a traffic cop for "stay"); tactile input (pushing down on her rear and pulling up on her collar); immediate verbal ("good girl"), tactile (back rub), and gustatory (doggie treat) positive feedback; all delivered very frequently and from very close range (face to face).
- **Gradually fade.** The volume of the verbal command is gradually lowered and even faded out altogether. The command gestures are gradually toned down to just a quick point of the finger for "sit" and a subtle hand sign for "stay". The tactile input is gradually softened and phased out entirely. Incrementally less doggie treat is provided until it is no longer necessary.
- **Gradually space.** Increase delays and distances. Positive attention is gradually spaced from being offered immediately upon compliance, to a few seconds lag, to many seconds, to minutes, and so on. Just as gradually, positive attention is delivered from farther and farther away.
- **Imagine.** Step one: "Sasha, Sit, stay." Compliance. Then immediately and without leaving her side, "Good girl." Step two: "Sit, stay." Compliance. Take one step away and then, after a few seconds, one step back, "Good girl." Step three: "Sit." Compliance. Take two steps away and then, after 10 seconds, back, "Good girl." As I space, I gradually fade until just the subtle hand gestures are necessary for compliance. I walk all way across the yard and hide behind a tree for 20 minutes. She dutifully waits for my return. I come back and say, "Good girl," even though I didn't need to.

Back to children. Commonly, when parents most want children to function independently, children most need attention. Spacing and fading work well when adults want their children to do something without interrupting them. Before spacing and fading, we must first communicate our expectations, stating very clearly what we want the child to do and that we do not want to be interrupted. Consequently, such commands require two specific parts:

"I want you to:
- Go to sleep
- Do your homework
- Play with your toys
- Read your book
- Practice piano

"And I don't want you to interrupt while I:
- Read my book
- Talk on the phone
- Do my work
- Talk to these people (visiting or visited)
- Rest

If parents give children more positive attention for independent behavior, they will not need to react with negative attention to disruptive behavior. By deliberately interrupting their own activities to intermittently give attention to their children, parents can prevent unwanted attention seeking. After giving immediate, close and high intensity attention to get the child started, parents can gradually space and fade, giving positive attention with gradually longer delays, from longer distances and with greater subtlety.

Susie has a history of interrupting her Mom during phone calls. Her mother decides to try some spacing. The phone rings. "Susie, I'm gong to have to get the phone. You play with your toys here while I talk - and no interrupting. Oh look, you're getting out your Jasmine figure!" Mom picks up the phone on the fourth ring, maintaining eye contact with Susie, giving her a smile and a wink as she answers: "Hi Marsha. How are you? Can I put you on hold for one second while I get my daughter occupied? Thanks. Be right back" Mom quickly comes back to Susie and gets down at eye level. "Susie, I see you've got Jasmine playing with Aladdin. That's great and thanks for letting mommy talk on the phone." She returns to the phone standing in the doorway to maintain visual contact with Susie. Gradually, while talking on the phone, Mom gives Susie fewer of these non-verbal signs of approval. After a minute, she can stretch the cord or wander with the cordless back to the floor near Susie and give more non-verbal and whispered praise for playing so well and not interrupting. Then back to the kitchen, this time deliberately if only momentarily breaking visual contact. Then visual contact and nonverbal positive attention become even less frequent and less prolonged. During this phone conversation and ones that follow over the months, the positive strokes for independent play continue but they are progressively subtler, fewer and farther between.

Session 5: Self-motivation and Learning from Experience

Children do not have to learn everything from their parents. In fact, children often learn better from their own experience. Although parents make a crucial difference, children need a chance to develop self-motivation. The strategies discussed below might require parents to set the stage a bit - but then back off. Parental restraint can give children the opportunity to appreciate the consequences of their own actions and learn for themselves.

Some basic principles of learning are worth reviewing. Children are more likely to repeat demands if they get what they want. They are less likely to repeat demands if their expectations are not met. Children are more likely to comply if something good follows. They are less likely to comply if there is nothing in it for them. These principles underlie some very simple and effective strategies.

Ignoring demands

Children often make demands which are inappropriate or unreasonable. Even if parents do not give-in to these demands, they need to be wary of giving too much attention to the demanding child. If the parent usually responds to demands, the child will learn to demand more. Children need opportunities to learn that they can not always get what they want; that they sometimes need to help themselves; and that certain types of demands may not be dignified with a response. If parents exercise restraint and ignore unreasonable demands, children will learn to "do-without" or "do-for-themselves". (Effective ignoring technique is covered in another session.) Such ignorable demands may involve:

- Providing pacifiers and bottles
- Unhealthy eating and drinking
- Impulsive eating and drinking
- Rocking or lying with to sleep
- Fetching
- Transporting
- Buying

Natural consequences

Children often resist parents' appropriate and reasonable suggestions on matters of comfort, health and success. If parents insistently repeat their requests, the child may intensify his or her resistance. Once a power struggle begins, it can only end with the parent over-powering or giving-in. Instead, parents could calmly make a suggestion - once and only once - then back off and allow the

child the opportunity to experience the natural consequences of their decisions. For example:

- What happens if I don't eat?
- What happens if I don't sleep?
- What happens if I don't put on a warm coat?
- What happens if I don't try to work out problems with siblings and friends?
- What happens if I don't do my homework?
- What happens if I don't clean up my room?
- What happens if I don't put my laundry in the basket?

Children can learn from natural consequences such as hunger, fatigue, cold, loneliness, teacher reaction, lost toys, and smelly socks. This is <u>not</u> a case for "tough love" or "the school of hard knocks". Parents should continue to assume a major role in paving their child's path to success. *They should never stand idly by and allow their children significant harm or suffering.* On the other hand, children should have the chance to learn for themselves from *minor* disappointment and distress. Parents can not prepare children for all of life's contingences. Even if they could, parents should not help their children over every little bump along the road.

Logical sequences

Non-compliant behavior is often the result of illogical sequencing; that is, children do not easily shift off something they *do* like onto something they do *not* like. Parents should analyze a typical day, from wake-up until sleep. Are regular problem situations and resistant behaviors the result of illogical sequencing? For example, does TV come *before* homework? Which comes first, niceties or necessities? For a mule to move forward, the carrot has to be in front, not behind.

Rules and routines should be adjusted to set the order right. Parents can withhold something that the child prefers until *after* the child does what is necessary. The child learns: "To get that, I must first do this." For example, in asking a child to come downstairs or get in the car, parents should not repeat requests or push from behind. They should position themselves downstairs or in the car and simply wait for the child to come. They should delay giving attention until after the child complies.   Sequencing strategies work best if there is a logical connection between what the parent requires and what the child wants. Examples:

- Get out of bed, go to the bathroom, and get completely dressed (including shoes). Then you can have your breakfast.
- Brush your teeth and get your back-pack ready. I'll be waiting for you in the car.
- Do your chores. Then you can have a friend over.
- Clean up all your toys. Then you can have a snack.

- Finish all your homework. Then you can watch TV or use the computer.
- Eat at least three pieces of each food on your dinner plate. Then you can have dessert.
- Put your dish in the sink and come upstairs. Then we can play a game of cards.
- Brush your teeth, get your pajamas on, and pull out your clothes for tomorrow morning. Then we can have story time.

Session 6: Motivation through Rewards

Why Give Rewards?

Some behavior scientists think that rewards and punishments should be front and center in any behavior management program. Not necessarily. Parents should remember that inappropriate use of rewards might miss the root of the problem, undermine natural drive, and prolong dependence. If parents raise each child with sensitivity to his or her unique profile, and use proactive strategies effectively, then rewards can be a relatively minor part of the overall program. So why give rewards at all?

Carefully designed reward systems can be a very useful and necessary part of a comprehensive behavioral strategy. Despite sufficient engagement, understanding, ability, and positive attention, some children might still lack enough motivation, especially if the task is unpleasant or difficult. There just may not be enough "gain to justify the pain"; not enough "will for there to be a way". Parents may feel that rewards *should* not be necessary, but this does not change the fact that rewards sometimes *are* necessary.

Reward systems usually modify a child's behavior by first modifying the parents' behavior. In establishing an effective reward system, parents are compelled to deal with the following issues:

1. *Clarity:* Children may not be completely clear about what they are supposed to do. Parents and other involved adults may not be sufficiently in-sync. Precisely, what is to be rewarded? Reward systems require everyone to agree on very specific expectations and draft very detailed job descriptions. Unstructured time gets "structured-up". In the process, parents and children come to understand exactly what needs to happen.

2. *Preparation:* Reward systems require adults to think ahead and prepare carefully. It is always better if parents determine consequences in advance, when they are calm and clear-headed, rather than in the moment, when high emotion or urgency might cloud their judgment.

3. *Custom-design:* Reward systems require adults to consider, not just the appropriateness of their expectations, but the motivational power of possible consequences to *their* child; that is, they need to individualize both the job and the rewards. Parents should motivate their child in ways that appeal to his or her unique and natural desires. Some children are more tuned-in to getting concrete things than abstract approval. Some children would rather work toward time spent doing

certain activities. What motivates one child may be meaningless to another.

4. ***Feedback:*** Some children need more feedback, more consequences, more often. Reward systems require adults to communicate with their child more regularly and immediately.

5. ***Monitoring:*** Sometimes it is hard for parents and children to tell whether they are making progress. Quantitative reward systems are very useful for monitoring, tracking and reporting. The number of checks, points, chips, or coins rewarded can serve to mark a child's progress towards specific goals. This promotes self-awareness.

6. ***Responsibility:*** Some children do not naturally appreciate the consequences of their behavior. Reward systems can help children connect cause and effect. By enhancing awareness of consequences, reward systems can promote self-awareness, self-ownership and self-control. Reward systems can also help children learn to accept responsibility, work hard, and spend wisely.

7. ***Independence:*** Some children become too dependent upon adult attention. A system of rewards can allow parents to deliberately space their feedback and fade their support. Rewards can help motivate children with gradually less immediate and direct adult involvement. Thoughtfully designed reward systems can serve as a bridge to delayed gratification and self-reliance.

How to Give Rewards

The Job

- *The job list:* First, parents should decide what *requires* a reward. The child may need rewards to do certain things. The child may need rewards to promote specific behaviors. These tasks and expectations go on the job list. For example, it may be the child's job to get dressed before coming down for breakfast. It may be the child's job not to hit his brother. Parents should think about their child's day, from wake-up until sleep. What situations are predictably problematic? Where are the regular behavioral breakdown points? What are the greatest sources of family tension? What does your child need to do better? Specific situations and behaviors should be put on the job list only if compliance is persistently difficult, despite sufficient engagement, understanding, ability and positive attention. Some children need short job lists, some long. Although parents control the job list, children maintain motivation better if easy jobs are thrown in with harder ones and if - whenever possible - they are given some degree of choice.
- *The job description:* For each target behavior, parents should clarify their expectations. Exactly what needs to done? Where? When? How? The job

description should be detailed and specific. Air tight. Black and white. Spelled out. No wiggle room. A good job description not only makes it easier for a child to succeed; sometimes, it is the essential missing piece. Sometimes a good job description makes the apparent need for rewards go away.

- *The job manual:* It is not enough for parents to be clear about the job description. They must effectively communicate their expectations. Job specifics should be demonstrated, illustrated, scheduled, broken down, written down – whatever it takes to insure understanding.

- *The job understood:* If the job description is done properly, parents and children should be able to recite or demonstrate specifically what it takes to earn the reward. If the child has not reached this level of job understanding, then parents need to do a better job of clarifying and explaining; or consider the possibility that they are expecting too much. If the child does not understand the job description, he or she will not be able to do it.

- *The job manager:* Once children get used to the idea of being rewarded for certain behaviors, they might want to add to their profits by adding to their job list. This is against the rules. Parents should calmly remind their child of the reason for the reward system. Rewards are designed to motivate the child to do specific jobs or mind specific behaviors. Jobs are not created for the sake of winning rewards. Parents decide what needs to be done; not children.

The Rewards

- *The reward list:* Although parents decide what goes on the job list, the child's preferences should guide what goes on the reward list. What would make this job worth the effort? Rewards that truly motivate must be customized for each child. What pleases or excites one child might displease or bore another. Some want material things. Others prefer activities. Some like intellectual stimulation, books or quiet activities. Others crave an adrenaline rush. For young or immature children, parents will have to come up with rewards on their child's behalf. Children who can participate in the discussion should have their say. A good way for parents to start: "I'm going to be asking you to do some things. I'd like to have a way to show you how much I appreciate your efforts. Maybe there are some things you'd like to have? Maybe there are some things you would like to do. Let's make a reward list." Although there is a wide range of possible rewards, individual reward lists should reflect individual preferences and individual needs. (For extra discussion about money, see below.)

- *Novelty and flexibility:* Some children are motivated by rewards that are new and different. These children do not want to get lots of the same thing. They want to consume, not accumulate. They might like grab-bags full of surprises. They do best with an ever-changing and varied menu of rewards; some cheap and easy, some expensive and harder to get, others in-between. Reward lists for these children should include perishables,

such as bubble bath and food treats; or special activities, such as movies and bowling. Flexibility and novelty are sometimes served by using money as the medium and our great big retail world as the bottomless treasure chest.

- *Familiarity and predictability*: Some children are motivated by rewards that are well-known favorites. They like accumulation. They would rather collect 500 of the same thing. These children prefer to hold onto symbols of success – tokens and stickers, stars on calendars and checks on charts - without necessarily cashing them in. They might prefer to save money in their piggy bank; for counting, not spending. In school, these children might be very motivated by grades. They might have very short reward lists - maybe just "one big thing" to work towards. They feel better knowing exactly what their reward will be.

Pay Day

- *What is each job worth?* Although children are encouraged to help develop a reward list, parents decide how hard it will be to earn rewards. Parents should examine the job list. Harder jobs require greater incentives. Children should earn more for relatively difficult jobs, less for relatively easy ones. For example: A child who has a great deal of trouble getting dressed on time might be given 3 points for that job. If getting undressed in the evening is not quite so difficult, then say only 1 point for that. What is easy for one child might be difficult for another.
- *What does each reward cost?* Parents should examine the reward list. In order for a reward to have motivational power, it has to be special enough and not too hard to earn. On the other hand, parents can spoil their children if rewards are too special or too easily won. Often, children want rewards that are unaffordable, unacceptable, or undesirable. That's fine. They can *wish* for anything they want: a pet chimpanzee, a $3000 guitar, black face paints, electronic Play Station, a Ferrari, a nose ring, a trip to Tahiti – "Great! Let's write it all down." But then, reality time. The parent says: "Let me tell you what you will have to do to earn those things." A potential argument becomes a "teaching opportunity". Children have no say over what it will take to earn specific rewards. Parents consider their own time, convenience, and feelings about the reward, plus - of course - the money. Then parents set the price accordingly. For example, a child may *really* want a new electronic Play Station but his parents have serious reservations. In this case, parents might be willing to give-in but only if the child truly earned this reward by working *very* hard over an *extended* period of time. A child might insist on a chance to earn some rewards that parents should be unwilling to provide; for example, if the desired reward is either too expensive (the trip to Tahiti) or too undesirable (the nose ring) or both (the pet chimpanzee). By simply setting the price impossibly high, parents can grant these rewards in fantasy but deny them in reality, thereby teaching an important lesson: you can't always get what you want.
- *Siblings and fairness:* Parents often feel that "fairness" requires them to make rewards available to siblings too. However, fairness is all about

individual need, not equality. Because every child has different needs, fairness requires parents to treat their children <u>un</u>equally: "In our family, we treat each other as unique individuals. We do different things for each child because each child is different." If both siblings truly need rewards, fine. Just be sure to individualize each reward system. If one child needs rewards and another does not, that's fine too. In these cases, parents can counter their guilt or their child's jealousy by deliberately increasing time-in (see session 1), not by negotiating.

- *Turn assumed rights into earned privileges:* Children have the right to essential food, clothing, shelter, safety, education, love and affection. Period. Everything else is a privilege. Parents may *choose* to grant certain privileges unconditionally. It is our right and pleasure as parents to give our children things that they do not really need. However, children should not take these gifts for granted. Many things that children customarily assume as rights should be moved to the reward list as privileges to be earned. A huge fringe benefit of using a reward system can be an education in financial planning, self-control, and responsibility. For example, a boy impulsively demands a cheap toy. Instead of long-winded explanations or arguments, parents can simply reply, "OK". He looks up a bit bewildered but pleased. The parent casually asks the child, "How much does that cost? Do you have the money?" Or the parent can simply wait for the person at check-out to ask for the payment. In any case, the child is on his own. No IOUs. If he has the money at home, it does him no good now. Next time he will know to plan ahead and bring it along. So much for impulsive shopping. If he brings money with him and loses it, a lesson is learned about carelessness. If he has thought ahead and has his hard-earned money, then he will have to face some tough choices about how to spend it. If he makes a poor choice, he will learn from his mistake. In any case, parents can relax and let market dynamics work. (See previous session about natural consequences and learning from experience.) Trips to the mall can become teaching opportunities instead of battles. If children earn enough money to achieve some degree of financial independence, they proud of their purchases and learn some important lessons about responsible money management.

- *The cost to parents:* Reward systems require parents to spend energy, time and money; but parents should not forget how much they spent before. Parents should put out at least as much for earned privileges as they had previously paid, when these same things were assumed rights, unearned and not contingent upon the child's performance. If parents had been "spoiling", they may come to realize a net savings. The child's spending will now be limited by his or her earned income, not the parents'. However, if parents are serious about teaching responsibility and promoting independence, the child should be rewarded sufficiently. They will need enough purchasing power to enjoy the fruits of their labors. Things are expensive. Parents should decide how much time and money to budget per week and make that amount available for earning.

- *Wages earned:* Once parents decide on the behaviors to be rewarded, the relative worth of each job, and the budget, they should simply divide the weekly amount available for earning by the number of "possible points"

or "jobs". This will determine the value of each "point" or "job". In addition to wages earned, some parents want to give their children allowance. If so, the amount of such <u>un</u>earned income should be *very* small.

- *Teaching money management to children:* If parents use money as a reward, they should not just hand it over. Taking full advantage of this teaching opportunity, there are some important issues to think about and discuss with the child.
    - o Spending and carrying: A specific percentage of earnings should be available for spending. Children should not be allowed to carry large sums of money. They should be taught to keep most of their money in a specific secure place. A small but useful portion of this spending money should be available for carrying. Parents should help their child plan how to carry their money safely. Sometimes children will want to buy things that cost more than they are allowed to carry. They will not be able to make such purchases without thinking ahead. Debit cards are an option for mature adolescents.
    - o Saving: A specific percentage of earnings should be set aside as savings, and kept in a home piggybank, safe or real bank account. Parents can teach children about interest and how to track their savings using computer software or old-fashioned bank books. Parents and children should develop clear guidelines about when it is ok to dip into savings.
    - o Charity: Many families set a specific small percentage of earnings for charitable giving. Children are never too young to think about how to give, compassionately and effectively.

Payment

- *For "start behaviors":* Some children need a reward to *do* something. Certain tasks are required but may not be intrinsically motivating; for example, homework, morning and evening routines, and chores. Parents can give rewards when these "start behaviors" are done. "You do this, you get that."
- *For "stop behaviors":* Some children need a reward to *keep from doing* something. They have difficulty inhibiting impulsive or out-of-control behaviors; such as hitting, biting finger-nails, or talking out of turn. Parents can give rewards at set intervals if the child has successfully inhibited such behaviors. However, giving a reward for "stop behaviors" may be impractical and ineffective. Another technique for rewarding "stop behaviors" is called "cost-response". Cost-response for "stop behaviors" means, "If you do that, the response is going to cost you." One way to do cost-response is to give the reward at the beginning of an observation period. Then the reward is the child's to keep or lose. For example, 10 coins could be put in a jar at the beginning of the day. The child is told that one coin will be removed each time he or she inappropriately touches another child. The number of coins left at the end of the day are then his

or hers to keep. The jar is refilled at the beginning of the next day. Another way to do cost-response is to simply take away a privilege; such as, TV, computer or video game time or use of a favorite toy. In other words, the parent takes away something that the child already has. As with all behavioral strategies, this take-away should be discussed in advance. Otherwise, it can feel too arbitrary and dependent upon the parent's emotional state.

- *Immediate payment:* For some children, rewards must be *immediate* to be effective. This is generally true for younger or impulsive children. Delayed fulfillment of a promise - one month, one week, one day, one hour, even thirty seconds later - might be too late to motivate. For these "here and now" children, the behavioral consequence must occur in the moment, at the point of performance. You did it, you get it - immediately. Obviously, parents should not drop everything and run to the store. Instead, very prompt payment in tokens, coins, list checks, index card tears, chart stickers, or hand marks can work as immediate IOUs, when gratification would otherwise be much too delayed. Like getting a paycheck, it feels good even before you cash or spend it.

- *Delayed payment:* For other children it is better to *delay* their gratification. This is generally true for older children or very persistent children. Feedback that is too frequent and immediate might be distracting or demeaning. Some children care more about things that takes longer to get. Some children experience growing anticipation if they track their progress towards a reward. They can add pieces to a puzzle which pictures the reward, color in a rising column with the reward pictured at the top, or use computer graphing software. Again, many children do well with staggered rewards; such as, relatively immediate feedback (tokens, stickers, points), which they can trade somewhat later in the day or week (for money or time towards an activity), which can be actually spent, still later, according to their mood or choice.

- *Consistency:* Whatever the payment system, the *timing* of the reward should be understood by parents and child. Parents who do not promptly and punctually honor their promises can hardly expect children to honor theirs. Reliable follow-through is crucial to motivation.

Tracking Job Performance

- *Record:* Whether rewarding "start behaviors" or noting failure to "stop behaviors", parents should quantify job performance. Compliance should be measured in earned tokens, marks, stickers, checks, poker chips, index card tears, behavior report card ratings, marbles or money. Job performance should be tracked documented by recording these numbers, clearly and regularly, on a master chart or calendar.

- *Report:* Quantifying and recording behavior facilitates communication between teachers, parents, babysitters, consulting professionals and children.

- *Track:* Parents and children can track progress and critically evaluate the effectiveness of behavioral strategies. Totals or tallies can be made at the

end of each day, week and month. Some families graph results. Trends can be noticed and analyzed. Most behavior management systems do not work perfectly. Tracking allows participants a chance to make repairs. Tracking creates opportunities to teach self-assessment. Parents should ask their child: "How did this day - this week, this month, and this year - compare to the last? What do you think explains the trend? What seems to be working? What needs to change?" Tracking can motivate children to improve performance consistency. Some parents offer substantial bonuses for breaking daily, weekly, and monthly records. Tracking allows children to see their progress and take pride.

- *Promoting independence:* If previous behavioral goals are being met, parents need not abandon an effective reward system. Instead, parents can set new goals to promote further skill development and self-reliance. They can offer greater rewards for more difficult and independent work. For example, Tammy has been doing a good job, consistently earning one point (equal to 25 cents) for coming down to the breakfast table on time. However, her mom has had to give Tammy multiple reminders to "get moving". Tammy's mother offers a promotion. From now on, she will get two points for getting to the breakfast table on time - without reminders. Once Tammy masters this, her mother plans another promotion: four points for coming on time without any reminders *and* preparing her own breakfast. Tammy's mother is adding to the workload but increasing the reward. In this way, she maintains motivation while building skill and independence. Parents who are concerned that pay raises will allow their child to amass great wealth while draining the family budget should shift more assumed rights to the earned privilege list.

Session 7: Time-out and Ignoring

TIME-OUT

Why use time out? Time-out should be used when it is necessary to create physical and emotional distance. Parents and children often get "sucked into" increasingly intense and prolonged interactions. The purpose of time-out is to immediately defuse explosive situations. Instead of spanking or yelling, parents can use time-out to convert misbehaviors that cannot be ignored into misbehaviors that can be ignored. This is sometimes necessary to:

1. ***Protect persons and property***. Time-out immediately puts a stop to dangerous or harmful behaviors.
2. ***Prevent counter-productive counter-intensity.*** Time-out allows for disengagement in situations that otherwise "turn ugly".

For what behaviors should time-out be used? Time-out should be used for behaviors that are *very harmful* and *cannot be ignored*. This includes behaviors that cause <u>significant and un-ignorable</u>:

1. ***Injury*** to any person; such as, hitting, biting, kicking, and throwing dangerous objects.
2. ***Damage*** to property.
3. ***Emotional harm***; such as, verbal assaults.
4. ***Disruption*** to normal family or social functioning; such as might occur at the dinner table or in the classroom. Some behaviors that are "insignificant and ignorable" might *become* "significant and un-ignorable" if they are *repeated*. For relatively minor offenses, parents should first try to ignore, distract, or redirect. If this is immediately successful, then parent and child can move on. But if the child continues to misbehave, relentlessly and intolerably, then parents should use time-out as soon as this pattern becomes apparent.

Time-out is <u>not</u> used to:

1. *Punish.* Time-out is designed to simply keep parents from unintentionally "fueling the fire". It is used *instead* of punishments – such as spanking – which only increase animosity and tension.
2. *Make a child feel remorse or say, "I'm sorry".* It is very important for children to understand the effect of their behavior on others. But time-out is not designed to instill empathy. Some children will say they are sorry to avoid being put in time-out or win early release from time-out. Nonetheless, it is important that parents follow through.
3. *Teach.* As a consequence of being put in time-out, children should learn that harmful behaviors will not be tolerated or attended. Some children benefit from time-out because it allows them time and space to think things over. Although we hope children "learn a lesson" from time-out,

failure to learn does not necessarily mean that time-out did not work. Time-out is most appropriate and effective at those emotionally charged times when parents are least able to teach and children are least able to learn. If the child is emotionally available for discussion and learning, then parents should use empathy and collaborative problem solving (see future session), not time-out.

How should parents do time-out? When putting a child in time-out, parents' mantra should be: *"immediate, non-emotional, non-verbal"*. When time-out fails, it is usually because the parent has delayed, blown-up or talked too much. If the behavior justifies a time-out, then there should be no extra warnings and no second chances. The parent must remain in control of his or her own emotions. Parents should be stern, serious and matter of fact. The message should be: "You, my child, may be out of control but I, your parent, am not." There should be no discussion at all. If misbehavior warrants a time-out, then no explanation should be necessary. Talking or admonishing just prolongs the interaction. It is too late for apologies or negotiations. The whole idea is to avoid any back and forth. If parents delay implementation, talk too much or get emotional, then the vicious cycle of intensity and counter-intensity is fueled by the use of time-out itself. *Remember: immediate, nonverbal, and non-emotional.*

Parents should think in advance about the best technique for getting their resistant child into time-out. If the child goes to time-out immediately and independently, fine. If not, then the parent can firmly hold both shoulders from behind and march the child to his or her room. If the child resists, then immediately get behind the child, bend at the knees, circle one arm firmly around the waist and the other around the chest. Pick him or her up so that the back is tight against your chest. If the child flails, kicks or screams, just keep carrying him or her to the room. The child can move his or her arms and legs in the air but you have complete control of the trunk. Again there should be no verbal or emotional response from the parent during this transport phase – no matter what. The goal is to get the child in time-out as quickly and efficiently as possible.

If there are other younger children, they can first be moved to a safe place. However, placement of the offending child In time-out should be so quick that parents can return to the other children without unsafe delay.

After placing the child in time-out, the parent should turn, walk out and shut the door - immediately, non-emotionally and non-verbally. When your child is in time-out, there should be no interaction at all. If you know your child is very likely to leave the time-out room, it may be necessary to use a lock, by either reversing the door knob or installing a heavy sliding bolt, high on the outside of the door. Parents should not hold doors shut against a struggling child or get into secondary battles with defiant escapees. Psychological scars can be caused by prolonged intense interactions between out-of-control parents and children, not by immediate and non-emotional establishment of a "demilitarized zone".

Anticipate that your child will test the system at first. Expect high intensity children to increase the volume of their screams, trash their rooms- you name it,

they will try it – anything to get you to react. Don't. Children give up this type of behavior once they learn that it does not get any reaction.

Where should parents place the child for time-out? Usually, the child's bedroom is a *safe and away place* for time-out. The bedroom is out of the mainstream of traffic. Bedroom doors serve as effective visual, auditory and physical barriers. If there are safety concerns in the child's room, then parents should take care of these in advance. Some windows may need to be (fire-safe) secured. Dangerous or valuable items should be removed. This way, anxious parents should not have to check a child during time-out to "make sure everything is ok." Property damage is usually less of a concern in the child's room than elsewhere. It's all their "stuff" anyway. Allowing a very volatile child to trash his or her own room beats the alternatives.

The only *reason <u>not</u> to use the child's room* is if he or she cannot be moved there. This happens when:

1. The child's size and strength or the parent's own physical limitations create an unfavorable balance of power.
2. The bedroom is shared with a sibling and time-out might require moving the sibling or cause unfair damage or displacement of the sibling's possessions.

In these cases, there are *alternatives to the bedroom*:

1. *Other rooms:* Some parents use bathrooms or other available rooms if they are closer. But possible problems with safety, property damage, and escape must be anticipated.
2. *"Room-less" time-outs:* A chair or bottom step out of the mainstream of traffic might suffice. For children who just turn themselves into immovable dead weight, the parent can simply declare: "You are in time-out!" The spot they are on magically becomes the time-out place. These alternatives only work if the child's temperament is such that he or she is unlikely to leave time-out. Unfortunately, most children who need to be put in time-out, need walls and doors.
3. *The "reverse time-out":* If walls and doors are necessary but the child can not be moved in, then parents can go to their room and lock the child out. This certainly creates the necessary distance. However, the fact that an unsupervised and angry child is free to do anything anywhere else in the house – or even leave the house altogether - might make this approach too uncontrolled and unsafe.
4. *The car and public places:* If you are in the car, drive to the nearest safe place and pull over. Get out, turn your back to the car and ignore for the allotted time. Do not threaten to leave a child alone in a locked car. Parents may want to lean back against the car and do some reading. Child-safety settings or remote control locks prevent dangerous escape. If you are in a public place, pick up the child, carry him to the car as described, and use the car as a portable time-out place. Remember: immediate, nonverbal, and non-emotional.

When should time-out end? Time-out should last one minute per year of age for minor offenses and two minutes per year of age for major offenses. When time-out is over, simply open the door and say: "You may come out now." At this point, there should be a clean slate. The child should *not* be made to apologize. There should be no discussion about the incident. The child has served his or her time. It is now time to move on.

If it is time to end time-out but the child is still screaming and carrying on, parents should simply say (through the door and one time only): "You can come out of time-out when you are calmed down and ready." The child should not be released if they are likely to misbehave in a way that would land them right back in. They certainly should <u>not</u> be expected to come out smiling and saying, "I love you." We just don't want them to come out swinging or cursing. For release, we require acceptable behavior, not good mood. If parents would like to review the incident for teaching purposes, this discussion should be deferred until later in the day or even the next day, when everyone is calm and more able to listen to each other.

Why doesn't time-out always work?

Parents commonly complain that they have tried time-out and it does not work. There are several possible reasons:

1. ***Over use:*** Time-out might be used for the *wrong behaviors* or for the *wrong reasons*. Sometimes people use time-out when it would be better to ignore or give empathy. Time-out is not for every behavior problem.
2. ***Not enough proactive problem solving:*** An ounce of prevention truly is worth a pound of cure. Why use time-out for difficult situations that could be avoided altogether? If we do time-in, give positive attention for compliance, and think creatively to insure engagement, understanding, ability and motivation, then the need for time-out should lessen. If the number of time-outs per day is not steadily declining within a week or two, it is a sure sign that more work needs to be done on the front-end. Our real goal is to understand and help a child so effectively that we do not have to use any time-outs at all.
3. ***Poor technique:*** Many parents do not do time-out right. Usually this means not being *immediate, non-verbal and non-emotional*.
4. ***Physical mismatch:*** For some very violent, large and strong children, time-out can not be implemented. In these cases, we must use more ignoring, empathic engagement and/ or problem solving.
5. ***Not enough "time-in":*** Unless adults are giving lots of positive attention, time-out will be ineffective - and it might even backfire. For example, if a child is struggling with unappreciated learning problems in the classroom, he or she might get negative feedback from the teacher. Frustration and anxiety mounts. The child acts out and is sent to the principal's office. There, he or she gets some attention and is spared further humiliation. In this way, time-out can be seen by the child as safe-harbor. Similarly, some parents might focus too much on their children's misbehavior. They find themselves giving their children too much negative attention. These

children might actually welcome time-out as a reprieve. Some boys and girls misbehave just to get any kind of reaction out of their parents. Children need to know that they will get positive attention for good behavior. They must get positive attention just for being who they are. This is why we implement time-in before time-out

What about school and time-out?

If there is truly a safety issue, a time-out place can be prepared and used according to the principles outlined above. However, teachers and administrators should be extremely careful about misusing time-out. In school, there is greater potential for backfiring. Humiliation, misunderstanding, animosity, and unenforceability all make this behavior management strategy more difficult in the classroom setting. As mentioned, some children act-out to escape tasks or situations that make them feel frustrated or anxious. Special attention should be paid to identifying patterns of misbehavior and underlying causes. Professional consultation can be helpful. Accommodations might prevent the trouble altogether. Some children just need a place to calm down temporarily. A quiet place can be provided and gently suggested. Better yet, children can be taught to ask for help or a break.

IGNORING

Time-out and ignoring both avoid power struggles by immediately creating physical and emotional distance. Time-out can be thought of as a *sometimes* necessary step on the way to ignoring; "*sometimes* necessary" because some behaviors just can not be immediately ignored. When ignoring would have regrettable consequences, then time-out is required. But when parental intervention is unnecessary or undesirable, then ignoring should be used instead. In general, parents should use ignoring much more than time-out.

What behaviors should parents ignore?

Some undesirable behaviors could result in power struggles but do not require a time-out or any response at all. Ignoring should be used for behaviors that are:

1. Relatively **harmless**; of no significant consequence.
2. Easily **convertible**, from un-ignorable to ignorable (without requiring a time-out).
3. Probably **self-limiting,** not likely to become repetitive, if parents do not react; potentially fueled by attention, more likely to become repetitive, if parents do react.
4. Potentially **developmental**; more likely to result in independent problem solving, motivation and learning if the child is allowed to experience and cope with the "natural consequences" of their behavior without parental involvement. (See session on "Motivation Through Natural Consequences.")

These include:

1. ***Minor injury*** to any person; such as, non-repetitive bumping, swiping or pushing.
2. ***Minor damage*** to property; such as breaking a cheap toy or crayon.
3. ***Unkind talk***; such as, verbal jabbing, whining, complaining, demanding.
4. ***Minor disruption*** to normal family or social functioning; such as arriving late or leaving early from the dinner table, cheating, or interrupting.

Note: Many sibling spats fall into this category.

How to ignore

Effective ignoring puts a lid on verbal *and* non-verbal communication. There should be no words spoken. Parents should stifle disapproving facial expressions, such as the exasperated scowl. No weary sighs. No angry posturing. No stomping off. No whistling or singing. These and other non-verbal messages do not constitute true ignoring. A parents' body language should "say" to the child, "What you just did is of no consequence. It doesn't matter. Whatever." Stay very non-emotional. Immediately but slowly walk away. Sometimes it is enough to just turn away. Occupy yourself with something else. Read the paper. Do the dishes. For ignoring to work, parents must remember: immediate, non-emotional, non-verbal.

Converting potentially non-ignorable behaviors into ignorable ones

1. ***Retreat:*** If ignoring is difficult because the child is *very* persistent, parents can calmly relocate themselves to another room. If necessary, parents can retreat behind their own locked bedroom door. Leaving the child unattended in the rest of the house assumes that there are no safety issues.
2. ***Distraction or redirection:*** For the relatively minor behavior problems of younger children, it may be appropriate to calmly distract or redirect. Although the parent is not truly ignoring the child, they are ignoring the child's misbehavior.
3. ***Triage:*** If the child inflicts *minor* injury upon the parent, then the parent should simply walk away. For minor injury to sibling or playmate, the parent can quickly get his or her body between the two children and then distract or redirect. Parents can very deliberately withdraw attention from the perpetrator while attending to the victim.
4. ***Removal:*** For inappropriate use of toys, food or utensils, parents should simply remove the object or items, remembering good technique: immediate, non-emotional and nonverbal.

When Ignoring Fails

As previously discussed, some behaviors that are "insignificant and ignorable" might become "significant and un-ignorable." Despite a parent's best efforts to defuse these situations, some children can be very persistent in their defiance and repetitive in their misbehavior. Parents can be too tolerant of significant disruption to normal family or social functioning. Parents should not allow themselves or others to become physical or emotional punching bags. Children need limits. Parents should be sure that they are not ignoring behaviors that should result in a time-out.

Counting-out: One popular approach for persistent non-compliance requires the parent to issue a short series of firm numerical warnings, before using time-out: "That's one, that's two, that's three- you're in time-out" (See Phelan, 1-2-3 Magic.) Counting-out should not be used as a global behavior management strategy. It should not be used when an immediate time-out is necessary. However, counting-out may be useful in borderline situations where immediate, non-verbal (numbers are not the same as words) and non-emotional *warning* may be an effective behavioral stop-gap.

Time-out and counting-out should not be used when it is better to ignore. Most important, proactive strategies reduce the need for reactive strategies such as counting-out, time-out and ignoring and should never be abandoned or displaced from the center of a behavior management plan.

Session 8: Empathy

Why give empathy?

- ***Staying out of power struggles:*** Remember the power struggle? The child does not meet the parent's expectation. The parent repeats the command. The child resists. Back and forth they go with increasing intensity, until the parent either overpowers or gives up. We have discussed how to stay out of power struggles; by using proactive strategies, ignoring for relatively harmless behaviors, and using time-out for behaviors that can not be ignored. Although ignoring and time-out are both effective strategies for avoiding power struggles, empathy usually works just as well, and without creating physical and emotional distance; rather, bringing parents and children closer together. Empathy helps children feel understood. Empathy teaches children the language of emotion. And empathy opens the door for collaborative problem solving.

- ***Helping your child feel understood:*** Children need to understand their parents' expectations, but parents need to understand their children's thoughts and feelings. Parents need to seriously consider the world through their child's eyes. When a parent understands their child's thoughts and feelings, and communicates that understanding to their child, then the child feels loved, the child feels supported, and the child learns to understand him or herself.

- ***Teaching your child the language of emotion:*** Every time a parent shows empathy, the child learns about his own feelings. Looking at the empathic parent's face, the child sees a reflection of his or her inner self. Hearing the empathic parent's words, the child learns to describe his or her own feelings. By demonstrating the verbal and non-verbal language of emotion, parents teach children to identify their own feelings, put their feelings into words and think about their feelings.

- ***Opening the door for collaborative problem solving:*** Until children feel understood by their parents and learn to understand their own feelings, they remain out-of-control bundles of emotional reactivity. Empathy calms. Empathy turns the irrationality switch off and the rationality switch on. Empathy makes people emotionally available to one another. Empathy opens the door for clear thinking and collaboration problem solving.

How to give empathy

- ***Taking the foot off the brake:*** When parents feel that their child is emotionally "skidding off the road," their first reflex is to "slam on the brakes". Parents repeat, explain, or reprimand. Their child not only fails to respond. He or she might spin further out of control. Before reacting, parents need to pause and ask, "If I was in my child's shoes, how would I feel?" Pausing to answer this simple question is the essence of empathy.

- ***Turning the wheels in the direction of the skid***: When things are not going well, parents often shift immediately into problem solving mode. It's like trying to turn a skidding car too quickly back onto an icy road. The skid gets worse. As the empathic parent appreciates their child's emotional status, their *non-verbal language* shows it. The empathic parent naturally uses facial expression, body posture, hand gesture, touch, interpersonal distance, vocal tone, even nearby props to reflect their sensitivity. Without saying a word, the empathic parent says, "I understand," and connects with the child's feelings.

- ***Letting the car slow down:*** The empathic parent takes the time to help the child put their feelings into *words*. Sometimes, the only way to regain traction is to take your foot off the gas and just let the wheels turn in the direction of the skid. For example:
  o "I guess you really don't feel like doing this right now."
  o "That sure is frustrating!"
  o "It seems like you don't want to stop what you're doing."
  o "It sounds like you're pretty angry."
  o "That looks hard to do."
  o "Bummer."
  o "You were really expecting that to go differently."
  o "I'd feel a little nervous about that too."

- ***Gradually turning the car back onto the road:*** By pausing to consider the child's feelings, helping the child feel understood, and teaching the child to use words to describe their own feelings, the empathic parent stays connected and helps the child regain control. Now, there is emotional traction between the parent and the child. Even if the child is not immediately ready for problem solving, at least they will be later. The skid has been safely stopped. It may be time to gently turn back onto the road. Sometimes just reframing the problem is enough. With a sympathetic tone of voice, the parent might say, "You want to do this, but I'd like to do that. I guess we want different things right now." Or the parent might go ahead and extend an invitation to problem solve: "I guess we've got a real problem here. But you know, I bet if we put our heads together, we can figure this out. What would be a good compromise?" If the child is ready for problem solving, great. If not, that's ok. When a problem is pressing, it is harder to stay calm, think clearly and communicate productively. If might be better to do the problem solving

later. However, problem solving is not always necessary. Sometimes, all the child needs to "get back on the road," is just to feel understood.

Session 9: Problem Solving

When children are very young, parents may have to solve problems on their behalf. But once they are old enough, children can be coached to solve their own problems. Parents should see problems as teaching opportunities. With practice, children can learn "STEPS" to solve problems more independently.

To begin, rather than jumping in with their own suggestions, parents can shift responsibility for problem solving to the child; simply asking, "Hey, what's up?" Patiently and empathically, they may need to wait for a response or help their child find the words. If the child is engaged and emotionally available, he or she may heed an optimistic invitation: "I bet if we put our heads together, we can think of some ways to solve this problem." Problem solving "STEPS" can begin. However, if the child is just not ready, parents may have to move on, deferring discussion until the time is right.

"*STEPS*" TO PROBLEM SOLVING:
1. **_S_**ay what the problem is.
2. **_T_**hink about all possible solutions.
3. **_E_**xamine each possible solution.
4. **_P_**ick the best solution.
5. **_S_**ee how it works.

HOW TO DO THE "*STEPS*":

1. **_S_ay what the problem is.**
   - *Avoid pessimistic generalizations:* When children are asked, "What's the problem?" they often answer as if the situation is hopeless. They use words that make problems seem unsolvable; words such as, "never", "forever", "always", "everywhere", "nowhere", "everybody", "nobody", "no way", "every way", "everything", and "nothing". Parents can be unnecessarily pessimistic too; maybe because of previous failures, exaggerated worries, unrealistic expectations or simple lack of knowledge. A sense of helplessness can be paralyzing, self-perpetuating, and contagious. Parents and children can make each other feel stuck.
   - *Avoid irrational thinking:* A "can't do" attitude is often the product of exaggerated or distorted thinking. Children and parents can fall into the habit of overstating problems. They catastrophize. They make mountains out of molehills. They think everything is a big deal, black and white, all or none, perfection or disaster.
   - *Define the problem situation in specific, solvable terms***:** Pessimistic generalizations are avoidable. Words like "never" should *never* be

used in a problem description. Instead, parents and children should *"Do the Ws":* What is the problem? Where does it happen? When does it happen? Who does it happen with? Why is it a problem? (How does it make you feel?) They should use the word "some". Most problems are about some specific situation, not all of life. Most problems happen in some specific places, not everywhere. Most problems happen at some specific times, not always. Most problems involve some specific people, not everybody. Most problems generate some specific feelings that can be labeled and understood. Framed this way, most problems are more solvable than people think. Optimists do the Ws.

- *Think in shades of gray*: Irrational and distorted thinking *is* avoidable if parents and children use vocabulary which describes the middle ground. For younger children: "Big deal, little deal, medium deal," or "red light, green light, yellow light." Non-verbal children can point to a smiley face, flat-mouth face, or frowning face; or they can signal with thumb-up, thumb-down, or thumb sideways. For older children, "If 0 is disaster, 10 is perfection, and 1-9 is everything in between, what number is this?" They can say the number, write it, or point to a number grid. (Follow-up question: "Is the number for how this problem *makes* you feel different from the number for how you think it *should* make you feel?" If so, "Why?")

2. *T*hink about all possible solutions.
   - *Brainstorm:* Parents and children should make a list. They can take turns offering solutions to the problem. Children and parents often make suggestions that neither would have been able to think of on their own. Take out a piece of paper and write down all the possible solutions. Be sure to give the child a chance to suggest his or her own ideas first.
   - *Anything goes:* Good ideas, bad ideas, silly ideas, serious ideas, simple ideas, complicated ideas, selfish ideas and compromises.
   - *No comments:* Parents and children should agree not to endorse or criticize any solutions as they are being proposed. That would shut down or side track the brainstorming process. Solutions should be discussed *after* all possibilities have been listed.

3. *E*xamine each possible solution.
   - *Predict outcomes:* Children often need to be reminded to consider consequences. "Look into your crystal ball." For each of the possible solutions listed, "What would happen if you tried this? Then what would happen? Then what would happen? How would that make you feel? How would that make other people feel?"
   - *Rate possible solution:* How well would each possible solution solve the problem? Again, younger children can point to a picture of a smiling face, flat mouth face, or frowning face; or they can use thumb up, thumb sideways or thumb down. Older children can use

a numerical rating system: 0=stinks, 1=bad, 2=ok, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent.

- *Be realistic:* Just like we need to avoid black and white thinking about problem statements, we also need to rate possible solutions in shades of gray. Parents and children should remember that most solutions are 1s though 4s; not 0s or 5s. They should not reject imperfect solutions. Sometimes a solution that is just ok is the best one possible.
- *Accept different opinions:* Parents can respectfully ask children to explain their ratings. They can make sure that children have thought through consequences carefully. If the problem directly involves parents or siblings, each "player" should rate possible solutions from their perspective. Children should understand that parents and siblings have needs and opinions too. Ultimately, parents and children should accept and respect each other's rating, even if they disagree.

4. *P*ick the best solution.
- *Encourage self-determination:* If the problem belongs to the child, the solution should belong to the child. The best solution will be the one (or ones) rated highest by the child. Parents should accept the child's choice. Children must accept that there is no such thing as a perfect solution.
- *Seek consensus:* If the problem involves more than one person, the solution must be satisfactory to all. The best solution should not receive a very bad rating from any one party and it need not receive the highest rating from all. Every problem presents an opportunity to teach the art of compromise. We are seeking the best common ground.

5. *S*ee how it works.
- *Anticipation:* After choosing the best solution, the parents and child should preview any problems with implementation.
- *Experimentation:* Strategies should be implemented on a trial basis.
- *Evaluation:* After a reasonable period of time, the parents and child should have a meeting to discuss the actual outcome. If siblings are involved, schedule a family meeting. Did the solution work as predicted? Better or worse?
- *Modification:* Even best solutions do not usually work perfectly. Breakdown points may become clear during the trial period. Sometimes, things can be repaired or improved. Other times, it's "back to the drawing board" to consider possible solutions all over again.
- *Re-evaluation:* Parents and children should remember that things change over time. STEPs should be repeated periodically.

Solving Anxiety Problems

When a child is fearful or worried, parents may try reassuring or instructing. They might even try to keep the child away from the source of his or her fear. These maneuvers are often the product of the parent's own anxiety. They rarely work and they often make the child's anxiety even worse. Moreover, the child does not learn to deal with his or her own worries. Instead, parents can teach their children how to "STOP" and face their fears. This discussion is usually more productive if it takes place when everyone is calm, not right in the middle of an anxious episode.

"STOP" AND FACE YOUR FEARS:
1. **S**cared?
2. **T**hinking about what?
3. **O**ther things I can do or think to help myself relax.
4. **P**at myself on the back for facing my fears.

HOW TO "*STOP*" AND FACE YOUR FEARS

1. **Scared?** Before children can solve their problems with anxiety, they must be able to recognize when they are feeling anxious. They can be taught to notice their own tell-tale signs: muscle tension, fast breathing, fast heart rate, abdominal discomfort, headache, nervous habits, shaky feelings, tearfulness, irritability, anticipatory dread, avoidance behaviors, obsessions, compulsions, etc. The earlier they recognize these red-flags, the easier it will be to reverse the problem. Children should learn to say to themselves, "I can tell that I'm beginning to feel scared. I need to do my *STOP*."
2. **Thinking about what?** After recognizing their anxious feelings, children need to identify the source and put these anxious thoughts into words. For example, "I'm afraid that robbers will come while I'm asleep" or "I'm feeling nervous about flunking my exam" or "I'm worried that something might happen to my parents?"
3. **Other things I can do or think to help myself relax.** Children need to be aware of irrational or distorted thoughts. They need to frame their anxiety problem in specific and solvable terms. They need to recognize unnecessary avoidance behaviors. If children think ahead about possible solutions, pick the best one, and practice implementation, then they can face their fears with confidence. Initially, most children need parents or professionals to coach them through this process. "Other things to think or do" include: positive self-talk, muscle relaxation, breathing awareness, meditation, yoga, physical exercise, positive imagery, self-hypnosis, talking, playing, pets, music, reading, drawing - any relaxing or distracting activities. After brainstorming and learning about possible solutions, the child should choose the best one(s). By deliberately and gradually increasing exposure to the source of anxiety, adults can give children opportunities to successfully practice chosen strategies, lessening the child's sensitivity, distress and impairment.

4. **_P_at myself on the back for facing my fears.** Initially, parents and professionals need to do some coaching. Eventually, the child should choose and carry out his or her own plan. After effectively conquering some fears, the child should feel empowered: "If I just STOP and think, I guess I can face just about anything."

Session 10: Ability

Knowing Your Child's Strengths and Weaknesses

Some general guidelines.

- ***Expecting too much:*** Make sure that the task is not too difficult for your child. Some children have relatively weak skills that make certain things hard. Others have true disabilities that might be subtle and underappreciated yet significant sources of impairment. In today's performance driven culture, there is a real danger of pushing children too hard or underestimating real impairments. Sometimes, what seems like a disability is really the result of unreasonable and harmful expectations; the so-called "hurried child syndrome". Many adults have lost perspective on normal development and the meaning of childhood.
- ***Expecting too little:*** Although I cannot overemphasize the dangers of expecting too much, sometimes we expect too little. When a child struggles, we might blame parents, teachers, therapists or doctors for pushing too hard and not accepting the child the way he or she is. In the process, we might lower our expectations. We want all children to learn responsibility. We want all children to feel good about their accomplishments. We want all children to have their best chance at successful relationships. We want all children to make some meaningful contribution to their larger community. We want all children to achieve their true potential. We are not doing our children any favors if we give-up on them too easily. What could be more important than helping children learn, grow and overcome life's challenges?
- ***Assessment before intervention:*** It is crucial to know your child's current functional level. What is he or she able to do now? For some skills, such as toilet training, parents can easily determine current abilities. For other skills, such as academics, professional consultation or standardized testing may be necessary. In any case, by understanding the natural sequence of development and skill acquisition, goals can be set, not too high and not too low, just one step up.
- ***"Modifiability": a different definition of health and disorder:*** Opposing medical convention, a functional approach to developmental pediatrics defers diagnosis of disorder until <u>after</u> assessment and treatment. Customarily, doctors make a diagnosis before treating. But what if treatment, time and circumstance modify the child's profile and degree of impairment? Because children can change, substantially and unpredictably, *"disorder"* should be defined as, *low modifiability of impairment, despite intervention, over time. "Health"* should be defined as, *high modifiability of impairment.* According to this way of thinking, health does not represent the absence of problems. If so, no one would be healthy because - of course – we all have problems of one kind or another. Health depends more on resilience than luck. In this era of debate over nature vs. nurture and genes vs. environment, it is important to remember that the capacity for change is at least as important as the stuff we're born of.

- **"Can/ can't" vs. "easy/ difficult":** Ability is not usually a matter of black/white or can/can't. Knowing your child's skills profile, in all its shades of gray, helps you and your child understand why some tasks might be *relatively* easy and others might be *relatively* hard. Weaknesses represent explanations not excuses; challenges not limitations.
- **Patience:** Some children just need more time. Parents and children tend to want instant results. Be realistic. If your child gets frustrated too easily, be reassuring. Learning and success require mistakes and failures.
- **Hard work:** Some children need more instruction and drill in areas of relative weakness. Good old-fashioned teaching and practice make all the difference. Many children receive the right kind of help but insufficient intensity, frequency, and duration.
- **Inconsistency vs. inability:** Inconsistency should not be confused with inability. Just because a child is able to do something sometimes, does not mean that he can do it just as well all the time. Children are often blamed for being inconsistent: "You had no problem doing that yesterday!" Helping a child with performance inconsistency requires different strategies than helping a child with a specific disability.
- **Break it down:** Performance may be compromised when "job chunks" are too complex, too big or too many. Parts of an assignment should be simple enough, small enough and few enough for your child to succeed at each step. Multi-step commands are not only harder to understand, they are harder to carry out. This leads to unnecessary frustration and loss of motivation.
- **"What are your child's natural abilities?"** There are many different types of abilities. Although it is human to have strengths and weaknesses, children and parents tend to get frustrated and make pessimistic generalizations when skills develop unevenly. Just because you have a hard time in one area, does not mean that you are "stupid". Special interests and talents should be nurtured and strengthened. Positive self-image and success usually come from specializing in areas of strength not necessarily from overcoming weaknesses.
- **Self-awareness and self-responsibility:** When possible, strategies should be pursued with the child's understanding and consent. If the child is not able to appreciate the reasons for accommodations or interventions, parents must act on his or her behalf. They can explain later, as the child becomes old enough to understand. Ultimately, the child must own both the problem and the solution. Every effort must be made to help the child become their own best advocate.
- **Independence:** Whenever possible, parents should set goals and choose strategies which clearly lead to the development of self-reliance. Although children may need considerable support in the early going, especially in areas of disability, such dependence should not be maintained. Deliberately and gradually, prompts and motivators should be spaced and faded. Realistically but steadily, expectations should be raised. True self-competence leads to optimism and a positive self-image. Parents who believe in their children have children who believe in themselves.

When Things are Too Hard: Accommodation and Change

There are two general types of intervention strategies. "Strategies to accommodate" require parents to accept their children the way they are. Accommodation strategies bypass weaknesses without changing the child's profile. "Strategies to change" require parents to *expect* more of their children. By repairing weaknesses, the child's profile is changed in a positive way. Effective intervention plans usually employ both types of strategies.

Strategies to accommodate

- *Acceptance:* Accommodations reflect a deep understanding and acceptance of the child. Accommodations work with the child "where he or she is at." At home, in school, and in social situations, strategies to accommodate set up the child for success through sensitivity to the child's profile. Just because a child *should* be able to do something, does not mean that they *can*.
- *Dependence:* Immature or impaired children must depend upon parents, teachers or others to implement accommodations. Although, children should learn to accommodate their own weaknesses as they get older, there is nothing wrong with getting some help along the way.
- *Public:* By-pass strategies should be used in public situations to minimize impairment and avoid unnecessary anxiety, frustration and humiliation.
- *Inconsistency*: Strategies to accommodate allow for performance inconsistency. Just because a child is *sometimes* able to do something, does not mean that he or she is *consistently* able to do the same thing.
- *Alternatives:* Whenever possible, tasks should tap a child's strengths rather than tax his or her weaknesses. Sometimes, accommodation requires excusing the child from poorly suited activities or situations. Adults can find alternatives that better fit the child's behavioral style and skills.
- *School accommodations:* Parents can request a meeting of their child's "Education Management Team" (EMT). The EMT can produce a "504 plan" for classroom accommodations; for example, preferential seating, extra time, and reduced work load. Of course, informal communication between parents and teachers can result in sufficient educational accommodations as well.
- *Empathy and common sense:* Strategies to accommodate are based on empathy, not extraordinary expertise. When children have problems, the first step should always be explanation; what is it about this child that makes this task difficult? What must that feel like for him or her?

Strategies to change

- *Development*: Parents should not accept everything about their child. Parents should want their child to change. This desire reflects a belief in the capacity of the child to grow and develop. Strategies to change need to be employed if the child is persistently and significantly impaired. Strategies to change are built upon the expectation that current difficulties need not block future successes.
- *Independence:* Although most children depend upon others to overcome their problems, the best changes lead to greater independence. The ultimate goal is self-help.

- *Private*: Strategies to change should be initiated in private. Public attention to areas of weakness just adds to a child's sense of inadequacy and embarrassment. Over time, sensitive one-on-one skill building allows the child to function in front of others with greater pride and confidence.
- *Consistency:* Strategies to change aim at *consistency* of performance. Inconsistency suggests room for improved fluency and automaticity.
- *Persistence*: If one strategy does not work immediately, parents and professionals should not give up. The strategy might just need some tuning. All too often, a good strategy is applied with insufficient intensity and persistence. Failure to respond is often due to partial application of otherwise effective treatment, not ineffective treatment per se. Change is never easy. Stick with one proven technique rather than hopping from one remedy to another. Results take time.
- *School remediation*: In school systems, Educational Team Meetings can lead to an Individualized Education Plan or "IEP". An IEP usually includes specific remedial services and therapies. Pediatricians and parents should become familiar with the range of special services and schools available in their communities.
- *Expertise and science*: Strategies to change usually require expert assessment of functional level and thoughtful discussion of management plans. Where is the child developmentally? Where should the child be? How is he or she going to get there? Choosing the best strategy can be difficult. The nature and complexity of the problem determines the type and level of special expertise.

Choosing and trying specific strategies

Intervention strategies should be selected carefully and implemented on a trial basis. It is easier to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of specific strategies if trials are carefully controlled. The best trials are usually designed and performed in consultation with professionals. (See "Treatment Trial Form" below.)

1. **Choose a target:** Do not try to solve more than one problem at a time. Set priorities. What needs to change? What are your child's greatest sources of impairment? What is it about your child's profile that represents "the biggest deal?" What is his or her most important problem? After choosing a target, decide what to use as outcome measures. What can we monitor to know if a strategy is working? Write-in targets and outcome measures on the trial form.
2. **Choose a strategy**: Know your child and use common sense but be sure to consult experts and the best available scientific information. Good science depends upon controlled and reproducible experimentation. Avoid speculation, bias and fad. Objectively weigh relative risks and benefits. Write-in the chosen strategy on the trial form.
3. **Establish baseline measures for targets and possible side effects:** For specific strategies, we can usually anticipate possible benefits and risks. Other times, we must make educated guesses. In any case, we need to know where we started. On the trial form, record the date, then rate targets *and* possible side effects at baseline as follows: 0 for no problem, 1 for little problem, 2 for medium problem or 3 for big problem. (Note: Just because something is listed as a *possible* side effect does not mean that it was necessarily a 0 before the trial or that it might not get better during the trial.)

4. **Establish observation intervals***:* How long will it take for this strategy to work? We need to be patient and give interventions a fair chance. On the other hand, we should not miss early signs of change, whether troubling or promising. Decide whether to reassess daily, bi-weekly, weekly or monthly? On the "Treatment Trial Form", write-in observation dates and any strategy changes.
5. **Observe***:* It is crucial to describe the child's functioning in his or her everyday natural life. Furthermore, good science usually depends upon pooling the observations of more than one person, sometimes across different settings and tasks. To eliminate bias, it may be appropriate and feasible to deliberately "blind" some observers to the type of intervention. If able, the child should participate in the trial. Children should feel included in their own care. Their observations are valuable. Furthermore, participation in treatment trials promotes self-monitoring, self-regulation, and self-advocacy.
6. **Evaluate and reevaluate:** Compare baseline and treatment observations. Write-in any unanticipated effects, either positive or negative**.** Where do we seem to be heading with this strategy?
    a. *Promising:* If numerical ratings of targets have come down and ratings of potential side effects have not gone up, then stay with it.
    b. *Disappointing or even harmful:* If numerical ratings of targets have not gone down and ratings of possible side effects have gone up, then modify or stop.
    c. *Inconclusive:* If ratings of targets and possible side effects remain unchanged, (essentially at baseline levels), then give more time, intensify, modify or abandon. Sometimes we deliberately try a strategy, stop it, try it and stop it. Other times, we compare one strategy against a modification or against a different strategy. These ABAB or ABCD design trials can clear up confusion about cause-effect connection, relative effectiveness or - for previously effective strategies - ongoing need (i.e. discontinuation trials).

Child's name: _____Grade: _____ Year: _____

Person completing this form: _____Relation to child: _____

When were your observations usually made? (Circle): mornings/ afternoons/ evenings/ weekdays/

weekends

Dear Parents, Teachers, and Child:
Thank you very much for your help. It is so important to conduct this trial in a careful and controlled fashion. Please complete the table below. **Observations will be recorded for the preceding**: **day/ week/ month (circle one)**. *If you were not able to make observations during that period, leave the column blank. Your comments in narrative form are also very helpful. On the back, please record the date and provide general impressions, including the following: Were there any problems with the treatment? Were there any benefits? Give details. Please call me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you.*

During the observation period, how big were these problems? 0=no problem, 1= little problem, 2=medium problem, 3=big problem

STRATEGY for: *Targets* **DATE**	baseline									
Possible Side Effects										

Problem Inventory – Thanks for comparing pre-course and post-course ratings

Name: _____   Date: _____   Rater: _____

Problem Situations

0	1	2	3	Getting ready to go in the morning
0	1	2	3	Riding in the car
0	1	2	3	Arriving at school
0	1	2	3	During class
0	1	2	3	In school hallways/ bathrooms
0	1	2	3	Recess at school
0	1	2	3	Lunch at school
0	1	2	3	School field trips
0	1	2	3	Pick-up at school
0	1	2	3	School bus
0	1	2	3	Arriving home
0	1	2	3	Meals
0	1	2	3	Playing with other children
0	1	2	3	When visitors come
0	1	2	3	When visiting others
0	1	2	3	In public places
0	1	2	3	With Mom
0	1	2	3	With Dad
0	1	2	3	With siblings
0	1	2	3	With babysitter
0	1	2	3	Doing home-work
0	1	2	3	Doing chores
0	1	2	3	Getting ready for bed (washing, bathing, teeth-brushing, etc.)
0	1	2	3	Getting in bed

Problem Behaviors

0	1	2	3	Actively defies/ refuses to comply
0	1	2	3	Loses temper
0	1	2	3	Argues with adults
0	1	2	3	Deliberately annoys people
0	1	2	3	Blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehaviors
0	1	2	3	Is touchy or easily annoyed by others
0	1	2	3	Is angry or resentful
0	1	2	3	Is spiteful or vindictive
0	1	2	3	Bullies, threatens or intimidates others
0	1	2	3	Initiates physical fights
0	1	2	3	Lies/ "cons" to obtain goods/ favors or to avoid obligations
0	1	2	3	Skips school
0	1	2	3	Is physically cruel to people or animals
0	1	2	3	Has stolen items of nontrivial value
0	1	2	3	Deliberately destroys other's property

Other problem behaviors and situations:

0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____
0	1	2	3	_____

Raising Your Challenging Child
A Parent Training Program

Program feedback   *date: _____*

Comparing baseline (circles) against follow-up (triangles) ratings, would you say that
your child's problem behaviors and problem situations have improved?
__ not at all (0%)
__ a little bit (10-25%)
__ medium (25-50%)
__ a lot (greater than 50%)

What was most useful about this
course?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What was least
useful?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you
change?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Grade the program: A=excellent, B=good, C=OK, D=weak, F=failed
- Course organization and content: ___
- Dr. Shapiro's presentations: ___
- Small group breakouts___
- Physical setting/ comfort:___
- Written handouts: ___
- Overall satisfaction with the program: ___

Thank you for your feedback. Most of all, thank you for your participation. I hope that
this program has been helpful. Good luck. Dr. Dan

Booklist for parent group:

Sources:
- Ross Greene, <u>The Explosive Child</u>
- Russell Barkley, <u>Defiant Children</u>
- Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas, <u>Know Your Child</u>
- Martin Seligman, <u>The Optimistic Child</u> and <u>Learned Optimism</u>
- Howard Glassman, <u>Transforming the Difficult Child</u>
- Brooks and Goldstein, <u>Raising Resilient Children</u>
- Daniel Goleman, <u>Emotional Intelligence</u> and <u>Social Intelligence</u>
- Mel Levine, <u>A Mind at a Time</u>
- Stanley Greenspan, <u>The Challenging Child</u> and <u>The Child with Special Needs</u>
- Stanley Turecki, <u>The Difficult Child</u>
- Koegel, <u>Overcoming Autism</u>
- Tony Atwood, <u>The Complete Guide to Asperger Syndrome</u>
- Nowicki and Duke, <u>Teach Your Child the Language of Social Success</u>
- Alfie Kohn, <u>Punished by Rewards</u>
- Peter Jensen, <u>Making the System Work for Your Child with ADHD</u>
- Baker and Brightman, <u>Steps to Independence</u>
- Dawson and Guare, <u>Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents</u>
- Rich Weinfeld, <u>Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties</u>
- Michelle Winner, <u>Thinking about You Thinking about Me</u>
- Richard Ferber, <u>Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems</u>
- Brenda Smith Myles and Jack Southwick, <u>Asperger Syndrome and Difficult Moments</u>