

Positive Reinforcement Techniques

What are Positive Opposites?

- Redefines negative behaviors
- Behaviors described in more positive terms
- Will help with understanding of expectations

If your child is whining – “use a big girl/big boy voice”

If your child is teasing someone – “be nice”

If your child is jumping on the couch – “sit down”

If your child is fighting with someone – “talk calmly or walk away”

****Say what you want to see or have done****

- Use calm voice
- It is best to not use the words “don’t” or “stop”, it can make them continue the behavior.

Effective Prompts:

1. Be Specific:

Instead of saying “Maria, go clean your room” you should say “Maria, go to your room and put your toys in the toy bin, dirty cloths in hamper, and pull up the sheets on your bed”

****By being specific, it gives the child more direction and gets what needs to be done completed.**

2. Be Calm:

Give prompt using calm tone, never yell or show agitation.

3. **Be close but do not touch:**

Provide a prompt without physical touch. **Touch will only be used to praise.

4. **Use statement form:**

Be careful **not to ask** the child, **direct them**

Ex. Maria, take your dishes to the sink and rinse them off, please.

Do not say "Maria, can you take your dishes to the sink and rinse them off?" The majority of the time, the child will say "no."

5. **One time:**

Provide the prompt once. Wait a few minutes to identify if the child is completing the task.

If the task is **not** being completed:

provide another prompt and include a choice.

For example: Maria, please rinse off your dishes now or you will not earn the privilege of watching T.V. for the rest to the evening.

If the child **still does not do as asked:**

implement the option they have chosen, and the next day address the issue again using the same technique.

Effective Praise:

1. **Give immediately:**

Provide praise immediately after the child has completed the task.

2. **With gentle touch:**

By gently touching the child on the shoulder or giving a high five.

3. **Saying “Thank you”:**

For example: “Thank you for cleaning your room when I asked”

Ex: “Maria, thank you for rinsing off your dishes, you did a really good job following directions and cleaning up after your self, (high five or touch arm), I really like it when we can work together.”

Attending & Ignoring

When Attending and Ignoring are used together, they are useful in decreasing irritating behaviors such as whining, complaining, noisiness, etc.

****Anytime you give any behavior attention, that behavior increases****

Appropriate Behaviors for Attending and Ignoring: (only choose one to work on at a time)

- Whining
- Bad table manners
- Complaining
- Calling parent/unable to play alone
- Pleading to be bought things in stores
- Crying
- Noisiness
- Pouting
- Interrupting

Attending:

- Define behavior you want to increase
 - i.e., talking in a normal voice instead of whining, accepting “no” instead of pleading over and over, waiting to speak instead of interrupting
- Decide what type of attention to use
 - Making eye contact
 - Smiling
 - Praising
 - Ask Questions
 - Playing
 - Talking
- Decide when to use it
 - During the positive behavior
 - Immediately after the positive behavior

Ignoring:

- Define the behavior you want to ignore
 - Only choose annoying behaviors that you can allow to continue
 - i.e., whining, pleading, interrupting
- Decide what type of ignoring to use
 - Look away
 - Talk to someone else
 - Get on the phone (briefly)
 - Watch TV (but be close)
 - Look at a book
 - Walk away (but not too far)
 - Pretend to do something else

- Decide when to use it
 - Immediately ignore annoying behavior
 - Prompt once for positive opposite and then ignore annoying behavior
- Decide what positive behavior to pay attention to
 - i.e., talking in a normal voice instead of whining, accepting “no” instead of pleading, waiting to speak instead of interrupting

Two Potential Problems When Ignoring:

- Annoying behavior may escalate when a parent first ignores -- keep ignoring
- Annoying behavior turns aggressive – use time-out

Case Examples

Case Scenarios:

You are in the grocery store with your child. He wants you to buy a package of cookies that you have said “no” to. He starts to cry. His crying is getting louder and then escalates to yelling. He throws himself on the floor and continues to scream. Other customers are beginning to stare disapprovingly.

Answers:

This is a difficult situation.

The parent should:

- Prompt in the beginning to accept the answer calmly in order to earn points.
- Ignore by looking away with no facial expression during negative behavior. If the child takes a break, the parent should attend by looking at or talking to the child at any calm moment.
- If the tantrum becomes aggressive the parent should implement a time-out with loss of privilege if necessary.
- Leave the store calmly if the parent is uncomfortable or the child continues to escalate.

Example Situation #1:

“Your child has a major report due for school. A few nights before the due date, you encourage your daughter to start her book report, but she complains and states, “I don’t want to do it now, I’ll do it later!” You calmly remind her that she can earn bonus points on her point chart for working on it that night. She gets her books and mumbles under her breath, “This is stupid; I hate this class, and who cares about this topic?” She looks out the window for a few minutes and begins working again. After working on it for 20 minutes she looks up and yells, “This is all of your fault, I wanted your help last week but you were too busy!” Two minutes later she pulls the book back and begins reading. As she continues her report, she starts to look confused and calmly asks her mother for help.”

Answers:

“Your child has a major report due for school. A few nights before the due date, you encourage your daughter to start her book report, but she complains and states, “I don’t want to do it now, I’ll do it later!” You calmly remind her that she can earn bonus points on her point chart for working on it that night. **She gets her books and mumbles under her breath, “This is stupid; I hate this class, and who cares about this topic?”** She looks out the window for a few minutes and begins working again. After working on it for 20 minutes she looks up and yells, “This is all of your fault, I wanted your help last week but you were too busy!” Two minutes later **she pulls the book back and begins reading.** As she continues her report, she starts to look confused and calmly asks her mother for help.”

Underline = ignore & Bold = attend

Example Situation #2:

A family of four is at a restaurant for dinner. The six-year-old girl is eating with her hands and making a big mess. A moment later, she picks up her napkin to wipe some food off of her face. After placing the napkin down, she taps her fork on the plate and complains about her food. A few minutes later she takes another bite using her fork. Then she asks calmly if she can get up from the table to look at the fish tank.

Answers

A family of four is at a restaurant for dinner. The six-year-old girl is eating with her hands and making a big mess. A moment later, **she picks up her napkin to wipe some food off of her face.** After placing the napkin down, she taps her fork on the plate and complains about her food. A few minutes **she takes another bite using her fork.** Then she asks calmly if she can get up from the table to look at the fish tank.

Underline = ignore & Bold = attend

Guidelines for Time-out

- To be used for verbal (what you can not ignore) or physical aggression
- Explain time-out to child before using
 - Select time to talk when everyone is relaxed and in good control
 - Calmly explain to child, don't debate or argue about time out
 - Follow all time-out rules
 - Have child practice time-out with you, if they refuse, drop issue and just make sure they understand the rules **Be sure to praise him/her afterward for cooperating**
- Make sure you choose a time out place that is boring and has minimal distractions
- Do not threaten time-out, use it
- Be consistent and fair

Time-out Rules

- Be calm
- Use time-out immediately
 - Do not threaten time-out, use it
- Do not debate or argue
- Do not touch child
- Praise if child goes
 - Child must be quiet in time-out; praise if quiet, offer choice if not
- If child breaks something on the way to or in time-out, prompt child to fix it. If child makes a mess, prompt child to clean it up. Give minding points (following first time asked) if they comply. Let it go or do it yourself if they don't comply.
- Big praise for going to time-out & completing time-out
- Only 3 time-outs allowed in one day
- Never give a time-out on top of a time-out
- Be consistent and fair

Coöperative Time-Out

- Be calm
- Be specific
- Praise before setting time and after time-out is over

Resistant Time-Out

- Be Calm
- Be Specific (i.e., behavior & length of time)
- **If they don't go** – Give a choice- “Either you go to Time-Out quietly or you will lose dessert.”
- Ignore all non-compliant behavior, stay calm
- Praise for sitting down and completing time-out
- Avoid lectures, discussions of behavior, prompt for apologies - avoid punishment on punishment
- Be consistent and fair

Noisy Time-out

- Same steps as Resistant Time Out
- Stay calm
- Ignore disruptive behavior on way to time-out; if they are going, let it go.
- If sitting for time-out but still noisy, give choice of either sitting in time-out quietly or losing a privilege
- Once time-out has been set, if child become noisy or moves, stop the time and give choice again, stay calm
- If child continues to be noisy or moves, remove privilege & end time-out
- Be consistent and fair

Refusal Time-out

- Same steps as Resistant Time-Out
- Stay calm

- State clearly that they either have a 6 minute time-out or they lose a privilege
- If child still refuses, state that they have lost a privilege
- Avoid lectures, discussions of behavior, & prompt for apologies
- Be consistent and fair