

YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!

Managing Difficult Behaviors

In the Foster or Adoptive Family
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Do You Feel Like You are Always Putting Out Fires?

***We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been
turning
We didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
But we tried to fight it*** Billy Joel

Firefighting – A High Calling!

- I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a fireman. The position may, in the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one; but we who know the work which the fireman has to do believe that his is a noble calling. Our proudest moment is to save lives. ~Edward F. Croker

Index Card Activity



Why is effective discipline important

- Discipline is part of the claiming process – I don't discipline "someone else's children"
- When I discipline you, I am accepting responsibility for you – you belong to me



Why do children test us so?



- Children are not ready to be in control of their lives – it is too scary

- They will push the boundaries because they need to know where they are



SO NOW ~~ HOW???

First – Lay the Foundation

- Understand child development
- Model behaviors you expect
- “Catch” your child being good
- Remember the sad >> mad >> bad cycle
- Provide opportunities for mastery & control

SO NOW ~~ HOW???

2nd – Have a discipline strategy

- Use logical consequences
- Ask “What can I teach?”
- Consequences –The 3 “C’s”
- Teach problem solving skills
- Have few rules, but enforce with consistency
- Use contracts, chaining and intermittent reinforcement

Understand Child Development

- Know what your child is capable of -- and know his limitations
- Set reasonable expectations
- Shape behavior incrementally
- Have high expectations for children with special needs, too

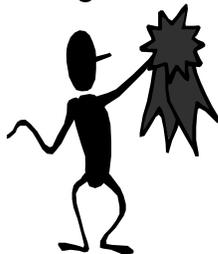


Model the Behaviors you Expect

- Children learn respect when they are treated with respect
- If it is not important enough for me to do – why is it important for my child?



“Catch” your child being good



- Keep the “4-to-1” ratio in mind of positive to negative interactions
- Consider a prize jar or similar approach to noticing the good stuff
- Pats-on-the-back
- Watch for and reward attempts at improvement

Feeling **SAD** >>>> makes me feel MAD>>>> which leads to acting BAD



- Model a range of expressions for emotions
- Use stories, movies, puppet play to “practice” and observe lots of emotions
- Provide physical as well as verbal outlets for emotions

Provide opportunities for mastery and control

- As often as possible offer choices
- Make sure each choice is acceptable
- Teach self-care and other independent living skills
- Find ways to master something bigger than myself – i.e. water, martial arts, murals



Manage Anger – Yours and Theirs!

- **Reduce Anger** – know your “stress busters”
- Set the tone and environment to reduce anger
- Express anger – provide both verbal & physical outlets
- Provide portable outlets too!



SODAS method of Problem Solving

- **S** = Situation
- **O** = Options
- **D** = Disadvantages
- **A** = Advantages
- **S** = Solution



Have few rules – but enforce consistently

- Relate rules to values
- K.I.S.S. works best with teens
- Written reminders – posted rules, agreements are helpful
- You are helping your child develop a tool-kit of responsible behavior



Use Logical Consequences & Choose Your "Battles"

"You can't teach to every situation"



- "Whose problem is it?"
- The story of the messy room
- When peer pressure is a good thing
- Logical consequences teach lasting lessons

Teaching Interactions ~~ *The Hockey Lesson – You will Play as good as you Practice*



- Ask, "What can I teach?"
- State what you want to teach
- Ask the child to repeat it back
- Provide an opportunity to practice

Consequences – the 3 "C's"



- **Keep**
Consequences:
 - Clear
 - Consistent
 - Calmly Administered

Consider a Point System Approach

- Determine each child's "target" area(s)
- Make a list of daily responsibilities, including target areas
- Determine how much each success or violation is worth (positive and negative)
- Determine rewards for success, consequences for falling short of goal
- Administer points calmly "Great, give yourself 100 points for that" or "Sorry, that will cost you 200 points"

Create Contracts to Address specific challenges or goals



- Name & Describe goal
- Name & Describe reward for achieving it
- Name & Describe penalties or consequences
- Set a time frame
- Put it in writing
- Everyone who will be part of implementation must sign

CHAINING

- **Start by rewarding small improvements**
- **Gradually only reward bigger steps,**
- **Eventually weaning so that behavior no longer needs ongoing rewards**
- **It has become a habit sign**



Intermittent Reinforcement

- Once a behavior is basically under control, reward only occasionally
- This is more effective as a tool for maintaining good behavior



**The funny thing
about firemen is,
night and day, they
are always firemen.**

~Gregory Widen,
Backdraft