



When Problem Behaviors Occur

Responding in an effective way

“There are no bad kids, just young people wrestling with emotions and impulses, trying to express their feelings and needs the only way they know how.” -Janet Lansbury

During times of unpredictability and high stress, emotions and tensions run high, especially for our children who don't understand everything happening around them. Despite our best efforts to create the most positive environment possible, problem behaviors will still inevitably occur. When problem behaviors do occur, the most important thing is to keep you and your child safe. Remain calm and collected so as not to add to the frustration. Use positive, clear and concise language to let your child know what the expectation is. Using first-then language is a simple way to make expectations clear (e.g. “first clean up then you can have a cookie”). If the behavior escalates, remain calm and keep your child safe. Limit language when your child is escalated; sometimes saying nothing is better. Once problem behavior starts



to decrease, reengage your child by providing opportunities for appropriate language and having them complete what they were working on before. Show them their schedule and explain when they can access their favorite video game or a break and most importantly, spend some quality time with your child after they are back on track.

Tips on responding to maladaptive behavior

- ◆ Learn the signs and situations that may mean your child is becoming frustrated
- ◆ Intervene as soon as you recognize your child is frustrated
- ◆ Provide opportunities for appropriate language, choices or break from the situation
- ◆ Provide visuals for appropriate language use and give praise for using appropriate language
- ◆ Make sure all visuals are easily accessible to your child at all times.
- ◆ If appropriate, provide the item/activity that was requested. If it can't be provided in the moment, let your child know when they can access it.
- ◆ Have a cool down space where your child will be safe
- ◆ Once the problem behavior is slowing, acknowledge your child's feelings
- ◆ Ideally, your child should not access what they wanted immediately after the problem behavior
- ◆ Get them back on track by presenting an activity or having them make an appropriate request
- ◆ Once everyone is calm, you can talk to your child about alternative ways to communicate their needs and frustrations.
- ◆ Give your child choices about order of activities
- ◆ Schedule quality play time with your child
- ◆ Set clear expectations

Additional Resources

http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-hEBo4CeIQN8/Xm_meR5-vjl/AAAAAAAAAMMI/vXpbGkfoKz4j-OA3qq4rSZUQXd251IVFwCK4BGAYYCw/s1600/home%2Blearning.jpg

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58176fd62994ca5361dac1f5/t/5e6a7b9f0b2aef00826731f4/1584036777924/Once+upon+a+time+there+was+a++virus....pdf>

<https://childmind.org/guide/parents-guide-to-problem-behavior/responding-to-problem-behavior/>

<https://www.rethinked.com/blog/blog/2017/11/30/parent-engagement-addressing-challenging-behavior/>

<https://www.sbsaba.com/7-proactive-strategies-for-dealing-with-problem-behaviors/>

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/managing-behavior-at-home/>

