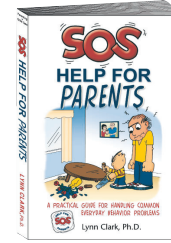


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Chapter 3

Ways Of Increasing Good Behavior



"That's great! You're learning to tie your own shoes!"

Encouragement, words of praise, and a loving touch strengthen good behavior.

Do you remember teaching a child how to tie his shoes? You first showed him how to do it. Then you asked him to try the first step. When he attempted this new task, you gave him lots of attention and encouragement. He responded by working even harder to please you.

Your encouragement, close attention, smiles, hugs, pats, and words of approval are extremely important to your child and strengthen his behavior. This chapter will show you various methods of rewarding your child in order to get good behavior from him.

Just as it's important to reward your child's good behavior, it's important to *fail to reward bad behavior*. When you see behavior that you don't want your child to continue, one effective option is to actively ignore it.

Use Active Ignoring

ACTIVE IGNORING



"I'll be glad when he stops his temper tantrum. I'm getting bored looking at these flowers. . . ."

Good for mother! She is using active ignoring — withdrawing her attention and herself from her misbehaving child.

Active ignoring is briefly removing all attention from your misbehaving child. Active ignoring is being sure that you don't accidentally reward his bad behavior with attention.* This method of managing children is particularly effective in reducing the tantrums of toddlers and preschoolers. If you scold or pay attention to your child while he is having a tantrum, you might unintentionally reward that behavior. Try active ignoring in order to weaken his tantrum behavior. If your child is in a safe place, walk out of the room and wait until his tantrum ceases before returning. Or, you might turn your back and pretend to be absorbed in something else. When his bad behavior stops, give him lots of attention. Also, be sure that your child's bad behavior

*Active ignoring of inappropriate behavior enables you to follow Child Rearing Rule #2, "Don't 'accidentally' reward bad behavior," described in Chapter 1. Not rewarding a particular bad behavior is called "*extinction*" and it weakens that bad behavior.

doesn't push you into giving him a material reward (such as cookies before dinner) or an activity reward (such as watching a late TV movie on a school night).

How do you use active ignoring? Follow the points listed in the table.

**Use Active Ignoring
For Some Misbehaviors**

- ___ Guidelines to follow:
- ___ 1. Briefly remove all attention from your child.
 - ___ 2. Refuse to argue, scold, or talk.
 - ___ 3. Turn your head and avoid eye contact.
 - ___ 4. Don't show anger in your manner or gestures.
 - ___ 5. Pretend to be absorbed in some other activity — or leave the room.
 - ___ 6. Be sure your child's bad behavior doesn't get him a material reward or activity reward.
 - ___ 7. Give your child lots of attention when his bad behavior stops.

Use *active ignoring* to weaken these misbehaviors:

- Whining and fussing
- Pouting and sulking
- Loud crying intended to manipulate parents
- Loud complaining
- Continuous begging and demanding
- Breath holding and mild tantrums

Active ignoring often helps to reduce misbehavior. However, when it doesn't, consider using one of the other methods described in this chapter or in succeeding chapters.

Reward Good Alternative Behavior

If your child's undesirable "target behavior" is whining, then the alternative behavior is talking in a normal tone of voice. If your daughter normally whines when she wants something, then you should praise her when she asks for something without whining. *Reward the alternative behavior in order to strengthen it.**

Rewarding Good Alternative Behavior — Examples For Parents

<i>Target Behavior To Be Decreased (Use active ignoring or mild correction)</i>	<i>Good Behavior To Be Increased (Use praise and attention)</i>
1. Whining	1. Talking in a normal tone of voice
2. Toy Grabbing	2. Toy sharing; toy trading
3. Temper tantrums when frustrated	3. Self-control when frustrated
4. Hostile teasing	4. Playing cooperatively
5. Swearing	5. Talking without swearing
6. Hitting	6. Solving problems using words

*Using rewards to increase good behavior which is an alternative to the undesirable target behavior is called "reinforcement of alternative behavior" or "differential reinforcement of other behavior."

Assume that Christopher, your four-year-old, usually has a temper tantrum when he doesn't get what he wants — like when he doesn't get a cookie just before dinner. The next time you turn down one of his requests, be sure to reward him with praise if he demonstrates self-control. Say to him, *“Christopher, you didn't get a cookie this time, but you still behaved yourself. I'm proud of that grown-up behavior. After we eat dinner you may have three cookies!”*

What behavior has to go? What is the behavior you want? Wait for that good behavior. Then *“catch your child being good”* and reward him. If your child doesn't seem to know how to perform the desirable behavior, such as sharing toys or trading toys, teach it to him. Teaching your child the desirable behavior is discussed next.

Help Your Child To Practice Good Behavior

Help your child to practice the behavior that you want her to learn. For example, if your daughter grabs toys away from another child, tell her to trade toys instead. Then demonstrate toy trading yourself and help her to actually practice this skill.

Toy-Grabbing Gloria

When three-year-old Gloria wanted a toy from her baby sister, she often grabbed it. Gloria's parents didn't allow her to keep the toy because that rewarded her for grabbing toys. However, Gloria persisted.

To help his daughter change, Mr. Scott developed a two-part plan. For the first part, Gloria either received a scolding or a time-out when she grabbed a toy.

For the second part, Mr. Scott helped Gloria learn to trade toys. If Gloria wanted a toy truck from her sister, she showed her another toy, and then offered to trade toys. Sometimes Gloria offered four or five different toys before her baby sister agreed to trade.

Mr. Scott taught Gloria the skill of toy trading by first demonstrating this skill himself and by having her watch. He traded toys with the baby. Then Gloria practiced toy trading with the baby and Mr. Scott watched. When Gloria was successful, he praised her efforts. However, when Gloria grabbed a toy from her baby sister, he scolded her or placed her in time-out.

Gloria became good at toy trading and also spent more time sharing toys and playing with her sister. Mr. Scott weakened toy grabbing by using a mild correction. He taught Gloria toy trading to replace toy grabbing.

Use Grandma's Rule

Help your children to do unpleasant tasks by using Grandma's Rule.* *Grandma's Rule states, "After you do your chore, then you get to play."* It's easier to begin and complete an unpleasant task if we get to have fun afterward.



Using Grandma's Rule — Examples for parents

After you:	then you get to:
1. complete your math	1. watch television.
2. wash the supper dishes	2. go out and play ball.
3. straighten your room	3. play video games.
4. take a nap	4. go swimming.
5. eat your brussels sprouts	5. eat dessert.
6. practice the piano for twenty minutes	6. visit a friend.

Don't reverse Grandma's Rule. An example of reversing Grandma's Rule is to say, "*You can watch television now if you promise to do your math homework later tonight.*" If your daughter always procrastinates with her math because she hates it, she won't be motivated to finish it by first watching television. She will continue to avoid her math. She will also feel guilty or upset for failing to complete it. Promises to begin a task and guilt don't help children to do unpleasant chores. Having fun afterward is a good motivator.

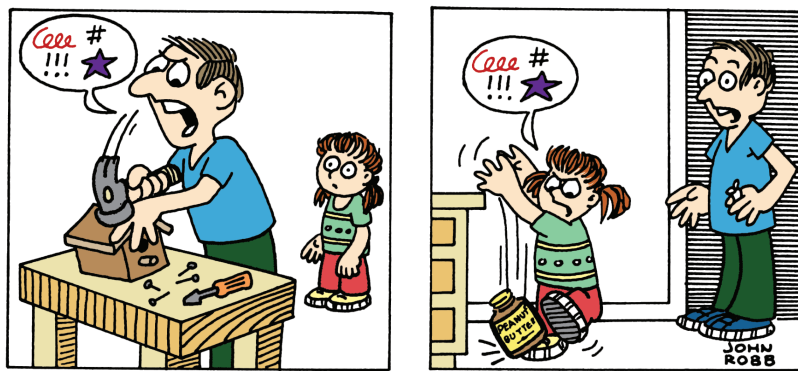
Getting your child to do something distasteful by reversing Grandma's Rule is difficult to do — like driving your car somewhere in reverse. Use Grandma's Rule correctly.

* Grandma's Rule is also called the Premack Principle.

Set a Good Example

Parents constantly demonstrate or “model” behavior which their children observe. Your child learns how to behave and misbehave by observing and imitating your behavior and the behavior of others. Don’t unintentionally demonstrate behavior that you wouldn’t like to see in your child.

CHILD REARING MISTAKES WHICH PARENTS MAKE



You are an example for your child!

Model only behavior that is acceptable for your child to imitate.

Your child pays particularly close attention to you when you are frustrated with a problem or having a conflict with another person. *By watching you, she is learning how she might handle her own frustrations and conflicts with others in the future.*

If you use a lot of sarcasm and criticism in dealing with other people, you’re actually teaching your child to use sassy talk and complaining as a way of dealing with you and other people. By watching their parents, some kids learn that people swear if they get hurt. Sometimes children learn to have temper tantrums by watching their parents lose control of their own emotions and behavior. *You are a role model for your child whether you want to be or not! Be a good model!*

Children also learn how to behave by watching people on television and in the movies. Many programs show people trying

to solve problems and conflicts with others by using aggression and violence. Monitor the kind of television programs and movies your kids watch. Reduce your child's exposure to violent models.

Be An Organized Parent

Be organized and plan ahead to be an effective parent. Anticipate your child's needs before his bad behavior forces you to meet his needs. When you allow your child's bad behavior to force you to meet his needs, you unintentionally reward that bad behavior.

HOUSEHOLD CONFUSION



*"Listen, Julie, I'm going to have to get off the phone.
The kids are starting to get wild!"*

Sometimes the entire family situation becomes disorganized. Often, in such a situation, the *misbehavior* of children rapidly increases. Reorganize the situation as quickly as you can. Being an effective parent takes not only love and discipline, but a lot of time and planning.

If you are shopping with your children, return home before they are completely exhausted. If your children begin to fuss with each other during religious services, don't scold or threaten.

Simply sit between them. The time to have a long telephone conversation is not just before supper when your children are hungry and fussing with each other. If you and your child are spending the evening visiting friends, avoid staying hours past your child's normal bedtime.

Clear family rules, predictable routines, and consistency in daily activities will help your children develop mature behavior. Regular times for waking, healthy snacks, meals, and bedtime will help your child anticipate what is expected of her. And she will be better behaved as a result. Limiting her snacking during the day will encourage her to eat the food offered at meals.

Your children, especially if they are young, need a lot of care and supervision. As parents, we really don't go "off duty" until our children are asleep and even then we are "on call." A favorite time of day for busy mothers and fathers is "after the children are asleep."

Main Points To Remember:

- *Encourage and praise* your child's good behavior.
- *Actively ignore* some misbehaviors.
- After targeting an undesirable behavior, *reward the good alternative behavior*.
- Help your child to *practice behavior* you want him to learn.
- Use *Grandma's Rule* to help your child perform unpleasant chores.
- Be an organized parent. Make clear family rules, predictable routines, and consistency in your child's daily activities.
- *Set a good example* for your child.

ANGER – USED AS AN INSTRUMENT TO GET WHAT YOU WANT



“Get me a Coke! Get me a Coke NOW!”

(from The SOS DVD Video)

Instrumental anger is the anger a child uses as an instrument or lever, to pressure others to give him what he wants. Unfortunately, some parents give in and accidentally reward their child for using anger, a fit, or emotional upsetness as an instrument for controlling the family and others.

For example, only when Michael expresses increasing anger does mother give in and give him both ice cream and a Coke. Earlier, she had told him “no dessert” because he didn’t eat his supper.

What is Michael believing and telling himself that causes him to behave aggressively? At a low level of self-awareness, Michael is saying to himself, “Mother must give me that Coke and if she doesn’t, it’s awful and I-can’t-stand-it! I must have that Coke! I’m going to get real upset, and then she’ll give in!”

Michael has accidentally learned to use emotional upsetness and anger to get what he wants. If this way of thinking and acting becomes a habit, he will be at high risk for experiencing emotional and behavioral problems as an adolescent and adult.

To see a brief video clip of this example (in either English or Spanish) along with solutions parents can implement, go to “Rewarding Bad Behavior” at www.sosprograms.com