

Common Child Rearing Challenges in Young Children: *How to Help Parents and Care Providers Manage*

Ranked Behavior Problems in 3 Year Olds

GIRLS

- Night wetting
- Poor appetite
- Fears
- Waking at night ($\geq 3x/week$)
- Sleeping with parents
- Day wetting ($\geq 1x/week$)
- Faddy eater
- Relationship with sibs
- Overactive
- Difficulty going to bed
- Attention seeking

BOYS

- Night wetting
- Day wetting ($\geq 1x/week$)
- Soiling ($\geq 1x/week$)
- Poor appetite
- Overactive
- Difficulty going to bed
- Waking at night ($\geq 3x/week$)
- Difficult to control
- Faddy eater
- Sleeps with parents
- Relationship with sibs

Source: Richman, Stevenson, & Graham (1975). Prevalence of behavior problems in 3-year-old children: An epidemiological study in a London borough. *J Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 16, 277-287.

Goals for Today

- Briefly discuss developmental and behavioral principles
- Discuss several broad, important parenting strategies
- Discuss 3 common child rearing challenges
 - Highlight normative perspective
 - Review practical strategies for success

Guiding Developmental & Learning Principles



Guiding Principles

- Interpretive principles
 - Skill deficiency
- Developmental principles
 - Thinking/reasoning skills slower to develop than behavioral skills
- Learning principles
 - Learning occurs through repetition with contrast

“Excesses” Vs. “Deficits”

- Is the focus on behavior that happens too often?
- Does your strategy deal with deficits?
 - How are you teaching new skills?
 - How are you strengthening positive skills?

Addressing Skills Deficiencies

- Is deficiency due to lack of use or lack of ability?
 - Lack of use
 - What's standing in the way?
 - Lack of ability
 - Teach skill

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Two Kinds of Knowing



- Knowing how to do something
- Knowing how to specify what it is you know how to do **OR** what you should do

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Two Kinds of Knowledge

Doing Knowledge

- Doing it
- Procedural
- Performance
- Contingency shaped
- Artist
- Skater
- Golfer
- Young child

Saying Knowledge

- Saying it
- Declarative
- Informational
- Rule
- Critic
- Judge
- Golf Pro
- Older child

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Doing vs. Knowing: The Example of Toileting

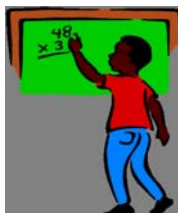
- *Do you need to go to the bathroom?*



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The Concept Of Same



- Seeing similarity in the presence of manifest formal or physical difference

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Tests Of Conservation

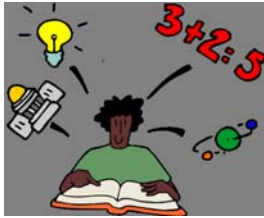


- Water
- Lead
- Apple
- Dough
- Quarters

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Tests For Abstract Thinking



- Carrying in their head
- Fractions
- Negative numbers

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Learning Opportunities

- Involves repetition with contrast
 - High contrast → Low repetition
 - Low contrast → High repetition
- Children will take negative over nothing

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Foundational Behavioral Strategies



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Discipline

- (N.) Training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement.
- 2-pronged approach
 - Responding to misbehavior
 - Encouraging appropriate behavior
 - Focus here first!



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Conceptualize Misbehavior

- Categorize misbehavior
 - Parents tend to lump them all together
 - Want to separate and respond differentially
- Negative to positive
 - Often focus on what don't want to see
 - Need to focus on what to encourage

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Required "Basics"

- The evil "C" word
 - Consistency in expectations and routines
 - Within and across environments
 - Within and across care providers
- Modeling of desired social behaviors
- Deciding what is important
 - Get the most bang for your buck!

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Establishing Rules

- The K.I.S.S. Principle
- Teach the rules
 - Model & role play
 - Practice frequently
- Specify consequences & use them

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Pre-correction

- Anticipate challenge and prepare
- Care providers should:
 - Restate rules
 - Restate benefit of following rules
 - Restate consequence for breaking rules

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Tantrums & Aggressive Behavior



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What Is a Tantrum?

- Common childhood behavior problem
- Frequent concern raised with pediatricians
- Communicate emotions
- Range among children
 - High intensity anger: kick, scream, hit, pull/push
 - Low intensity anger: shout, stamp, cry, whine

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Who Tantrums?

- All children!
- Peak at age 2-3
- Decrease around age 4
- 75% last less than 5 minutes
- Average of once per day
- Emotions
 - Anger: rises quickly, peaks, then decreases
 - Distress: slowly increases, followed by sadness

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Parenting

- Frustrating, anxiety-provoking
- Negative discipline
 - Harsh, inconsistent parenting may increase/maintain behavior problems

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Create TIME-IN

- Because they want attention, give it!
- Valuable use of your time
- Creating time in
 - Physical affection
 - Creating contrast
 - Earning distinction
 - Anything fun
 - 2nd and 3rd hand praise



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Strategic Attention

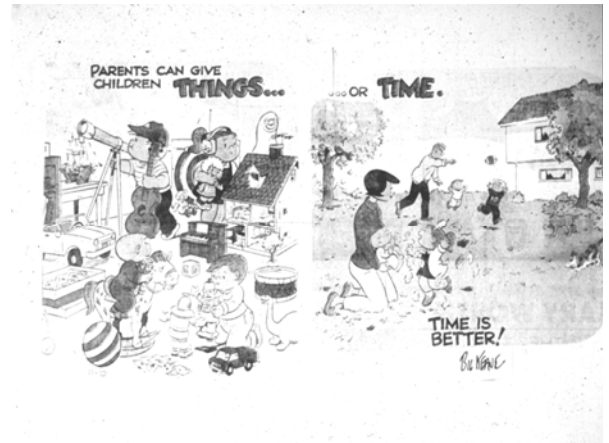
- No good behavior should be taken for granted
- Praise
 - Give labeled, specific praise
 - Praise appropriately, immediately, consistently
 - Praise with eye contact, smiles, enthusiasm
- 4 to 1 rule

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Selective Ignoring

- Low-level tantrums that are not dangerous
 - Whining, crying, stamping feet
- Most difficult strategy to consistently implement
 - Avoid discussion and eye contact
 - Be consistent
 - Move away from your child, but stay in the room
 - Pay attention to positive behaviors

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Common Errors

- Unclear expectations
- “Non-meaningful” rewards
- Set the bar too high
- Expect good behavior for too long
- Use the same rewards over & over



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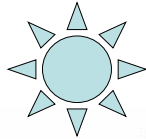
Using Rewards

- The key to motivation is restriction!
- Tie directly to specific behavior
- Start off giving rewards more frequently
- Shift to intermittent rewards
- Variety is the spice of life!

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Dot-to-Dot

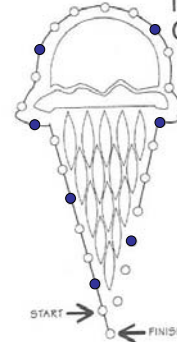
- System so that kids can track their own progress
- Specifies clearly when reinforcers are delivered



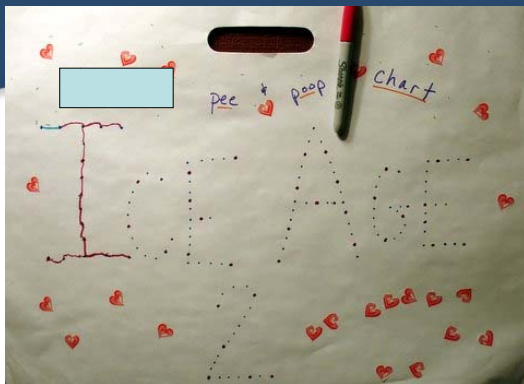
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Mary's Chart



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Grab Bag

- Features
 - Slips of paper with small treats
 - Criteria to access
- Advantages
 - Flexible
 - Creates interest and novelty

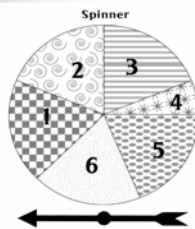


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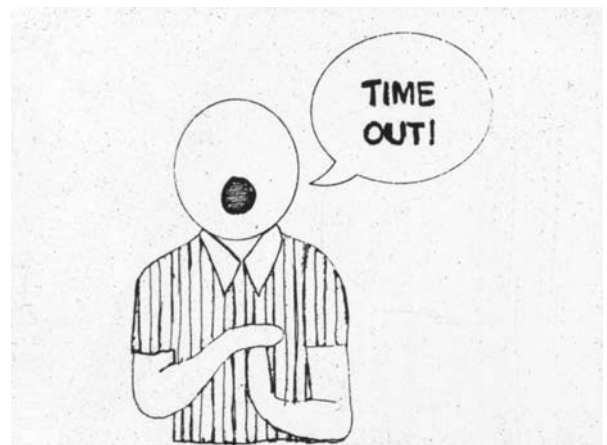


Spinners

- Game-like system used to reinforce behavior
- Divide into sections of various sizes
 - Each section represents different reward
 - “Higher” valued rewards get smaller sections



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Time-out

- For high-anger tantrums
 - Kicking, hitting, pushing
- Provides a consequence for unacceptable behavior
- Helps children feel calm and safe

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Time Out, 2 Kinds of Nothing, & The Stages of Grief



- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Grieving
- Acceptance

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Other Critical Features of Time Out

- Focus on teaching skill initially
- Used judiciously and consistently
- Occurs in appropriate setting
- Sufficient, but not excessive, length
- “Time out” vs. “Calm down time”

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Addressing Noncompliance

Or, “How to get them to do what you want without scaring the ____ out of ‘em!”



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Prepare for Success

- Is the task within the child’s ability?
- Can you follow-through?
- Do you have child’s attention?
- Can I offer a choice?

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Giving Effective Instructions

- Wording is key!
 - Direct vs. Indirect
 - Positively stated
 - Single step
 - Specific vs. Vague
 - Neutral, firm tone
 - Polite and respectful
 - Used when necessary
 - Give rationale beforehand



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Parental Follow-thru

- Compliance
 - Enthusiastic, labeled praise
 - Additional rewards, treats, etc
- Noncompliance
 - Warning (count in head)
 - Consequence
 - Time out

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Ways to Increase Compliance

- Compliance Game
 - Way to practice listening skills
 - Focuses first on easier instructions
- Limit instructions to essentials
- Choose your battles

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Pediatric Bedtime Problems

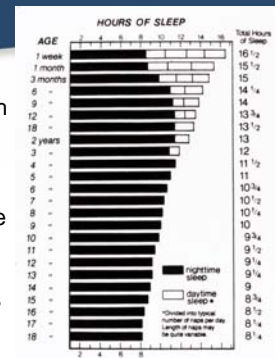


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Sleep

- Necessary for health functioning
- Average sleep requirements by age (Ferber, 1985)
- Fatigue deteriorates neural controls



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FIGURE 1 Typical Sleep Requirements in Childhood

Bedtime Resistance

- Definition
 - Crying out, calling out, leaving the room
- Prevalence
 - Most common sleep disorder



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Treatment – General Issues

- Bedtime routine
 - Calming activities
 - Standard bed and rise time
- Bedroom/bed setting & patterns
 - Quiet, comfortable
 - No TV, radio, etc
- Behavioral intervention
 - Elimination of secondary gain
 - Reward success

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Parental Ignoring (Extinction)

- Standard
 - Simply let child cry, scream, etc.
- Graduated ignoring
 - Increase time between visits or decrease time spent responding
- Works, but parents don't like!



Bedtime Pass

- 3 x 5 or 5 x 7 note card
 - Exchangeable for 1 excused departure from bedroom after bedtime
- Change parental response to resistance
 - Ignore crying or calling out
 - Redirect back to bed if leaves room (but no talking!)

Johnny's
Pass



Benefits of the Bedtime Pass

- Effective for reducing/eliminating bedtime resistance
- Absence of “burst” before gets better
- Acceptable to parents

Summary of Themes

- Attend to developmental and learning principles
 - Focus on action not words
 - Create repetition with contrast
- Empower parents
 - Increase motivational influence of attention
 - Use rewards to one's advantage
 - Teach effective limit setting & follow-through



Thank You !