



Tuesday's Child

Outreach week 4:

When changing a behavior or creating a new habit make sure:

- Parent has encouraging scripts and reinforcers on hand.
- Is the child aware of final behavioral goal?
- Parent is engaged in the goal plan for an appropriate length of time. (*You're in it to encourage your child to succeed*)

If the goal plan is less than 50% successful – find out why? Is it too difficult? Have you picked the wrong motivator?

Can you break down the final behavior into steps – less behavior expected to earn reinforce.

It's ok to initially set the final behavior bar on "easy". We have learned these past few weeks that a successful parenting technique is to INCREASE cooperation – and to do that – we need cooperation.

Make sure any behavior you want to eliminate you have to have a replacement behavior clearly defined ~ *What can they do??*

"How can I stop my child from interrupting?"

Behavior you want – child to wait for her turn to talk

Behavioral Plan:

When she interrupts; identify it then state the behavior you need -- "Your interrupting. Please wait one minute for your turn to speak"

Quickly finish up your conversation while ignoring child's whining (quickly because she needs to see success / or that you really mean it will be her turn soon)

When finished with quick conversation, turn to her and say "Now its your turn".

** She didn't have to wait quietly. We can work on that next. She needs to learn the process – first she waits, then she gets her turn to talk.

What is the function-- or why-- of the behavior? Usually there are four reasons for behavior:

- **Escape/Avoidance:** The behavior is to get out of doing something he/she does not want to do.
- **Attention Seeking:** The behavior is to get focused attention from parents, teachers, siblings, peers, or other people that are around them.
- **Seeking Access to Materials:** The behavior is to get an item or participate in an enjoyable activity.
- **Sensory Stimulation:** The individual behaves in a specific way because it feels good to them.

Other considerations:

HALT: -- Is this an antecedent?

Is the child Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

If a child is experiencing any of the above, they may not be able to respond appropriately or complete a desired task. This is where we should adjust expectations. **Adjust not abandon**

Example: You pick child up from daycare. Daycare says child did not eat their afterschool snack. Child immediately reports *extreme* hunger/death's door hunger

It is reasonable to give child snack

Adjust mealtime expectations – eating what is served at mealtime

Keep expectation of coming to table cooperatively, sitting and eating and appropriate amount of the meal

Consequences

Consequences can help your child learn to make responsible choices and to develop mature behavior. **Our goal** is to have children internalize limit setting and gain control of their own impulses. **As your** child displays responsible behavior, you are likely to allow more independence.

Consequences can be *natural* – arising from behavior without your intervention –

touch a hot stove – you get a burn.

– or *logical* – planned and applied by you.

A child who loses the privilege of popcorn money for school will miss the treat.

Ideally, consequences should be stated ahead of time and are directly related to the child's behavior.

In working on a problem behavior, you can preview the logical consequences with your child as well as provide encouragement toward making a good choice / decision.

You like to watch Dora in the mornings. First your job is to get completely dressed, then you can watch Dora. You are so quick and capable; I know you can do it!

Or, it may be appropriate to let your child face the natural consequences of their behavior.

You left your dollies outside and they were rained upon.

Are logical consequences different from punishment?

Both natural and logical consequences teach the child he can be a problem solver. This helps develop a sense of responsibility. Providing safe, natural and logical consequences helps children problem solve, delay gratification and take pride in a job well done.

Punishment usually does not teach why responsible behavior is important because the punishment is often not related to the behavior.

How do I explain and carry out logical consequences?

Always tell your child about the logical consequences of choices *before* the child misbehaves. Try to phrase it positively:

The way to earn your car treat is to get into the car cooperatively.

Be matter-of-fact when you need follow through with a consequence. Don't scold or nag.

Be encouraging. If your child has lost a privilege as a logical consequence, make sure the child knows that there is a chance to earn it back at another time.

Natural consequences speak for themselves. If the child complains about these consequences, validate their feeling and express your confidence in the child's ability to change things for the better.



Tuesday's Child

Part V

DISCIPLINE AS LIMIT SETTING, STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

A major part of the following section has been adapted from Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000.

The subject of discipline has caused much controversy among educators and other professionals. The recent trend in education encourages abandonment of any form of severe discipline, and use of limits starting in early childhood. Although there is a general agreement among professionals on need for limit setting and structure in development of children early on, the degree and form and the approach to limit setting and structure is not agreed upon. In fact, the belief on how to set limits for children is very much influenced by the philosophy one holds about children's learning and development.

To clarify these issues, we should look at certain factors in children's learning. One point should be kept in mind that children's emotional well being – the way children are cared for, nurtured, and receive warmth and trust from their caregivers - influences all of their learning. Early attachment between the child and caregiver not only builds the foundations for the relationship between caregiver/parents and children, but also plays an important role in the social and emotional development of children. Because of their relationship with their parents and caregivers, children desire to please those around them. Children generally want to please the adults around them for two reasons: either they love their caregiver, or they are afraid of them. A combination of fear and desire for approval may often be the case as well. Based on this desire, children are enabled to learn and internalize limits.

Learning Through Fear: Children who are afraid of their caregivers/parents and curb their aggression or "inappropriate behavior" strictly out of fear, tend to do so where there is an authority figure around – because they know this is who will implement the punishment. Fear is usually induced according to specific situations, and unfortunately, if it is excessive, it could lead to anxiety or withdrawal in the child. Another downfall of learning or being disciplined through fear is that because of its being situation specific, children usually don't generalize learning from fear. For example a child may learn not to hit his sibling when parents are present, but may hit other children at school, because he hasn't been punished at school before. A great amount of evidence suggests that discipline through fear may later on lead to drinking, alcohol abuse, drugs or other delinquent behaviors.

Physical Discipline / Punishment: In the United States physical punishment like hitting or spanking a child is no longer an acceptable form of discipline. In its true sense, discipline means TEACHING, not punishing. Physical punishment is self-demeaning and will eventually undermine a child's self image. Frustration and anger caused by punishment may be stored up in children and later appear in the form of abusive behaviors toward others. On the other hand, because of excessive violence in our society today, when treating children with anger and punishment, we are reinforcing the message that "Violence is how we deal with things here." This is a message that we should not and cannot afford today.

We do not recommend physical discipline at Tuesday's Child. Aside from what was mentioned, physical discipline has the following undesirable side affects:

- Adults model aggressive behavior when they spank or hit a child. When you hit or spank a child you are modeling unacceptable behavior.
- Spanking can make the child emotionally upset. Emotional upset interferes with learning. If a child is upset, you cannot teach him correct behavior effectively.
- Spanking tends to be administered inconsistently. Parents are usually reluctant to spank their child over and

over. In fact, parents usually threaten to spank the child, but never actually do it when a negative behavior occurs.

- Even when physical discipline is used frequently, it loses its effectiveness over time. Eventually, parents have to systematically inflict harsher and harsher physical discipline to maintain its effectiveness.
- Physical discipline can easily lead to child abuse, leaving emotional and mental scars – if not physical – on an otherwise mentally and emotionally healthy child.
- Children avoid adults who administer severe punishment. Parents want to teach their children how to establish and maintain relationships and get along with family and peers. It is hard to be a good teacher if your child avoids you.

Discipline as Limit Setting: Our goal should be teaching children to internalize limit setting. When children learn to internalize limits, they become able to control their own impulses. They form self-discipline or self-limits. Again, keep in mind that teaching self-discipline begins with nurture, warmth, and respect. Respect causes children to have positive feelings and confidence about themselves and their own abilities. It leads them to have a sense of inner goals and inner values, even if there is not an adult around to remind them. It is at this point that the child learns to make wise choices about certain situations and choose appropriate behaviors over inappropriate behaviors. This leads children to begin changing their behaviors from the inside. This internalized limit setting and self-discipline, however, starts from parents or caregivers early on in a child's life.

- 1) Even before a child can use words – from 12 months – limits could be set through nonverbal communication. For example, a 14 month old moves toward an electrical outlet. Turning around and looking at her mother, mom shakes her head “No” and points to it and says, “No.” The baby may stop for a second, but continue on her way again. Mom may signal to the baby no again, and this back and forth communication may last for several minutes until the parent physically intervenes and blocks the baby's access to the outlet. Mom may lift up the child and firmly say, “You can't do that. You need to stop. You can't touch that.” With a similar approach, parents can teach a child who is experimenting with his newfound skill of biting and scratching, appropriate “nice touches” and “no biting friends” messages.
- 2) By 18 –30 months, when the child has gotten consistent messages of “No” and “Stop” for dangerous situations or inappropriate behaviors, he becomes capable of internalizing these ideas and saying to himself, “Don't do that.”
- 3) By 30 to 48 months when children may reason, “I shouldn't do that, but I want to,” – children begin to experiment with their will and form defiance. It is up to parents to set clear expectations at this point and help the child move toward internalizing limits.
- 4) Parents often assume that their children know their expectations. Commonly, parents may say, “He knows that he is not supposed to do that,” without really letting the child know what the rule is. To communicate expectations, parents should set clear rules in consistent routines and structure at home. For example, by having a bedtime routine, parents could communicate to the child that at 8:00 p.m. they expect him to be in bed. The TV is turned off at 7:30 p.m. and a consistent bathroom routine starts every night at the same time.
- 5) Finally, as limits are set, you should not forget to build your child's sense of being respected for his/her unique qualities. Every child is different, and should be respected for his/her individual difference. Respecting children's individual differences enables them to eventually create their own particular stamp that makes them feel confident and fulfilled in a personal way. Children who feel they are special are more likely to develop their own expectations of themselves and set goals for themselves, rather than feeling as though they are carrying out someone else's agenda – which could lead to rebellion, or a sense of compliance or just passivity.

At Tuesday's Child, we will teach you how to give clear messages, be consistent with your messages, and set structure at home and how to use contingency, differential attention, and other techniques to make your expectations clear to your children. We will also teach you how to set time aside for your child in order to show

him/ her how much you value his/her uniqueness.

DECREASING UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIORS

Children may fail to internalize limits for different reasons. Sometimes, it may be due to children's individual differences, developmental delays, special needs, or it may be because of environmental factors.

However, no matter what the reasons for your children's lack of internalized limit setting, parents and educators can change the undesirable behaviors, set limits, and help children develop self-discipline and understand expectations, by using simple techniques.

Let us consider our behavioral principle:

ANTECEDENT → BEHAVIOR → CONSEQUENCE

According to this rule, a child's behavior is influenced by consequences. When a particular behavior is followed by an unpleasant consequence, that behavior decreases. Discipline or setting limits is an unpleasant consequence to the child's inappropriate behavior. Different techniques may be used to decrease inappropriate behaviors. You will learn different ways to set limits and decrease inappropriate behaviors in the following section.

SELECTING BEHAVIORS TO DECREASE

Clearly Define the Behaviors That You Want to Decrease. Start by listing very specific behaviors that you find unacceptable. Try to list behaviors that you can actually see, such as hitting another child or getting up from the table at meals. Avoid global statements such as "my child has a bad attitude." "Bad attitude" covers a broad range of behaviors and could include hitting other children, using nasty words, or talking back to adults. Try to think of all the behaviors you are labeling "bad attitude." Be as specific as you can.

Observe the behaviors that you want to decrease. In order to decide whether discipline is effective, you must know the "base rate" of a problem behavior. Oftentimes, annoying or disruptive behavior seems to "go on forever." If you rely only on your overall impression of a troublesome behavior, you might underestimate the effectiveness of a technique. Let us consider an example. Suppose that your child screams for two hours each night before falling asleep. You decide to ignore your child's screaming. After five days, your child screams for one hour before falling asleep. There has been a 50% reduction in the problem behavior! However, one hour of screaming still seems like an eternity. Without an exact measure of your child's screaming, you might prematurely abandon your program of ignoring.

Once you have selected a problem behavior to decrease, select a desirable behavior to replace it. Be sure to teach your child correct behavior to replace the undesirable behavior. Think to yourself, "Once I eliminate the problem behavior, what do I want my child to do instead?" It is always productive to give the child an alternative behavior. This should usually be a socially appropriate behavior. Let us consider an example of teaching your child correct behavior. Suppose that your child hits peers when he wants a toy. You want to eliminate hitting. At the same time, you must teach your child the correct way to ask someone for a toy. To do this, demonstrate the correct behavior for your child. Then, reinforce your child when he asks for a toy in the right way.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR INTERVENTION (Removal of Positive Reinforcement)

Intervention is more effective if limits are set immediately after an undesirable behavior has occurred. Delayed limit setting is ineffective. This is particularly true of young children who tend to operate in the "here and now."

Limits should be set every time an undesirable behavior occurs. It is very important to set limits consistently. Threatening does not decrease behavior effectively. Setting limits only once in a while tells your child that he can get away with a lot of misbehavior before you will do something.

1. Using Differential Attention to Decrease Behavior

DIFFERENTIAL ATTENTION means that you attend to your child's acceptable behavior and "turn off" your attention when your child's behavior is unacceptable.

A good rule to remember is: **IGNORE THE BEHAVIOR, NOT THE CHILD**. You ignore selected behaviors and "turn on" your attention as soon as the desirable behavior occurs. In order to "turn on" quickly, you must be near the child. Do not walk away or leave the room when using differential attention.

Withdraw all attention when ignoring unacceptable behavior. Do not talk to the child, touch the child, or even look at the child.

Don't back down once you start ignoring unacceptable behavior. While you are ignoring, it is often tempting to say, "Stop that!" or firmly explain to the child that his behavior is annoying. Doing so, however, only provides attention to the problem behavior. This intermittent attention or intermittent social reinforcement will keep the unacceptable behavior going!

Use differential attention for annoying behaviors. Differential attention can be used effectively for behaviors that are neither dangerous nor harmful. Annoying behaviors include: whining, screaming, crying, throwing a tantrum, or persistently demanding something.

Differential attention is ineffective if other reinforcers are available to the child. Ignoring unacceptable behavior will not be effective if brothers, sisters, peers, or other adults attend to the child. For example, if you try to ignore "silly noises" during mealtime, the behavior will not decrease if brothers and sisters laugh or look at the child.

Ignoring unacceptable behavior will not be effective if your child is allowed to do something pleasant while you are ignoring. Let us suppose that your child is banging a toy loudly enough to disrupt the family. Ignoring "banging" will not decrease the behavior, since banging the toy is a reinforcing activity in itself.

Differential attention may be used as a consequence for noncompliance. If your child does not follow a direction, you can "turn off" your attention as a consequence for noncompliance. Turn on your attention as soon as the child begins to follow the direction.

If you use differential attention for noncompliance, you must keep your child in the situation, and you must be sure that your child does not do something enjoyable while you are ignoring his behavior. For instance, you direct your child to put on his clothes. Your child refuses, walks out of his bedroom and begins to watch television. Turning off your attention would be ineffective, since your child can do something pleasurable while you turn off your attention. (You must keep the child in his room until he begins to dress.) If your child's room has a number of toys, you may have to tell him to get dressed in the bathroom, the hallway, or another room. Remember, you must stay nearby, even though your attention is "turned off," so that you can reinforce as soon as your child begins dressing.

In some cases, young children become distracted while adult attention is "turned off." In these instances, you can lead the child through the task if he refuses to do it himself. This must be done without any talking or other social reinforcement. For instance, you ask the child to hang up his coat. The child starts to wander into the next room. Without saying anything, lead the child back to the coat hook, put the child's hands on the coat, and assist the child in hanging up the coat. Then, turn on your attention as soon as the coat is hung up.

2. "Breaking The Cycle" or "Interruption" to Decrease Undesirable Behavior

Many parents and professionals use the term "time out" to refer to an intervention technique, which would interrupt a negative behavior. Unfortunately, the technique of "time-out" has been misunderstood and misused by many educators and parents. Where originally, this technique was supposed to be used to stop the inappropriate behavior and redirect the child into a more appropriate behavior; it is now commonly misused as a way to punish the child.

To prevent any misunderstanding or possible misuse, we use the term "Interruption" or "Breaking the Cycle" in describing a certain technique to stop behaviors that may be aggressive and harmful to the child and others, and to

redirect the child into more appropriate and socially acceptable behaviors.

In a typically developing child - ages 30 to 48 months- the child learns to connect ideas together. He/she is able to have an internal debate like, "I shouldn't do that, but I really want to," and anticipate the consequence, "If I do it, I will lose TV or have a time-out," or "If I do the right thing, Mom or Dad will be proud of me." The child may not be using all these words yet, but is able to have a general sense of these words. The child is able to combine these general ideas to get a sense of consequences. However, it is important to note that the child's emotional state affects the amount of control they have over following the expected rules. Also, such rule-governed behavior is situation specific and may not transfer to other situations. From 1 ½ to 3 ½ years, children's need for understanding limits is very powerful. It helps children learn to organize themselves when parents respond promptly and firmly to inappropriate behaviors. For example, when a child displays an aggressive behavior, the parent can say to a child, "Every time you do that, I am going to stop you until you can stop yourself." This is done to "break the cycle" of inappropriate or aggressive behavior, and to teach alternative behaviors. This is called "Interruption."

"Interruption" or "breaking the cycle" not only puts a stop to an aggressive or dangerous behavior a child is exhibiting (i.e.: hitting, jumping off furniture, running into street, kicking), but helps the child replace that behavior with another behavior, which is appropriate. Interruption should be used whenever and wherever the aggressive or dangerous behavior occurs.

When used correctly, interruption will teach the child a more appropriate way to solve conflicts that may occur.

The following procedure should be used in breaking the cycle or interrupting:

- For children 15 months through 3 years (approximately), grasp the child firmly by the upper arms and bring child down to sitting position, briefly stating the reason for holding. Say "Stop hitting." Do not use more than one phrase.
- Quickly (within 3—5 seconds) stand child up and REDIRECT to appropriate new behavior. For example, say "Use your words and say 'give me my car.'" At this point, praise the appropriate behavior. This part of redirection is the most important part. This is what teaches the child what the correct response or behavior is.
- For typically developing children over 4 years (approximately), grasp the child firmly by the upper arms (not necessarily bringing the child to a sitting position), briefly stating the reason for holding him. For example say, "Stop spitting." Do not use more than one phrase. For older children it may not be possible or appropriate to physically bring the child to a sitting position. Often a firm grasp, and a sharp tone of voice will interrupt the behavior.
- Immediately REDIRECT to an appropriate NEW BEHAVIOR. Say, "You need to share the watercolors with your brother. When you let him work with you, you can continue to paint." Praise the appropriate behavior. Interruption of an inappropriate behavior and redirection to a new behavior should be conducted in a calm, matter of fact manner. This may be difficult, since you will likely be angry about your child's unacceptable behavior. Showing your anger will not help. It will only make the procedure more prolonged and difficult. Stay calm. By using the disruption procedure (along with a program of positive reinforcement) the problem behavior will decrease, and there will be fewer occasions to become angry.
- When special needs are not involved in a child's development, you can explain and teach your child why you had to stop the child's inappropriate behavior. For example, once you have interrupted the inappropriate behavior, you can say, "Let's talk about this. Looks like you have a hard time stopping yourself. So every time you do this, I have to stop you. I wonder how I should stop you. Could you help me? You tell me what I should do. Let's work this out together." From 3 ½ to 6 years the discussion can become more sophisticated: "Every time you do this, I get angry. I don't like to get angry with you, or say things to you, which may hurt you. Let's think about ways that might help me help you before we get in trouble?" The long-term goal is self-discipline. Self-discipline involves years of teaching consistently. It

will not magically happen over night. By age four or five a typically developing child can tell you what would work for him and can already be involved in the process. This could be an enjoyable process as your child learns to internalize limits. Therefore, use every inappropriate behavior as an opportunity to teach limits.

- Interruption is effective if the problem behavior decreases. The effectiveness of this technique is judged by a change in your child's behavior. If the problem behavior for which disruption is constantly used decreases, then this procedure is effective. Your child's behavior during the distraction is not an indication of its effectiveness. Some children laugh or look unconcerned about this procedure. Do not take that as a sign that the technique is not working. Rely on observations of your child's behavior.

Once you begin to break the cycle for a problem behavior, this behavior should decrease. The behavior will not stop all at once, but you should notice that it does not occur as often. If some decrease in problem behavior has not occurred after five days, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I breaking the cycle every time the problem behavior occurs?
2. Am I following the procedure and giving as little attention to my child as possible during the procedure?
3. Am I reinforcing acceptable behavior that my child can substitute for the problem behavior?
4. Is my child capable of the "substitute" behavior that I expect?
5. Should I spend more time showing my child acceptable substitute behavior?
6. Should I spend more time modeling acceptable substitute behavior with my child?

Disruption is effective, when it is used consistently, and it must be combined with positive redirection and reinforcement.

3. Removing a Desirable Object to Decrease Behavior

1. If your child is using an object inappropriately, removing that object is a way of withdrawing positive reinforcement.
Let us suppose that your child is playing in a noisy and annoying manner with a toy. You ask him to stop, and he refuses. As a consequence, you can remove the toy.
2. Return an object that has been withdrawn fairly soon.
Your child needs the opportunity to practice using the object appropriately. Therefore, it is important to return the object fairly soon.

4. Withdrawing a Pleasurable Activity to Decrease Unacceptable Behavior

1. An activity may be withdrawn as a consequence for unacceptable behavior, but **THIS MUST BE DONE CAREFULLY.**
It is advisable to withdraw activities that are fairly "routine," such as going to the park, stopping for lunch at McDonald's, or watching television. **DO NOT** withdraw activities, which are special events such as a Birthday party. **DO NOT** withdraw an activity that has been earned as a reinforcer.
2. Do not withdraw too many activities in one day.
Withdrawing too many activities can make your child frustrated, and he/she might "give up" trying to improve his/her behavior.
3. Do not remove any activity for a long period.

For young children, removal of an activity should be fairly short. For example, suppose that your child misbehaves while playing outdoors. As a consequence, you tell your child to come inside. It is better to keep your child indoors for 15 to 30 minutes rather than 2 or 3 hours. By going outdoors again, your child will have the opportunity to “practice” the right way to play outside.

4. Withdraw an activity, which immediately follows the unacceptable behavior. Intervention is more effective if it is done immediately. Do not remove an activity that is far removed in time from the unacceptable behavior. For instance, if your child does something unacceptable in the morning, taking away a morning cartoon would be more effective than taking away an afternoon trip to the park.
5. Once you withdraw an activity, stick to your decision. Once you tell your child that she cannot go to the park or have lunch at McDonald’s. etc., he/she might scream, whine, plead, or talk you out of your decision. Do not give in. If you don’t think that you can stick to your decision, choose another form of decreasing inappropriate behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN DISCIPLINE AS SETTING LIMITS, STRUCTURE, AND EXPECTATIONS

- I) **When You Give More, You Can Expect More.** Make sure your limit setting and rules are coupled with nurturing care. Do not lose the balance between giving and expecting. When we lose the balance and expect without giving or give without expecting, the results may often be an angry and resistant child in the first case, or a spoiled and passive child in the second case.
- II) **Discipline should be Teaching.** Make sure your discipline includes not only limits, but opportunities for learning to problem solve, anticipate difficult situations, and deal with disappointments and feelings of loss and humiliation.
- III) **Physical Discipline.** This is not considered an option at Tuesday’s Child.
- IV) **Do Not Humiliate.** Humiliation only leads to anger, resentment, and rebelliousness, rather than internalizing values.
- V) **Show Expectations in Your Own Relationships.** Children learn your expectations of them not only by the rules and structure you set, but also by observing what you do for yourself in your relationship with others. If your relationship with your spouse or other people around you is marked by anger and aggression, it will be difficult if not impossible to expect your child to respect others.
- VI) **Make Expectations Appropriate To a Child’s Age and Developmental Level.** It is important to know stages of development and your child’s developmental level and whether or not a special need or disability is involved. Expectations should be set based upon your child’s age and developmental level.
- VII) **Self Discipline.** Never forget, your goal is eventual self-control.
- VIII) **Discipline at the End of the Work Day.** Avoid teaching discipline the first hour you get home from a whole day of working. Use this time to get close to your child, rather than teaching discipline.
- IX) **Parents, Partners, or Extended Family Members as a Team.** Setting limits works better if parents, partners, or extended family members work as a team and are consistent in giving the same message to the child. Contradictory and inconsistent messages confuse the child and render any kind of limit setting less effective.

REFERENCES

Brazelton, T. Berry & Greenspan, Stanley, I. (2000). The Irreducible Needs of Children: What every child must have to grow, learn, and flourish. Perseus: Cambridge