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Module Two, Session One— Promoting Positive Behavior

Revised 02/2012

**MODULE TWO
SESSION ONE**

Session One Competencies and Objectives

Competencies

The foster parent:

- Understands the relationship between behavior and meeting needs; can assist child in meeting needs responsibly.
- Can use discipline techniques to promote positive behavior.

Objectives

Session One will enable participants to:

1. Get acquainted with the trainers and each other;
2. Describe the relationship between this PRIDE module and the entire PRIDE Training Program;
3. Define discipline;
4. Explain the relationship between the goals of effective discipline and using discipline to protect, nurture, and meet developmental needs;
5. Assess one's own strengths and needs related to the personal qualities essential for instilling discipline;
6. Describe how meeting one's needs for belonging, recognition, power, and enjoyment affects behavior;
7. Describe the range and major categories of disciplinary techniques;
8. Describe how praise is used to promote positive behavior;
9. Describe how rewards are used to promote positive behavior;
10. Describe how encouragement is used to promote positive behavior;
11. Demonstrate the ability to respond to certain situations with statements of encouragement; and
12. Describe how ignoring is used to promote positive behavior.

Session One Agenda

Part I: Welcome and Introductions (35 minutes)

- A. Welcoming remarks and participant introductions
- B. Use of PRIDEbook
- C. Purpose of this Foster PRIDE module
- D. Review of Session One objectives and agenda
- E. Discussion of teamwork agreements

Part II: Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture (1 hour 30 minutes, including 15-minute break)

- A. The challenge of discipline: Overview
- B. The qualities essential for effective discipline
- C. The range of discipline methods and techniques

Part III: Promoting Positive Behavior (45 minutes)

- A. The connection between self-esteem and positive behavior
- B. Rewards, praise, and the special gift of encouragement
- C. Don't ignore IGNORING!

Part IV: Closing Remarks (10 minutes)

- A. Summary
- B. Preview of next session
- C. Taking PRIDE activity
- D. End session

Why Discipline and Punishment Are Not the Same

Discipline	Punishment
A. Is instilled in children by parents	A. Is imposed on children
B. Can be used to prevent problems from happening	B. Focuses on dealing with problems after their occurrence
C. Fosters self-control and self-responsibility	C. Places responsibility with the person who has power to control the child's behavior
D. Emphasizes structure and guidance	D. Emphasizes sanctions and enforcement
E. Teaches the right way to solve or prevent problems	E. May stop wrong behavior but does not teach right or expected behaviors
F. Encourages the child to be capable and responsible for making decisions.	F. Prevents children from learning to make their own decisions.
G. Encourages the desired behavior	G. May reinforce unacceptable behavior if misbehaving is the only way to get parental attention
H. Is intended to protect and nurture children	H. Often uses, and may cause, emotional and physical pain
I. May help children feel better about themselves as they grow confident of their ability to meet needs responsibly.	I. May reinforce poor self-esteem, especially if the punishment was demeaning.
J. Encourages children to rely on their inner controls or rules of conduct.	J. Implies that responsible behavior is expected only when authority figures are present.
K. The teaching-learning approach promotes a cooperative, mutual, positive relationship between children and adults.	K. Increases avoidance and fear.

Goals of Effective Discipline

The disciplinary process should be concerned with:

- a. protecting and nurturing the child's physical and psychological well-being
- b. advancing the child's development
- c. meeting the child's needs
- d. teaching ways to prevent and solve problems
- e. maintaining and building the parent/child relationship
- f. building self-control and responsibility
- g. producing the desired behavior
- h. complying with the agency policy on discipline that prohibits corporal punishment

My Strengths and Needs Related to the Essential Qualities for Ensuring Effective Discipline

Patience: The effective disciplinarian understands that change happens slowly.

I can tell a child something time and time again without getting frustrated.

I do not mind repetition.

I can tolerate a child making the same mistakes again and again.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Determination: The effective disciplinarian never gives up and always searches for new solutions.

I do not easily become discouraged.

I believe that hard work will pay off in the long run.

I am willing to keep trying new techniques and solutions when something doesn't work.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Confidence: The effective disciplinarian acts upon his or her own feelings of self-worth and self-assurance.

I am willing to make mistakes and I know no one has all the answers.

I believe that I know good and effective ways to nurture, protect, and discipline children.

I can ask for help from others.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Genuineness and concern: The effective disciplinarian knows that discipline depends on a positive relationship with the child.

I am able to set limits in a caring, yet firm way.

I pay attention to the child—and not just when his or her behavior is bad or challenging.

My words and actions convey what I'm really feeling and thinking.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Openness: The effective disciplinarian sees more than one side to a situation and will try a variety of options.

I will factor in the child's side of the story.

I am open to trying new ways or approaches to solving problems.

I am willing to risk making mistakes.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Separateness: The effective disciplinarian understands the need for separateness and distance between the parent and child.

I am able to feel good and competent, even when the child misbehaves.

I can tolerate watching a child experience the consequences of his or her behavior.

I am able to walk away, or postpone discussions, when I am angry or upset.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Friendly firmness: The effective disciplinarian understands that discipline must occur in a consistent, predictable, calm, and friendly manner.

I am able to set limits without yelling.

I am consistent in my response to the child's behaviors.

The child in my home can accurately predict what my response will be to most situations.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Understanding of how developmental needs affect discipline: The effective disciplinarian knows that discipline must be appropriate to the child's developmental stage.

I am comfortable disciplining children of different ages.

I depend on a range of discipline techniques depending on the needs of the child.

I understand that as children grow discipline will need to address—not extinguish—their increasing independence.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

Communication: The successful disciplinarian is an effective communicator.

I can listen to a child.

I know how to use "I" messages.

My conversations with children do not escalate into yelling.

1	2	3	4
High need to develop this quality	Have some of this quality but could use a lot more	Have some of this quality but could use a little more.	Very strong in this quality.

The Range of Disciplinary Techniques

PROMOTING

<p>PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR</p> <p>Seeks to strengthen relationship with child, build self-esteem, and promote child's ability and confidence to handle situations alone.</p>	<p>Child maintains greatest responsibility for control of behavior.</p>	<p>Listening Questioning Modeling Praise Verbal Nonverbal Physical Sharing positive feelings Rewards Tangible privileges Increased responsibility Support interests Encouragement Ignoring</p>
<p>PROMOTING SELF-CONTROL</p> <p>Uses planning and preparation as a means to avoid acting-out and negative behaviors.</p>	<p>Parent and child share responsibility for control of behavior.</p>	<p>Encourage risk-taking Establish expectations Rules Standards of behavior Family meetings Preparing/planning for changes Modifying the environment</p>
<p>RESPONDING TO LACK OF SELF-CONTROL</p> <p>Uses direct intervention to address situations where the child does not have sufficient self-control to ensure acceptable behavior.</p>	<p>Parent maintains greatest responsibility for control of behavior.</p>	<p>"I-messages" Natural and logical consequences Exploring alternatives Rules Commands or requests Removing child from situation Time-out</p>

RESPONDING

Circumstances Influencing the Methods of Discipline We Use

- a. The behavior itself**

- b. Our feelings about the behavior**

- c. The child**

- d. The purpose we assign to the behavior**

- e. Where the behavior is occurring**

- f. Who is present in the setting**

- g. Factors affecting our ability and willingness to respond effectively**

- h. Our relationship with the child**

I Caught You! (Being Good)

Verbal praise

Nonverbal praise

Physical praise

Sharing positive feelings

Tangible rewards

Privileges

Increasing responsibility

Supporting interests and talents

"Ground Rules" for Providing Encouragement

Focus on internal evaluation—not external.

"You must be very proud of yourself."

"How do you think you are doing?"

"What kinds of things can you do so that you will be more pleased with this?"

(vs. "I'm so proud of you.")

Focus on contributions and appreciation—not value judgments.

"I appreciate the help you gave me."

"Your hard work sure did help the family."

"When you do ____, it makes my job so much easier."

(vs. "What a good boy you are!" or "What a good job you did!")

Focus on effort and improvement—not winning or competition.

"You have really been practicing hard."

"I can see the progress you've made."

"Being part of a team takes a lot of work and dedication."

(vs. "I'm so proud of you for winning!" or "You're a good basketball player.")

What Do I Say?

Todd, age two, has dressed himself in his sister's shirt, pants that are on backwards, no socks, and shoes on the wrong feet. You say:

The Little League team just won the championship, and Ryan scored the winning run. You say:

Anya complains that his arithmetic homework is too hard for him. You say:

Tracey was late handing in her homework and got an F. This was the first homework assignment she completed this year. You say:

Ground Rules for Ignoring

Give the child no recognition when the child exhibits unacceptable behavior.

Be consistent with your approach.

Recognize the child as soon as the unacceptable behavior stops.

Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture, and Meet Developmental Needs

- Discipline is intended to result in a child’s development of self-control, self-respect, responsibility, and orderliness. Specifically, a disciplined person has learned self-control and is governed by a system of rules from within. Thus, the long process of discipline evolves to meet the changing needs of the growing child.
- A system of discipline focuses on what you want the child to do the next time the child finds himself or herself in a similar situation. Stopping the child from touching the stove—or managing the child’s behavior—is certainly important. But it is even more important for the child to learn not to touch the stove in the future.
- Punishment may be a part of the discipline process, but it is never the main ingredient.
- Spanking can lead to child abuse. Our greatest responsibility is to keep children safe.
- One of the most powerful ways to encourage self-esteem and self-control is to promote positive behavior. Examples include listening, asking questions, providing encouragement, modeling, praising desired behavior, and rewarding appropriate behavior. These techniques allow children to take control and responsibility for their own behavior.
- When we promote positive behaviors, we promote self-esteem. When we promote self-esteem, we promote positive behavior. With a good self-concept, children can learn, have confidence, take risks, and problem-solve. A good self-concept allows the child the maximum benefit from all methods of discipline.
- There are always opportunities to recognize positive behavior—because **no child exhibits bad behavior all the time.**
- Praise and reward are good techniques for recognizing positive behavior. But it is important to think about the way you use these techniques. Overuse of praise can cause children to believe that their worth depends on the opinions of others. Or children may only behave if they know they will receive a reward. The problem with praise and reward is that children learn to rely primarily on external means to influence behavior.
- Encouragement is another means to encourage positive behavior, and some argue that it is more effective than praise or reward. Encouragement implies reasonable (one step at a time) expectations, and that we accept the child's mistakes as well the successes.
- Ignoring is particularly effective when the behavior is meant to gain the parent's attention. Attention-seeking behavior will persist as long as the adult responds. Ignoring provides no response, and avoids encouraging negative behaviors.

Taking PRIDE Activity One

Identify a child in your family and make a commitment to promote the child's positive behavior. Identify ways to reward, praise, or provide encouragement, and/or identify behavior that you wish to ignore.

Child's first name: _____ Age: _____

I. Using Rewards, Praise, and Encouragement

What positive behavior were you trying to promote? _____

What technique did you utilize? _____

What did you say or do? _____

What was the result? _____

What might you do to be more effective next time? _____

II. Don't Ignore IGNORING!

What behavior did you plan to ignore? _____

Describe your efforts (How many times did you have to ignore? How often? Were you consistent? Were others in your family consistent? Did you stick with it?): _____

What was the result? _____

What might you do to be more effective next time? _____

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Module Two, Session Two—

Promoting Self-Responsibility and Responding to Unacceptable Behavior

Session Two Competencies and Objectives

Competencies

The foster parent:

- Understands the relationship between behavior and meeting needs; can assist child in meeting needs responsibly.
- Can use discipline techniques to promote self-responsibility.
- Can use discipline techniques to respond to unacceptable behavior.

Objectives

Session Two will enable participants to:

1. Describe the range and categories of discipline techniques;
2. Explain the importance of using planning and preparation as a means to promote self-control;
3. Identify techniques for promoting self-control;
4. Describe the relationship between establishing expectations and promoting self-control;
5. Describe the relationship between planning for change and establishing self-control;
6. Identify specific ways to modify the environment in order to promote self-control;
7. Describe situations in which taking control is necessary for promoting self-control;
8. Identify techniques for responding to out-of-control behavior;
9. Demonstrate the use of "I-messages" when communicating with children and youth;
10. Develop natural or logical consequences for certain situations; and
11. Identify basic guidelines for the use of time out.

Resource 2-2

Session Two Agenda

Part I: Welcome and Building Bridges (20 minutes)

- A. Welcome and review of objectives and agenda
- B. Building bridges

Part II: Promoting Self-Control (1 hour 35 minutes, including 15-minute break)

- A. Establishing expectations
- B. Planning for change
- C. Modifying the environment

Part III: Responding to Lack of Control (55 minutes)

- A. Sending an "I-message"
- B. Natural and logical consequences
- C. Time out

Part IV: Closing Remarks (10 minutes)

- A. Summary
- B. Preview of next session
- C. Taking PRIDE activity
- D. End session

**MODULE TWO
SESSION TWO**

Rules About Rules

- A. Prioritize and establish a few rules that are most important to the well-being and safety of the family.
- B. Involve family members in setting rules.
- C. Make sure the child understands the reasons or rationale for the rule.
- D. Make sure the rule addresses the issue it is intended to address.
- E. Make rules clear.
- F. Make sure the child understands the exceptions to the rule.
- G. Make rules positive and action-oriented. Save "don't" for specific safety situations.
- H. Make sure rules "grow" with the child.
- I. Make only those rules that you are confident you can enforce over time.
- J. Be consistent.

Assessing Our Rules

Rule as stated or written: _____

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Were family members involved in setting this rule? | Yes | No |
| 2. Was the child (or family) told the reasons for the rule? | Yes | No |
| 3. Does the rule address the issue it was intended to address? | Yes | No |
| 4. Is the rule clear? | Yes | No |
| 5. Does the child understand any exceptions to the rule? | Yes | No |
| 6. Is the rule positive and action oriented? | Yes | No |
| 7. Is this rule age-appropriate? | Yes | No |
| 8. Can this rule "grow" with the child? | Yes | No |
| 9. Can I truly enforce this rule over time? | Yes | No |
| 10. Is this rule consistently enforced? | Yes | No |

Are there any changes you would make in this rule, or any steps you would take to improve its effectiveness? If so what? _____

Rule as stated or written: _____

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Were family members involved in setting this rule? | Yes | No |
| 2. Was the child (or family) told the reasons for the rule? | Yes | No |
| 3. Does the rule address the issue it was intended to address? | Yes | No |
| 4. Is the rule clear? | Yes | No |
| 5. Does the child understand any exceptions to the rule? | Yes | No |
| 6. Is the rule positive and action oriented? | Yes | No |
| 7. Is this rule age appropriate? | Yes | No |
| 8. Can this rule "grow" with the child? | Yes | No |
| 9. Can I truly enforce this rule over time? | Yes | No |
| 10. Is this rule consistently enforced? | Yes | No |

Are there any changes you would make in this rule, or any steps you would take to improve its effectiveness? If so what? _____

Planning for Change

a. Try to be aware of pending changes in the child's life.

Sometimes it is hard even to be aware that a child will interpret something as a "change." But try to be sensitive to small changes and the impact they have on children. Be sure to stay in contact with the social worker and other members of the foster care team to make sure you are aware of changes in other aspects of the child's life—school, therapy, visits, etc.

b. Talk with the child about the change ahead of time.

There is no value in protecting children from things that are going to happen. They need time to prepare and deal with their feelings. You will have to determine, given the child's developmental level and situation, how far in advance you begin planning with the child. Obviously, you do not begin to talk weeks ahead of time about a change for a toddler that will occur months down the road. You will have to use your discretion about when and how to talk with children about things that *may* happen. Many children cannot deal with this type of uncertainty and, indeed, are better off not knowing something until it is sure to happen.

c. Talk with the child to identify potential feelings.

Helping children identify and label potential feelings is part of the disciplinary (teaching) process. When the child knows to expect fear, nervousness, or sadness, these then become a predictable part of the child's world. You have put the child in charge or in control. The child is less likely to become overwhelmed or consumed by feelings that often lead to out-of-control behaviors.

d. Talk with the child to identify strategies to deal with these feelings.

Once potential feelings are identified you can talk with the child about ways to handle those feelings. Identify ways for the child to cope during the change period (plan a telephone call to a good friend, talk to the school counselor, give your "blankey" an extra hug etc.). Help the child plan activities or other ways to focus attention and put the child in control (reading, listening to music, writing in a journal). Remember that children respond best to action. Directing their attention to "do" something puts them "in charge" of themselves and reduces the sense of powerlessness that change brings.

Building Success into the Environment

Organizing

Enhancing

Soothing

Redirecting

Childproofing

Adolescent proofing

My Own "I-Message"

You loaned your bicycle pump to 14-year-old Dan. When you needed it, you found it had not been returned.

You say: _____

Twelve-year-old Marta is found smoking in her bedroom.

You say: _____

Your own situation: _____

You say: _____

If . . . Then . . .

Think about how you can apply specific natural or logical consequences to help change unacceptable behaviors.

Behavior _____

Consequence: **Natural** ____ **Logical** ____

Behavior _____

Consequence: **Natural** ____ **Logical** ____

Taking Time and Giving Time

- a. Take time to gain your composure and self-control.**

- b. Give the child an opportunity to change the behavior.**

- c. If these efforts fail, tell the child where to go for a time-out.**

- d. Time out should be used sparingly.**

- e. Time out is not punishment.**

- f. Focus the child on a positive activity after the time-out.**

Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture, and Meet Developmental Needs

Promoting self-control refers to the use of planning and preparation as a means to avoid acting out and negative behaviors. It recognizes that children cannot always be totally responsible for their own behavior. Promoting self-control requires that parent and child share responsibility for avoiding acting-out behavior. Ideally, the parent assumes this responsibility only to the degree that the child cannot.

ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS for behavior is one of the cornerstones of promoting self-control. Expectations provide children with a purpose and a structure for maintaining their self-control. Children have not "internalized" all the standards of conduct and behavior that adults may assume, and they may never internalize them if they are not made aware of them.

RULES provide predictability, consistency, and stability that children need to feel safe and nurtured. They can be used for a variety of reasons ranging from preventing problems to responding to them when they do occur.

Change places tremendous strain on children, who respond best to structure, consistency, and routine. Children under stress often exhibit the most challenging and out-of-control behavior.

MODIFYING THE ENVIRONMENT refers to steps the parent takes to change or structure the child's environment in a way that helps the child to succeed at tasks and remain safe.

Regardless of how much you promote positive behavior, or seek to promote self-control, the child's behavior will often become out of control. As the adult and teacher it is your responsibility to intervene and help the child reestablish control.

The use of an "**I-MESSAGE**" lowers confrontation and focuses on helping children understand the impact of their behavior. You let the child know how you feel and how the behavior affects you. But the responsibility for change remains with the child.

NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES are effective ways to intervene while maintaining respect for the child's ability to make decisions. Consequences promote an understanding of how the world operates in relation to how one behaves.

The purpose of **TIME OUT** is to allow the child to reestablish self-control, to end unacceptable behaviors, and to help the child think about behavior and its impact.

There will always be situations where you find yourself overwhelmed with feelings. It may be helpful to think about whether you need to give a time-out to the child, or take a timeout for yourself.

Taking PRIDE Activity Two

Use this worksheet to record examples of how you used an “I-Message” and Logical or Natural Consequences to promote positive behavior, and respond to unacceptable behavior, of a child in your family.

Part I: “I-Message”

1. The child’s behavior you wanted to change:
2. How you felt about this behavior:
3. The effect of this behavior on you or others:
4. Your “I-Message” said to the child:
5. The child’s response to your “I-Message”:

Part II: Logical or Natural Consequences

1. The child’s unacceptable behavior:
2. What you said in offering choices to the child in response to this behavior:
3. The consequence chosen:
4. The result of using this consequence:

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Module Two, Session Three— Responding to the Challenges

Session Three Competencies and Objectives

Competencies

The foster parent:

- Understands the relationship between behavior and meeting needs; can assist children in meeting their needs responsibly.
- Can use discipline techniques to promote positive behavior.
- Can use discipline techniques to promote self-responsibility.
- Can use discipline techniques to respond to unacceptable behavior.

Objectives

Session Three will enable participants to:

1. Describe a problem-solving process used to deal with children's challenging behaviors;
2. Apply an understanding of the goals of effective discipline and the circumstances influencing the selection of disciplinary methods to children's challenging behaviors;
3. Use praise and rewards to recognize a child's positive behavior;
4. Use encouragement statements to promote positive behavior;
5. Select children's behaviors which could be ignored as a means to promoting positive behavior;
6. Help children plan for change as a way to maintain self-control;
7. Identify specific ways to modify their environment in order to promote self-control;
8. Identify techniques for responding to out-of-control behavior;
9. Demonstrate the use of "I-messages";
10. Develop natural or logical consequences for certain situations; and
11. Identify situations in which the use of time-out may be an effective response to children's out-of-control behavior

Resource 3-2

Session Three Agenda

Part I: Welcome and Building Bridges (25 minutes)

- A. Welcome and review of objectives and agenda
- B. Building bridges

Part II: Planning to Meet the Behavioral Challenges (45 minutes)

- A. Revisiting the range of discipline methods and techniques
- B. Considering circumstances, qualities, and goals
- C. Building the problem-solving machine

Part III: Demonstrating Disciplinary Skills (1 hour 35 minutes, including 15-minute break)

- A. Practicing problem solving
- B. Responding to the challenges

Part IV: Closing Remarks (15 minutes)

- A. Summary
- B. Instructions for participant evaluation
- C. End module

**MODULE TWO
SESSION THREE**

The Problem-Solving Machine

The Problem-Solving Machine is a process to use in dealing with children's behavioral challenges. There are six steps in the process.

1. Identify the problem.

While this step may seem pretty basic, we often set out to solve problems with others when we don't all have the same understanding or perception of the problem. Take some time to identify the true problem before you proceed.

2. Gather information.

When gathering information, ask yourself such questions as:

- Where does the behavior usually occur?
- Does the child do this all the time or just when...?
- What need(s) may the child be trying to meet?
- Did the beginning of this behavior coincide with another event?

3. Brainstorm ideas.

Come up with as many ideas for managing the behavior as you can. Make a list. Don't reject any idea.

4. Evaluate possible solutions.

After you have all your ideas out, go over the list and decide what might work. Sometimes two or three ideas may be combined.

5. Select a tentative solution.

Select one of the possible solutions and decide on a plan for using it. Decide how long you will try this.

6. Measure the outcome.

After you have tried the solution for the time you determined was best, use the goals of effective discipline to help you decide if your solution worked. These goals are:

- To protect and nurture the child's physical and psychological well-being;
- To meet the child's developmental needs;
- To meet the need motivating the behavior;
- To teach ways to prevent and solve problems;
- To maintain and build the parent/child relationship;
- To build self-control and responsibility;
- To produce the desired behavior;
- To comply with the agency's policy on discipline.

If the solution you chose worked well, enjoy the success. If you find that it didn't, remember that an effective disciplinarian sees more than one side to a situation and will try other options. Follow the process again and select something different to try.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Disciplinary Methods

1. Has the disciplinary method protected and nurtured the child's physical and psychological well-being?
2. Did it enhance the child's development?
3. Were the child's needs met in a responsible manner?
4. Has it taught the child ways to prevent and solve problems?
5. Will this method preserve and/or build the parent/child relationship?
6. Will this method build self-control and self-responsibility?
7. Did this method result in the behavior you wanted?
8. Was the method based on an understanding and appreciation of the child's developmental status and uniqueness?

What I Would Say and Do In This Situation

For the following situations, select a tentative solution for dealing with the behaviors. Also, give a specific example of what you would say or do when using the selected technique(s).

EXAMPLE: The children are making a lot of noise while you are talking on the telephone.

Tentative solution(s):

- a) "I-message"
- b) Logical Consequence

What I would say/do:

- a) "When it is so loud I get upset because I can't hear the person I'm talking with."
- b) "Either you can play in here quietly, or you can go to your room."

a. A toddler throws himself on the floor kicking and screaming.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

b. The children won't go to bed when you want them to.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

c. Returning from a shopping trip with a six-year-old, you find that she has a pocket full of candy you didn't buy for her.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

d. A nine-year-old acts very shy and is often withdrawn.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

e. The ten and eleven-year-old boys are constantly vying for position and trying to compete for your attention. They put each other down all the time.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

f. A twelve-year-old gets upset very quickly, throws things, picks on smaller children, and yells and argues with you when he doesn't get his way.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

g. A fourteen-year-old borrows your clothes and leaves them at a friend's home.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

h. A child is very upset about receiving a failing grade for work done on a school project.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

i. An eight-year-old who frequently lies tells you she cleaned her room. You know this is not true.

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

j. A child talks back and sasses you.

Tentative solution:

What I would say/do:

k. A ten-year-old comforts a younger child who is frightened by a barking dog.

Tentative solution:

What I would say/do:

- 1. A seven year old seems to have a lot of fears. He is afraid of the dark, gets very anxious at the thought of trying to do anything new, and loses control during any change in routine.**

Tentative solution(s):

What I would say/do:

Responding to the Challenges

1. The child's problem behavior:
2. Background information:
(include reason or underlying need child is trying to meet)
3. Possible tentative solutions:
4. The tentative solution(s) I selected:
5. What I will say and do:
(and when)
6. How I will "measure the outcome":

Solutions to Some Common Behavioral Challenges

a. A toddler throws himself on the floor kicking and screaming.¹

Ignore the behavior by standing quietly near the child and waiting until it is over. Until the child regains control, do not attempt to reason, criticize or discuss the behavior with the child. Observe for any risks to the child's safety.

With some children, it helps to hold them and comfort them when they are having a tantrum.

Pay attention to what is happening which might provoke the child's behavior and plan ahead or modify the environment.

During a calm time, ask the child if he or she would like to learn some other ways to handle frustration. Teach how to tell you how he or she feels instead of giving you an emotional display through behavior.

Ask the child what he or she would like you to do when he or she is having a tantrum. For example, "Would you like me to hug you, or would you want me to just wait until you are over it?"

Use verbal or nonverbal praise to show your approval when the child does not throw a tantrum during a frustrating time. For example, "You must be very proud of yourself."

b. The children won't go to bed when you want them to.

Modify the environment (soothing). Reduce stimulation by restricting activities which have the opposite effect on relaxation.

Modify the environment (enhancing). If the child is afraid of the dark, add a night light, provide a favorite blanket or stuffed animal, etc.

Establish routines and expectations regarding bedtime rituals such as baths, drinks of water, using the toilet, bedtime stories, lights out, etc.

Use consequences. For example, "You can settle down now and go to bed or you will start getting ready for bed a half hour earlier tomorrow."

Plan ahead by setting up the bedtime routine during the day or by discussing bedtime during family meetings.

c. Returning from a shopping trip with a six-year-old, you find that she has a pocket full of candy you didn't buy for her.

Don't call the child a thief.

Use an "I-message" to express your feelings about this behavior and its effect on you and others. For example, "I'm very concerned (upset, disappointed, etc.) about your taking things from others without paying for them."

Explain how stealing affects trust and how hard it is for people to live together or to get along without trust.

Explore with the child the reason for stealing, using reflective listening and various questions to encourage the sharing of feelings and the identification of needs.

Don't try to trap the child by asking, "Did you steal the candy." Tell the child you know she stole the candy. Ask, "How did you feel when you stole the candy?"

Ask other questions in a nonthreatening way. For example, ask, "How might the store owner feel when things are stolen?" or, "How many things do you think the store owner will have to sell in order to make up for the stolen candy?"

Help children figure out ways to get what they want without having to steal.

Make sure children have allowances that are realistic (to cover expenses and that fit within the family's budget).

Go with the child while the child takes the stolen goods back to the store.

Explain the potential legal consequences of stealing.

Enforce the specific rules you have established about stealing.

d. A nine-year-old acts very shy and is often withdrawn.

Don't label or introduce the child as shy, or try to explain to others that he is shy if he doesn't want to talk.

Use reflective listening to show your understanding of how it might be hard or scary for the child to be in a situation in which he doesn't feel comfortable.

Use nonthreatening questions to determine if the child's behavior is problematic to him, and if there are things you may do to help the child feel more comfortable with others.

Examine what you might be doing to encourage this behavior, or to force the child to act a certain way. Plan ahead to prevent problems, including:

- not forcing a child into situations that he isn't ready for;
- helping the child explore ways to feel more comfortable;
- offering praise and encouragement, and supporting positive behaviors;
- not criticizing the child; and
- not letting the child's shyness be an excuse to stop him from doing things he needs to do such as going to school.

e. The ten- and eleven-year-old boys are constantly vying for position and trying to compete for your attention. They put each other down all the time.

Provide unconditional love and caring.

Don't stress competition, and avoid comparing and judging.

Stress teamwork and cooperation.

Ignore their attention-seeking behavior, and acknowledge the efforts they make to work together to accomplish group or family activities.

Recognize and value each child's uniqueness (see Foster PRIDE Core Module One, Session Two, for ideas).

Provide verbal and nonverbal praise to both children so they know how they are special as individuals. Focus on effort and improvement, not winning or competition. Say "Being part of a team takes a lot of work and dedication," instead of, "I'm so proud of you for winning."

Plan to have special one-to-one time with each child during the day.

f. A twelve-year-old gets upset very quickly, throws things, picks on smaller children, and yells and argues with you when he doesn't get his way.

Tell the youngster that it is okay to feel angry, but that you will not let him hurt others or property.

Use timeout to allow the child to regain control of his behavior.

Establish rules about behavior which is not permitted.

Provide consequences (e.g., paying for damage, restricting the use of certain objects, etc.).

Use requests, then commands.

Explore with the child more effective ways to deal with his anger.

Model effective and safe ways to express anger, disappointment, disagreement, and frustration.

Determine situations which usually cause the child to express his anger, and plan with him how to prepare for, and respond to, these situations.

g. A fourteen-year-old borrows your clothes and leaves them at a friend's home.

Give the youth an "I-message" to express how you feel about this behavior.

For example, "I get upset when my clothes aren't returned, because I need them."

Provide consequences such as not allowing the youth to borrow anything, or insisting that the items be replaced at once.

Don't label the youth as "forgetful," because this will result in a self-fulfilling prophecy, and increase the amount the youth forgets.

Teach the concept of ownership.

Don't borrow others' possessions without asking.

Establish clear, understandable, and enforceable rules about borrowing another's possessions.

h. A child is very upset about receiving a failing grade for work done on a school project.

Use reflective listening. For example, "You're very sad about the failing grade you received."

Explore alternatives by asking the child what he or she can do the next time a project is due.

Provide statements of encouragement, and focus on effort and improvement.

Establish expectations regarding completion of school work assignments.

Modify the environment (either organizing, enhancing, or soothing, depending on the identified reason for the failing grade).

i. An eight year old who lies frequently tells you she cleaned her room. You know this is not true.

Don't ask a set-up question such as, "Did you clean your room?" when you already know that she hasn't done it.

Don't call the child a liar.

Use an "I-message" to share your feelings about her behavior, and to describe the effects of it on you and others.

Put your energy into finding solutions to the problems instead of focusing on blame. For example, say, "What would you like to do about getting your room cleaned?" or, "I saw that you didn't clean your room. What can be done about this?"

Show appreciation when the child tells the truth.

Model honesty.

Explain how lying affects trust, and how hard it is for people who live together to get along without trust.

j. A child talks back and sasses you.

Ignore the behavior.

Use an “I-message.”

Use logical consequences. For example, “Until you’re ready to talk respectfully with me I will not listen to you.”

Use reflective listening, an “I-message,” and exploring alternatives. For example, “It sounds like you’re very upset right now.” “It upsets me when you talk that way.” “What can we do about this?”

Use time out. For example, “I think we should take some time to calm down. We can talk later when you’re ready to talk respectfully.”

k. A ten-year-old comforts a young boy who is frightened by a barking dog.

Praise the child. For example, “You really did a brave thing and showed how much you cared about his feelings and safety.”

Show your appreciation. For example, “I appreciate the help you gave him.”

l. A seven-year-old seems to have a lot of fears. He is afraid of the dark, gets very anxious at the thought of trying to do anything new, and loses control during any change in routine.

Use reflective listening to show your understanding of how the child feels.

Don’t minimize, judge, or neglect the child’s fears.

Explore with the child ways to handle situations which produce his or her fears.

Modify the environment to make it less threatening and more manageable.

Provide encouragement and support as the child deals with difficult situations in small steps.

Talk with the child about change ahead of time to identify potential feelings the child might be experiencing, and to plan strategies to deal with these feelings.

End Notes

¹Adapted from Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, & Stephen Glenn, *Positive Discipline A-Z: 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems*. (Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing, 1993), pp. 305-306

²Ibid., p. 276