AGENDA

I. Introduction
   A. Welcome
   B. Overview of Module
   C. Introduction to Vocabulary

II. Introduction Activity – Value Statements

III. Introduction to Current Discipline Policy

IV. Natural and Logical Consequences

V. Summary

VOCABULARY

Structure – creates an environment that promotes safety to change

Respect – to consider worthy of and in high regard, to refrain from interfering with

Limit Setting – to establish age-appropriate expectations

Discipline – to teach; teaching a child healthy behavior

Punishment – giving negative consequences for inappropriate behavior

VALUE STATEMENTS

	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1. I believe that it is ok to spank your own children.	A	U	D
2. I believe that it is ok to spank someone else's child if they are misbehaving.	A	U	D
3. I was spanked as a child and I turned out ok.	A	U	D
4. Parents have a responsibility to spank children when they misbehave.	A	U	D
5. Children deserve more discipline than they get.	A	U	D

DFCS DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Division of Family and Children Services Discipline Policy is that any physical or emotional punishment to a foster child is prohibited. Physical punishment is defined as any deliberately inflicted pain to the body of the individual. Foster parents in the State of Georgia are required to know the difference between punishment and discipline. Discipline is instruction - a standard of behavior that is maintained consistently and with authority.

Punishment is one means of enforcing discipline, usually the least effective means. Discipline is a learning process for children. Discipline should help a child reach a goal of controlling his or her own behavior, acquiring self-discipline.

Foster parents may have used some forms of physical and emotional punishment with their own children. We must remember, however, that children raised in an accepting and loving family which is able to meet their needs tolerate punishment in a different way than children removed from their families because of severe neglect and abuse. Children entering foster care usually feel at least one and often all of the following:

- Negative attention is better than no attention at all;
- The natural response to frustration, disappointment, anger, etc.., is physical or verbal violence;
- Any form of physical action can lead to severe abuse, creating fear and mistrust;
- They are not lovable, which is reinforced by physical hurt and verbal demeaning; and
- They are the reason the family is not together and deserve punishment.

Acceptable Methods of Discipline

To help you develop acceptable alternatives to punishment, we have listed some guidelines below:

1. Reinforce Acceptable Behavior
   Examples: honest praise, special privileges and treats, extra hugs and kisses, additional time spent with the child, and awards such as stars or smiley faces on a door or bulletin board.
   Reinforcement should be made immediately and frequently when positive changes (no matter how small) are observed.
2. Use Logical Consequences For the Behavior
   Examples: If you leave your bike out, you can't ride it tomorrow.
   If you go in the street, you have to come inside.
   If you can't get up on time, you will have to go to bed 30 minutes earlier.
3. Criticize the Behavior, Not the Child when talking with your children. It is helpful to think in terms of "you messages" and "I messages." The "you-message" lays blame and conveys criticism of the child. It suggests that the child is at fault. It is simply a verbal attack. In contrast, an "I message" simply describes how the behavior makes you feel. The message focuses on you, not the child. It reports how you feel. It does not assign blame. Example: I can't hear the television when there is so much noise. I would like to be able to hear it.
4. Loss of Privileges
   Example: Television, telephoning friends, playing with a specific toy. Make this time appropriate according to the child's age, i.e., take the TV away for an hour, not a day. It is more important to use a positive reinforcement than punishment to control behavior.

DFCS DISCIPLINE POLICY

5. Grounding
   Example: Restricting the child to the house or yard or sending the child out of the room and away from the family activity for a short period of time. Be careful to make the time appropriate. Use the latter restriction judiciously making sure the child realizes the purpose is to help him regain control of his/her behavior.
6. Helping Children Deal With And Manage Their Own Behavior
   Example: If the child is fighting, have him or her hit a pillow. Explain calmly that to feel angry is ok, but that to hurt others or the property of others is not ok. This requires much repetition and practice.
7. Re-direct The Child's Activity
   Example: Suggest the child play with a toy instead of a sharp object.
8. Time-Out From Activities
   Example: With younger children, sit them in a chair for a few minutes and possibly use a timer so that they can understand the time frame. A good rule of thumb is one minute for every year, i.e., 5 years of age: 5 minutes.

Specific Problem Behaviors

1. If the child is not being truthful, try to understand the reason and the motivation behind the child's action. Often the child is seeking acceptance, rather than trying to be deceitful.
2. In the case of tantrums, you may need to discuss the particular problems with your caseworker so that you can work together to try to determine why they occur and what can be done to eliminate them. Foster children's tantrums may be more destructive in nature than those of your children.

Prohibited Disciplinary Practices

1. Spanking, slapping, switching or hitting a child with your hand or any object
2. Shaking, pinching, or biting
3. Tying a child with a rope or similar item
4. Withholding of meals
5. Denying mail, family visits, telephone contacts with family or activities with the services worker or other Department staff
6. Criticizing the child's family or the child's experiences with the family
7. Humiliating or degrading punishment which subjects the child to ridicule, such as:
   - Cutting or combing the child's hair for punishment;
   - Name calling and public scolding;
   - Forcing any child to wear clothing or accessories usually associated with the other sex.
8. Threatening a child with removal from the foster home. This creates fear, anger and increased anxiety
9. Locking a child in a room/closet or outside the home
10. Group punishment for the misbehavior of an individual child
11. Delegating authority for punishment to or allowing punishment by other children or adults
12. Destroying the child's property

Agency Policy Regarding Reports of Abuse/Neglect in DFCS Homes

There may be times when the Agency receives a report of abuse and/or neglect concerning a DFCS Home. As an agency resource, you need to be aware of the policy and procedures regarding this issue in the event your home is the subject of such a report.

A. *DFCS homes* include the following placement resources:

1. Foster homes, foster/adoptive homes, and adoptive homes prior to finalization. This includes therapeutic and specialized foster homes receiving level of care (LOC) payments.
2. Relative placements such as relative foster homes, relative foster/adoptive homes, relative adoptive homes prior to finalization, approved relative homes receiving TANF benefits, or approved relative free homes.
3. Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) approved placements of children in the custody of another state, who are in an approved Georgia family foster home, foster/adoptive home, adoptive home, or relative placement.

B. When the Agency receives a report of abuse and/or neglect on one of the above homes, there are specific policies and procedures that the Agency is required to follow.

C. Procedures for Reports of Abuse and Neglect in DFCS Homes

1. Reports that are not screened out are assigned to a regional Special Investigations Unit (SIU) investigator. This is not a regular case manager, but a special expert in the field who will handle the investigation.
   a. Screened-out reports are referred to the resource development/placement supervisor for an assessment as directed by adoptions or foster care policy.
   b. All reports alleging child abuse and neglect are immediately forwared to law enforcement.
2. The SIU investigator, based on the allegations in the report, the needs of the county, and their availability may:
   - Assume primary responsibility for the CPS investigation,
   - Assist the county with any part of the investigation that is mutually agreed upon by the county director/designee and the SIU investigator/manager,
   - Consult with the county on the investigation, or
   - If maltreatment is not suspected, conduct an evaluation of the circumstances of the death of a child in a DFCS home instead of a

CPS investigation, if the death was anticipated or expected and is medically documented in the case file.

3. Reports alleging violations of adoption or foster care policy/discipline policy are **not** investigated as CPS but will be referred to resource development or placement staff for assessment and possible corrective action.

4. The county of residence for the DFCS approved caregiver has primary responsibility for coordinating and managing the CPS investigation until case disposition. That county will request assistance from other county DFCS offices, as needed, to interview children or other witnesses residing in another county or state.

5. The county director or designee will immediately notify the Adoption Exchange, Office of Adoptions, in the event a CPS report is received on a family in the adoptive process but prior to finalization.

   CPS reports received on DFCS homes with a child in the adoptive process require attempts by DFCS to delay adoption finalization proceedings until permission to proceed is granted from the DFCS Social Services Section Director and the Office of Adoptions. If the Affidavit of Release and Consent has been requested or sent to the family's attorney, the county director or designee immediately notifies the S.A.A.G. and family's attorney to delay the finalization process until the CPS investigation is completed and approval to proceed with finalization is secured from the Social Services Section Director.

D. After a determination is made:

1. A substantiated CPS investigation in a DFCS home results in removal of children in the custody of DFCS/DHR from the home and closure of the DFCS home, unless a policy waiver is being requested from the Social Services Section Director.

2. An unsubstantiated CPS investigation in a DFCS home may result in in:

   - No further action being taken,
   - Development of a corrective action plan addressing adoptions or foster care policy/discipline policy violations, or
   - Closure of the foster home.

3. As a DFCS approved caregiver, you cannot request a formal CPS review (panel or administrative) of the case determination - these decisions are not subject to review by the caregiver.

4. Neither will you be able to file a grievance concerning the closure of your home in the event that happens.

5. DFCS approved caregivers do **not** receive case determination letters if the report of maltreatment involves a child in the legal custody of DFCS. DFCS approved caregivers will receive case determination

letters if the report of maltreatment only involves a child in the caregiver's legal custody.

6. Staffing outcomes are shared with the DFCS approved caregivers and all case managers, supervisory staff, and out-of-county DFCS staff involved with the DFCS home that were not present at the staffing.

Children in the legal custody of DFCS/DHR who were removed from a DFCS home during the CPS investigation will not be re-placed in that home unless a policy waiver is requested, reviewed and approved by the Social Services Section Director.

7. Children in the legal custody of DFCS/DHR who were deemed safe and not removed from the DFCS home during the CPS investigation, may remain in the home, under a corrective action plan, until the Social Services Section Director responds to policy waiver request.

E. Sharing of information

1. All CPS case information concerning DFCS homes is shared with any DFCS county office or other legally mandated public or private child protection agency involved in a CPS investigation of the home.
2. CPS case information is also shared for the purpose of background checks with other DFCS county offices involved in approving a DFCS home.
3. If a DFCS county office receives a request from an outside agency for background checks on DFCS approved caregivers, DFCS
   - May release information if there is no substantiated CPS history
   - May tell the outside agency that the resource "may not be used for the placement of a child in the legal custody of DFCS/DHR", when such placement may put a child in our legal custody at risk.
4. No further information is to be provided to the outside agency and it should be made clear to that agency that their agency, and not DFCS/DHR, is determining whether to contract with or utilize a specific placement resource and that the placement resource should not be referred to DFCS/DHR for clarification of this information.
5. DFCS will not release information if there is substantiated CPS history unless the DFCS Legal Services Office gives approval. The DFCS Legal Services Office will be contacted and a case specific review of the information may reveal an exception to confidentiality laws.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE LIMITS

- Set Few Limits - Choose Only What is Really Important
- Set Fair and Reasonable Limits
- State Limits Clearly
- State Limits In Positive Terms
- Change Limits To Adapt To The Child's Age
- State The Reason For The Limit
- Set Enforceable Limits

USE OF NATURAL OR LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Every one makes mistakes. When we do, we "pay the price." What does this statement mean? It means we must face the consequences or results of our actions. As unpleasant as this may be at times, experiencing consequences is an important part of learning. If consequences or outcomes of our behavior are good we may repeat that action. If the consequences are bad, we probably won't. This is true for both children and adults.

Parents sometimes try to protect their children from the negative consequences of their actions. We don't like to see our children unhappy. But when we protect children from the consequences, they miss important lessons. These lessons are part of growing up into mature, responsible adults.

What are "natural" consequences?

Natural consequences are the direct results of behavior. For example, if your child forgets to put her dirty clothes in the laundry, those clothes won't be washed. She may not have her favorite jeans ready to wear. Note that you, the parent, did not have to take any action. The consequence occurred naturally.

What would be the <u>natural</u> consequences of the following behaviors?

> Your 9-year-old is watching TV. He doesn't come when you tell him dinner is ready.
>
> Your 8-year-old puts on her favorite shirt and goes outside to play. When she gets dirty, she wants you to quickly wash her shirt so she can wear it to a party.

You should protect your child from natural consequences if they are dangerous. For example, a parent can't let a child fall off his bike and get hurt to teach him to always wear his helmet.

At other times, it may take too long for a natural consequence to occur. Or, your child's behavior may be unfair to others. Then parents can use logical consequences.

What are "logical" consequences?

Logical consequences are set by the parent.

Let's look at an example. Yesterday, Tim's Dad asked him to stop bouncing his basketball inside. He told Tim that the bouncing made too much noise and could break something. Today, Tim is bouncing his ball again. When his dad sees this, he say's "Tim, we talked yesterday about not bouncing the ball inside. Please put your ball away until tomorrow. Then you can practice dribbling outside."

The logical consequence is to have Tim put his ball away for a while. Because the consequence related to the action, it teaches Tim a lesson. His father's consequence teaches Tim why he shouldn't play inside (he might break something). It also teaches him what to do instead (play outside). It would not be logical to spank Tim or send him to his room. That would not teach him about playing responsibly with his basketball.

What would be some logical consequences of the following behaviors?

Your child leaves a library book out in the rain.

_____

Your child went down the street to play at a friend's house without telling you.

_____

Your eight year old is teasing children at the park.

_____

How do I use "natural" or "logical" consequences?

1. Make sure the rule is clear. Do all the members of the family understand it?

2. Discuss the consequences. What will happen if the rule is broken?

3. Let your child learn from natural consequences when possible. When you use logical consequences, be firm and consistent.

10 TECHNIQUES TO SHAPE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

Shaping means providing the child with cues and reinforcements that direct them toward desirable behavior. As you shape behavior, the child's personality tags along and also changes and improves. The main ways to shape a child's behavior are through:

- Praise
- Selective ignoring
- Consequences
- Motivators
- Reminders
- Negotiation
- Withdrawing privileges
- No nagging
- Humor
- Holding a family meeting

I. PRAISE

Praise is a valuable shaper; children want to please you and keep your approval. Yet, you can easily overdo it. Praise the behavior, not the person. Praises like "good girl" or "good boy" risk misinterpretation and are best reserved for training pets. These labels are too heavy for some children. ("If I don't do well, does that mean I'm bad?") Better is: "You did a good job cleaning your room," "that's a good decision," "I like the way you used lots of color in this picture." The child will see that the praise is sincere since you made the effort to be specific; it shows that you're paying attention. For quickies try "Great job!" or "Way to go!" or even "Yesss!" To avoid the "I'm valued by my performance" trap, acknowledge the act and let the child conclude the act is praiseworthy. If you praise every other move the child makes he will either get addicted to praise, or wonders why you are so desperate to make him feel good about himself. Be realistic. You don't have to praise, or even acknowledge, things he just does for the joy of it, for his own reasons.

Shaping through praise works well if you have a specific behavior goal that you want to reach, for example, stopping whining. Initially, you may feel like you are acknowledging nearly every pleasant sound your child makes ("I like your sweet voice"). Eventually, as the whining subsides, the immediate need for praise lessens (of course, a booster shot is needed for relapses) and you move on to shaping another behavior.

Change praises. To keep your child's attention, change the delivery of your accolades. As you pass by the open door of the cleaner room, say: "Good job!" Show with body language a thumbs-up signal for the child who dresses herself. Written praises are a boon in large families. They show extra care. Private praises help, too. Leave little "nice work" notes on pillows, yellow "post-its" on homework, messages that convey that you noticed and that you are pleased. Children need praise, but don't overdo it. You don't want a child to look around

for applause whenever she lifts a finger, like a dog expecting a cookie every time he does a trick.
As an exercise in praise giving, write down how many times you praised and how many times you criticized your child in the last 24 hours. We call these pull-ups and put-downs. If your pull-ups don't significantly outnumber your pull-downs, you are shaping your child in the wrong direction.

Praise genuinely. Praise loses its punch if you shower acclaim on usual and expected behavior; yet when the child who habitually strikes out finally hits the ball, that's praiseworthy. Simply acknowledge expected behavior, rather than gushing praise. Acknowledgment is dispassionate praise that shapes a child to please himself rather than perform for approval. Don't make up fake kudos. The child will see through them and begin to question even genuine praise. For example, before you praise, try to read your child's body language to see whether the child feels the job is praiseworthy: "Daddy, look at my drawing I did at school. I got an 'A'." If she approaches you eagerly, displaying her picture for all to see, this child deserves praise that shares her excitement. If she pulls the paper out of her schoolbag and tosses it on the kitchen table, praise may not be in order.

Use the art of complimenting. Teach children to be comfortable giving and receiving compliments. Tell them, "What a handsome boy you are" or "How pretty you look in that dress!" Eye and body contact during your delivery reinforces the sincerity of your acknowledgment. Make sure you're sincere. When you hear children complimenting one another, compliment yourself for your modeling. Children with weak self-worth have difficulty giving and receiving compliments. They are so hung up on how they imagine the receiver will take their tribute, that they clam up; they feel so unworthy of any compliment that they shrug off the compliment and put off the complimenter. If you are like that as a person, learn to give and take a compliment yourself so that you can model this to your child. Compliment yourself, "I feel good about the sale I made today!" Parental self-image directly affects children's self-confidence and the ability to give and receive compliments comfortably.

Avoid praises with a hidden agenda. I had been on our teenager's case about dressing more modestly. One day I said, "I like your new wardrobe." She saw right through this, and took it as a put-down of her old wardrobe. She interpreted my comment as trying to manipulate what she wears. A better approach would have been more specific and more centered on her: "That longer shirt really makes you look graceful" or "Classy jacket—you look ready for college."

Problems with praise. While appropriately used praise can shape behavior, it's not the only way to reinforce good behavior. In some ways it's superficial. Praise is an external motivator. The ultimate goal of discipline is self-discipline—inner motivation. We praise good grades and have always motivated our children by planting the idea that good grades are one ticket to success. We always temper our praise with "How do you feel about your report card? We want you to get

good grades mainly because it makes you happy." When possible, turn the focus back on the child's feelings: "You played well at the recital. I bet you're relieved and proud." Best results with praise to shape behavior are setting the conditions that help children know how and when to praise themselves.

Expect good behavior. Excessive praise will give children the message that obedience and good behavior are optional. It's better to give your child the message that he is doing exactly what you expect, not something out of the ordinary. Children are programmed to meet your expectations. Sometimes all that is needed for you to break a negative cycle is to expect good behavior. Treat them as if they really are going to choose right. When parents don't expect obedience, they generally don't get it.

II. SELECTIVE IGNORING

To preserve parental sanity, in our large family we run a tight ship in certain situations. In other areas we are more lax. We have learned to ignore smallies and concentrate on biggies. A smallie is a behavior that is annoying but doesn't harm humans, animals, or property, or which even if uncorrected does not lead to a biggie. These childish irresponsibilities will self-correct with time and maturity. Ignoring helps your child respect the limits of a parent's job description (e.g., "I don't do petty arguments"). Ignoring undesirable behaviors works best if you readily acknowledge desirable ones. The ignored interrupter learns to enter adult conversations with "excuse me" once you reinforce the use of these polite addresses. Ignore the misbehavior, not the child.
Harmless behaviors fade both as your tolerance level widens and your reactions don't reinforce the child's behavior. It's helpful to gain practice in selective ignoring in the early years of a child's life to prepare you for the challenges yet to come—accepting teenagers with their unconventional dress and hairstyles, loud music, and moody behaviors.

III. CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Experiencing the consequences of their choices is one of the most effective ways children can learn self-discipline. These lessons really last because they come from real life. Most success in life depends on making wise choices. Being able to think ahead about the positive or negative consequences of an action and choose accordingly is a skill we want our children to learn.

Building a child's natural immunity to bad choices. Letting natural consequences teach your child to make right choices is a powerful learning tool. Experience is the best teacher: He's careless, he falls; he leaves his bicycle in the driveway, it gets stolen. Children make unwise choices on the way to becoming responsible adults. Children must experience the consequences of their actions in order to learn from them. Expect the preschooler to help clean up his messes. Let your school-age child experience the penalty for not completing homework by bedtime. After years of small inoculations of consequences, the child enters adolescence at least partially immunized against bad choices, having

had some genuine experience with decision-making. Children learn better from their own mistakes than from your preventive preaching.
Adolescence is a time when the consequences of wrong choices are serious. The child who has learned to deal with smallies is more likely to be successful with biggies. Being a wise immunizer means keeping a balance between overprotecting your child and being negligent ("Let him get hurt, he'll learn.") In the first case, the child enters adolescence with little practice at handling inevitable conflicts and risks. In the second case, the child feels no one cares. Either way, there are rough times ahead.

Sometimes the best solution is to offer the child guidance, state your opinion, and then back off and let the consequence teach your child. Use each consequence as a teachable moment, not an opportunity to gloat. Avoid sentences that begin with "I told you so..." or "If you would have listened to me..." But to be sure that your child learns these little lessons of life, talk through each situation. Replay the tape so that your child gets the point that choices count, and his actions affect what happens. You want your child to realize that he is happier and his life runs more smoothly when he makes wise, though perhaps not easy, choices. Let the consequence speak for itself. The child spills her soda and there's no more soda – without your commentary.

Use logical consequences to correct. Besides letting natural consequences teach your child, you can set up parent-made consequences tailored to have lasting learning value for your child. Here's a logical consequence that parents in our practice tried: "Our son was four-years-old, and we had just moved into a new house. He had gotten a new bedroom set and was feeling very proud and grown up, enjoying his privacy and playing with his friends. When it was time for his friends to leave, and our son became angry and kept slamming the door. I asked him to stop and explained patiently why he shouldn't keep slamming the door. I told him (after thirty minutes) that if this behavior continued, he would no longer enjoy the privacy of a door: "Brett, if you keep slamming the door, I'm going to take it off. (He got this "Yeah, sure, dad's going to take the door off" look of disbelief on his face). For the next three days every time he got a little upset, he slammed the door. So on the fourth day our son went out to play, and when he returned he found his door had been removed from the hinges. But he only noticed it when he went to slam it and it was not there. A week later we put it back. Four years have passed, and he hasn't slammed the door since."

Our then ten-year-old, Erin, treasured her new bike, but now and then she would carelessly leave it overnight on the front sidewalk. We kept reminding her to put her bike in the garage at the end of the day so it wouldn't get stolen, but she still often forgot. So one day we hid the bike. When she got up the next morning, there was no bike. "Perhaps it got stolen?" we offered. Erin was heartbroken; she had already had one bike stolen because she left it out. We gave her time to work through her feelings of loss, guilt, remorse, and anger—all the emotions that one has when you blow it and it's your fault. Then we rescued the bike, and Erin. She realized this loss could have been real, and the bike slept safely in the garage thereafter.

For the most learning value, balance negative with positive consequences: The child who frequently practices the piano gets the thrill of moving through his books quickly and receiving hearty applause at his recital. The child who consistently takes care of her bicycle merits a new one when she outgrows it; otherwise, she gets a used one. The child who puts his sports equipment away in the same place each time gets the nice feeling of always being able to find his favorite bat or soccer ball.
In these examples, no amount of punishment could have had the lasting teaching value of natural and logical consequences. With punishment, children see no connection between their behavior and the discipline. With consequences, the child makes the connection between the behavior and the results. You plant a lesson of life: take responsibility for your behavior.

IV. MOTIVATORS AND REWARDS

Children and adults behave according to the pleasure principle: behavior that's rewarding continues, behavior that's unrewarding ceases. While you don't have to go to the extreme of playing behavioral scientist, dangling cheese in front of little rats to direct them through the maze, you can invent creative ways to motivate desirable behavior with rewards. Motivators help family life run more smoothly: "First one in bed picks the story."

A word of caution. Prizes are a way to entice the child toward goals you've made for him. The ultimate goal is self-discipline – a child behaves because she wants to or because she knows you expect good behavior. She shouldn't expect a prize each time she behaves well. A friend who home-schooled her child until he was eight found that when he entered school as an already a strong reader who was motivated by the pleasure he found in reading, the reward system for reading used by the teacher was not appropriate for him. He made out like a bandit. Slowly his motivation shifted from reading for pleasure to reading for prizes. Ideally, a job well done like reading and finishing a book should be its own reward. Some children may need rewards to get them to read in the first place, but you run the risk that these children will never read for pleasure.
Still, kids are human, and humans go for that chunk of cheese. You do a job well partly because of the rewards you expect to get. If "rewards" or "bribes" offend the moralist in you, call them "motivators." An attachment-parented child is more likely to be motivated by social rewards than by prizes: "This coupon is good for one lunch date with Mommy or Daddy."
To work, a reward must be something your child likes and truly desires. Ask some leading questions to get ideas:

- "If you could do some special things with mom or dad, what would they be?"
- "If you could go somewhere with a friend, where would you like to go?
- "If you had a dollar, what would you buy?"

Granting privileges and rewards are discipline tools to set limits and get jobs done. "If you hurry and do a good job cleaning your room, you might get finished in time to play outside before dinner."

Rewards that work. The best rewards are ones that are natural consequences of good behavior: "You're taking such good care of your train set. Let's go to the train store and get another boxcar." The natural consequences of good behavior are not always motivating enough in themselves. Sometimes it's necessary to fabricate a reward.

Reward charts. Charts are a helpful way to motivate young children. They see their progress and participate in the daily steps toward the reward. The chart stands out as a testimony of good behavior for all to see. Charts work because they are interactive and fun. Even the business world uses charts as profit motivators. Throughout life many children will be surrounded by performance charts, so they may as well get used to seeing them in their home. When nothing else seems to be working, behavior charts help a child get over the hump of extinguishing an undesirable behavior. As you weed out undesirable behaviors one by one, your child gradually gets used to the feelings that come with good behavior, and these feelings become self-motivating. The need for charting lessens as your child grows, and you will need to find new clutter for your kitchen wall. In making reward charts, consider these tips:

- Follow the basic rule: KISMIF – Keep it simple, make it fun.
- Work with your child. Let your child help construct the chart and make daily entries.
- Construct the chart so that the child has a visual image of closing in on the reward. We have gotten best results from a "connect the dots" chart. Have the child draw a picture of what she wants. Then outline the periphery of the picture with dots several inches apart. With each day of successful behavior (e.g., each time he remembers to take out the trash) the child connects another dot. When all the dots are connected, the child collects the prize.
- Display the chart in a high visibility location. (We strategically place ours on the wall along the path between the kitchen table and the refrigerator.) Giving the chart a high profile and high visibility gives the child easy access, serves as a frequent reminder of the desired behavior, and lets her proudly exhibit her progress.
- Make the chart interactive: connecting dots, pasting on stickers or different colored stars, anything more interesting than a check mark.
- Charts can contain positive and negative entries, reminders of both types of behaviors. In my office we use daily charts to correct bedwetting in children older than five. The child puts a happy face sticker on the chart every morning he wakes up dry and a sad face sticker on the chart on mornings he wakes up wet. If the happy faces outnumber the sad faces at the end of the week, the child gets to choose where he wants to go for lunch on Saturday.
- Keep the time until the prize is collected short. Frequent, simple rewards keep motivation high. For a toddler, use end-of-the-hour rewards; for the

preschooler, end-of-the-day rewards; for the school-age child, end-of-the-week rewards. A month is an unreachable eternity for any child. For the preschool child, rather than set a calendar time, refer to an event such as "dinner time" or "after Sunday school." Novelty wears off quickly for children. Change charts frequently.

Creative rewards. Besides charts, design your own clever motivators. Because her six-year-old's toy of the month was a dollhouse, a mother chose a piece of furniture or clothing for the doll as a weekly reward for the child keeping her room tidy. And she related the reward to the behavior: "When you show me you can keep your room tidy, then we'll furnish your doll house." She used periodic reminders: "Let's keep your room as nice as you do your doll house."

To keep order among the seven-to-nine-year-old boys at our twice-monthly Cub Scout meetings, we use the "good behavior candle." The object is to burn the candle all the way down so the whole group can have a treat. At the beginning of the meeting we light the candle. The candle stays lit until a disruption occurs. The disrupter has to blow out the candle. The sooner the candle burns down (e.g., the fewer disruptions), the sooner the boys get a prize. Consider what's going on in their impressionable minds. Each time someone snuffs out a candle, they halt the progress toward the prize. Since children don't like to delay gratification, they're motivated to snuff out their own disruptive behavior.

The ticket system. Tina and her four-year-old daughter Haley were very connected. Haley had been a high-need baby and turned into a strong-willed child. Here is how Tina channeled Haley's obstinate behavior in the right direction and had fun doing it:

Haley and I were butting heads, and it seemed like our whole day was becoming increasingly full of negatives. All the techniques I'd tried before weren't working. So I tried what we fondly refer to as the ticket system. This took incredible stress off me as a mother, and I was no longer the bad guy. I give her three 'free' tickets to start the day. She earns tickets for helping without being asked, for doing assigned chores, for having a good attitude, etc. She loses tickets for whining, complaining, refusing to obey (which eliminated the on-going 'By the time I count to three' line that I was always using). The tickets became like gold, and after a while she became more and more eager to please. At the end of the day or the week Haley got a special treat that was prearranged according to the number of coupons she had collected (frozen yogurt, a movie, a hamburger, etc.).

With Haley, it was very difficult to see the 'positive' in her behavior. The ticket system forced me to 'catch' her at being good, as opposed to just seeing the bad. I found myself saying things such as, 'I liked the way you smiled when you woke up this morning' or 'Thank you for waiting your turn on the swing without screaming or crying.' Delayed gratification was not Haley's strong suit, so I would carry tickets with me everywhere we went, so that she not only heard my words of praise, but saw tangible evidence of her good behavior. This also enabled me to take them from her just as quickly to show the immediate consequence of her

unacceptable behavior. This game helped her to understand that I still loved her and that she was a good person, but there were guidelines that needed to be followed. It helped me not to yell and continually feel the need to raise my voice. It was also a system my husband Steve could quickly pick up after a hard day's work and on the weekends without feeling left out. We've also allowed baby-sitters to use it to reward Haley for cooperating.

For us, the ticket system has eliminated the need to spank, and 'time-out' is reserved for those really trying times when separation is best for both Haley and us. Altogether, it has greatly lessened the power struggle that I have felt with Haley since she was very young. This is not a system for everyone's problems. It's very time-consuming for us, and Haley because it constantly keeps us informed if we're slipping up on our duties. It is, however, a lot of fun and well worth the effort.

V. REMINDERS

"But I forgot." "But I didn't know I was supposed to." As lame as these excuses sound to adults, children do honestly forget and need reminders to keep their behavior on track.

Reminders are cues that jog the hazy memory of a busy child. They may be subtle prompts in the form of a look that tells the about-to-be-mischievous child, "You know better," or a short verbal cue that turns on the child's memory: "Ah! Where does that plate belong?" Some situations call for a major reminder and follow through that rings the child's memory bell loud and clear: "Remember what we've said about running in the street! A car could hit you! You have to look both ways!" (See related topic, Danger Discipline).

Reminders are less likely to provoke a refusal or a power struggle than are outright commands. You have already painted the scene in the child's mind, he knows what you expect, and he has previously agreed to it. Reminders prompt a child to complete a behavior equation on her own. You give a clue and the child fills in the blanks. You stand over a pile of homework sprawled on the floor, then scowl disapprovingly. He gets the message and picks up the homework without you even saying a word.

Written reminders go over better with children who don't like to feel controlled. You avoid a face-off. It's up to the child to carry out the reminder in good time to avoid getting a verbal direction. A recent note on Erin's door read, "Please remove the dishes from your room before they start growing things." Frequent reminders of what's acceptable and what's not lets the child know what is normal for your home.

VI. THE ART OF NEGOTIATING

Bargaining with your child doesn't compromise your authority. It strengthens it. Children respect parents who are willing to listen to them. Until they leave your

home, children must accept your authority— that's not negotiable; but that doesn't mean you can't listen to their side of things.
Negotiating is a win-win situation that benefits both parents and children. Parents show that they are approachable and open to another's viewpoint—a quality children become more sensitive about as they approach adolescence. In teen years you will find that negotiating becomes your main behavior management tool, because adolescents like to be treated as intellectual equals and expect you to respect their viewpoint. If used wisely, negotiating improves communication between parent and child. A stubborn insistence on having your own way has the opposite effect. "I just can't talk to my dad," said Jessica, a teenager whose father's attitude was "Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up." Even the wishes of a seven or eight-year-old should be open to negotiation. This is a warm-up time to help you sharpen your negotiating skills for the years ahead.

"Why do I have to go to bed at 9 o'clock?" argued ten-year-old Margo. “What time do you think is a good bedtime for you?" asked Father Negotiator. “Ten o'clock," Margo suggested. “That extra hour means a lot to you doesn't it? What would you do during that extra hour? “I could read," Margo pleaded. “Remember how tired you are the next morning when you stay up late. You fall asleep at school," Father reminded her. “But that was last year, dad. I'm older now," Margo countered. “Yes, I guess you are. Let's try this," Father suggested. "On school nights you must be in bed at nine o'clock and you can read in bed until 9:30. On nights when you don't have school the next day you can stay up until ten o'clock." The child thought this was acceptable, and her reasoning was validated. The father achieved his goal being sure his child got enough sleep. He knew that after five minutes of reading in bed she would probably fall asleep, which she did. As this volley went back and forth, the father was earning points with his child. The child was getting the message that "I can talk to my dad. He is reasonable, and he really does care about what's good for me. My father listens, and he has some wise things to say."
Sometimes let your child take the lead. Use a well-known negotiating tool: Meet the child where he is, and then bring him to where you want him to be. For example, you want your child to sit and read a book with you, but he's intent on wrestling as evidenced by his grabbing your arm and showing signs that he wants physical play. Let him spend a bit of energy roughhousing on the floor. Tire him out enough so that he can then sit still and read the book. This is not giving into the child or letting the child be in control, it's simply being a smart negotiator. It's a way to bring your child back to your agenda after a short excursion that satisfies the needs of his agenda.

Follow the house rules. Command and exhibit respect during negotiations. If your child starts yelling or acting disrespectful of your authority, close the discussion: "You must not talk to me in that tone, Susan. I'm the mother, you're the child, and I expect respect." This sets the tone for future negotiations. You may have to remind your child of this non-negotiable fact of family life often during the pre-teen and teen years. Because of the constant haggling that older children do, it is easy to let your authority slip away. Don't! You need this

authority to keep order in the house, and your child will need to respect authority to get along in life.
There will be situations when you don't want to dicker with your child. You know you're right and your child is being unreasonable. Before the child works himself into a dither, break off the negotiations. That's the parents' prerogative. "That's a no-good rotten TV program, and I've told you before why I am not going to let you watch it. I will not change my mind about this so don't even start on me." Then walk away. Children need to learn when parents mean business. Parents can't use this approach every time or children will see them as tyrants Be prepared to allow the child to watch other programs that are acceptable.
If used wisely, negotiation can become a valuable communication tool, helping children develop their reasoning abilities. Teach your child that negotiations work best when everyone is calm and peaceful, not in the heat of the moment. "No for now, but I'll talk it over with your dad and get back to you tonight." "I don't like the way you are talking to me. Come back later when you're feeling more peaceful." When you're not sure, or feeling pressured, decide not to decide.

VII. WITHDRAWING PRIVILEGES

Withdrawing privileges is one of the few behavior shapers you never run out of. Kids will always want something from you. For this correction technique to have a good chance of preventing recurrence of misbehavior, the child must naturally connect the privilege withdrawal with the behavior: "If you ride your tricycle into the street, you lose the use of your tricycle for the rest of the day."
This correction technique is commonly used in adult law enforcement: You get caught driving drunk and you lose your license. But this doesn't cure your drinking problem. So you see, withdrawing privileges has its limits as a discipline technique. What does withholding television have to do with being home in time for supper, a child may wonder.

Losing privileges can work if it's part of a pre-agreed behavior management strategy decided on during a family meeting. Parents state the behaviors they expect from their children and announce that part of the fun of being a parent is granting privileges to the children so they can have some fun too. But if the children don't hold up their end of the bargain, the parents cannot grant those privileges. So, being home in time for supper gets you the privilege of a half-hour of TV rather than the TV time being an inalienable right of every citizen of the household. As children get older they need to learn a valuable lesson for life: With increasing privileges come increasing responsibilities.

VIII. NO NAGGING

"You're picking your nose again." "Watch where you're going." "Late again!" "Can't you do anything right?" Persistent negative comments like these, called nagging, nip away at a child's self-worth. Studies show that nagging does not improve behavior; it actually worsens it. Nagging is especially defeating in children with a poor self-image. Nagging and repeating commands make children

nervous. Some children exhibit more than their fair share of negative behavior, but constantly reminding them produces more negative behavior. It is better to purposely pick out some redeeming qualities and concentrate on the positives ("I like the way you stepped aside for your sister"). You will see the negatives melt away.

Continuing to talk, or repeating advice that you've previously given, tells the child that you don't trust her to carry out a simple request, such as "Put a load of laundry in, please." If you add a string of qualifiers, you're teaching her you don't trust her to do it right (your way). If you can't stop "advising," start writing notes.

IX. HUMOR: THE BEST MEDICINE

In disciplining a growing child, a parent wears many costumes: You put on your policeman's cap for dangerous situations, your preacher's collar for morality lessons, your diplomatic tie and tails for power struggles, and your doctor's coat for healing little hurts. But the costume that will serve you best during tough discipline times is your jester's cap.

Humor surprises. Levity catches a child off guard and sparks instant attention, diffusing a power struggle before the opening shots are fired. Humor opens up closed little ears and minds. Here is how one mother turned comedienne and used humor to get cooperation from her children. Six-year-old Lauren and three-year- old Nicholas were in the middle of a squabble over a toy at the end of the day when their mother was already stressed. She had neither the time nor the energy to get out her therapist couch and delve into her children's feelings. Instead she grabbed a big toy block and put it on her head, and her act began. "Mom is going to be a blockhead," she said. "I'm going crazy. I can't take this bickering anymore." She started being really goofy and silly. The children cracked up and everyone was laughing as the mother's antics diffused the children's quarreling. Mother then sat down with the children and said, "It's a tough time of the day. Mom is tired. I've got to get dinner ready. You're tired; you're hungry; please help me fix dinner."

Humor gets jobs done. Seven-year-old Aaron's room was a mess. Instead of "Go make your bed," his comical mother let the bed do the talking. "I walked by your bed this morning," she said, "and it cried 'Please cover me, I'm cold.'" Even for adults, humor has a way of getting jobs done

Humor protects. Three-year-old Alan had a habit of darting away from his parents, especially in parking lots. Dad decided to play the blind man's game. As they came out of a store, Dad put his hand over his eyes, gave the child the car keys, and said, "Please hold my hand and lead me to the car." Of course, he peeked a lot.

Humor disarms. Children can look at your face and realize when you are going to say no to something. They are already mustering up resistance; you break through by putting on your best comic mask. Humor also helps snap a child out of regressive behavior. Here is how a mother in our practice solved this problem:

Four-year-old Monica insisted on wearing a diaper because her new brother did. Mother played along with Monica's game by trying to put a small, newborn-size diaper on her. As they both struggled to get the diaper to fit, Monica realized how silly her whim was.

We use humor quite often to give a child a second chance to obey. Our children love videos, so we put on our "rewind" theatrics. "Matthew, please help me clear the table." "But Dad," Matthew protests. Immediately I say "Rewind!" I step back a few feet and start over, this time making a grand gesture toward Matthew, indicating the cue for his second chance. This approach usually results in both laughter and obedience.

Use humor sensitively. There are times when your child's behavior is no laughing matter. Also, children are sensitive to ridicule and sometimes take your humor as a sarcastic put-down, even when you may simply be trying to bring a bit of levity to a tense situation. There are times to be serious, and there are times to be funny. Both have a place in disciplining your family. Much of your discipline can be amusing to your kids, and it's fun to have an admiring audience.

X. HOLDING A FAMILY MEETING

Family meetings are good times to set house rules. You are relaxed and the children are more receptive. Spur-of-the-moment rules ("You're grounded!") made when you are angry are likely to be unfair and not followed. Getting together to sort out discipline problems is a valuable way for parents and children to express their concerns. Discipline problems that involve one child should be handled privately, but there are times when all the children get a bit lax in the self-control department and the whole family needs a reminder. Suppose your house is continually a mess. Call a family meeting and invite suggestions from the children on how to keep the house tidy. Use a chalkboard to make it more businesslike. Write down the problem and propose solutions. Put together a "kids want/parents want" list in order to set goals. To avoid chore wars, we assign each child a room to tidy. Then we know who is responsible and who to compliment. Formulate house rules for happier living. Arriving at a general consensus is better than voting, which has winners and losers. Try a suggestion box and have the children write their suggestions on little cards. You'll learn a lot about your living habits that way. I got a suggestion from my teenage daughter: "Daddy, please ask me to help instead of giving orders." You can use family councils to help a child solve a problem. Develop a share-and-care atmosphere. Make the meeting fun. Besides your living room, try other meeting places, such as a family picnic at the park. Meetings shape family behavior and are a forum in which to foster family communication.

The information was adapted from Dr. William Sears at his website at www.askdrsears.com . Dr. Sears, or Dr. Bill as his "little patients" call him, is the father of eight children as well as the author of over 30 books on childcare. Dr. Bill is an Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of California, Irvine, School of Medicine. Dr. Sears is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and a fellow of the Royal College of Pediatricians (RCP).Dr. Bill is also a medical and parenting consultant for BabyTalk and Parenting magazines and the pediatrician on the website Parenting.com.