

5 Steps to Building Your Coping Toolbox

~Bonus Material~

*Empowering you to fill and
use your toolbox quickly!*



*Practical and Positive Behavior Interventions
For Parents and Teachers*

Communication

The only person that you truly have control over is yourself! You make your own choices and you can choose to interact with your child on respectful terms and work together for greatness. Although you would like to think that you are in charge of your child, they are the ones who ultimately make their decisions.

So use this fact to your benefit...

- Include them in the process of behavior change
- Talk to them about goals, expectations, and incentives
- Make sure your words and actions match
- Be consistent and follow-through

Here is an example of the importance of consistently matching your words with your actions:

You tell your children that they will have to go to their room if they do not start listening. You make this threat three more times and now you are frustrated and are yelling at them.

Question: What did your children hear?

Answer: "Blah, Blah, Blah, BLAH, BLAH" When your actions do not support your words, your kids may hear your actual words, but they mean nothing. Only when you follow through on doing what you say, will your children take you seriously.

It is so true!

~Change your ways of interacting with your kids and you will see positive gains~

Triggers

Attempt to identify your child's triggers to becoming defiant. Do this by asking yourself, "What happened just before and after the behavior occurred?"

This information will help you to figure out what caused the behavior and what is reinforcing it to continue. Use positive consequences to motivate your child to have a more productive outcome in the future. Future planning for success is part of the learning process for both of you.

Problem Behavior



What happened before the problem behavior?



What happened after the problem behavior?

Motivators & Incentives

It is helpful to put reward options on a menu or list for your children to choose from. Assign each incentive a value. Make some cost only a small amount of tokens, while others should cost much more to teach your children perseverance and responsibility.

This method also gives them more control over the plan by allowing them to choose how to spend their earned tokens vs. you telling them what incentive they have earned.

Never take back earned tokens or other positive rewards.

Once earned they cannot be taken away. However, you may restrict the use of your child's tokens until they serve the consequence that result from poor behavior.

Tip: Use physical tokens such as stickers, play money, chips, etc... to represent earned rewards. Allow your child to turn in these tokens in exchange for the agreed upon positive incentive options.

~Work together to develop the incentives that your child can earn in order to keep them motivated.~

Building Your Toolbox

Tweak as you go. I have never seen a plan or intervention be implemented and be carried out just as it started.

Children require *newness*.

Children require *compromise*.

Children require *understanding*.

All of these things need to be considered as changes are made to interventions being used.

All of this may or may not mean that a completely different strategy is selected from the list of ideas. It could just simply mean that your child needs a slightly different approach, incentive, or motivator in order to continue their success. Whatever the case, be willing to show how much you love your children, how proud you are of them, and that you value their opinion by compromising with them.

Write the agreed upon rewards down in a behavior plan that includes what expectations need to be met. You can use a charting system, a journaling system or whatever works best for your children. They need to be able to refer back to what they are working toward and what they need to do in order to earn their positive consequences.

~"I am proud of you and love you no matter what!"~

Consequences

Ask yourself...

What occurs after my child's misbehavior that may be causing it to happen in the first place? Perhaps it is that your child gets your attention. Maybe they get out of a responsibility. Whatever the case, think about what consequences (natural, positive, negative, and/or logical) are occurring in direct relation to your child's behavior to see if those consequences are giving them an incentive to continue the misbehavior.

When you are successful in identifying what may be maintaining your child's misbehavior, you can then start to make plans for how this can change.

Remember: You can control only one person – yourself! Make a plan to change your reactions and to create suitable consequences.

Logical consequences help children learn from their actions in very effective ways because the consequences are directly linked to the misbehavior.

Example: If your child uses their cell phone when they are not allowed to = they have no cell phone to use.

Positive consequences result from your child obeying your requests, rules and expectations. These are best described as incentives and rewards.

Negative consequences occur in response to your child misbehaving. You need to have these pre-established within your child's plan prior to using them when possible. Never be punitive (no hitting, no name calling, etc..)

~Be prepared to follow through on consequences every time. If you are consistent, your children will begin to see that you mean business.~

Consequences

How to Deliver Consequences Effectively

All types of consequences should be directly related to your child's actions in order to have the greatest impact on improving behavior. To ensure that consequences will be a good match to promote positive behavior refer to this checklist

- The consequence is directly linked to my child's behavior.
- The consequence is given immediately or as soon as possible after the behavior.
- The consequence is given each time the behavior is used.
- The consequence is developmentally appropriate for my child.
- The consequence is not too severe or too mild to convey understanding.
- The consequence is used to positively teach my child about appropriate behavior.
- Negative and logical consequences are given privately.
- The consequence is given in an environment that has little to no distractions when possible.
- Negative and logical consequences are given in a respectful manner, void of put downs, yelling, hitting, and name calling.
- When a negative or logical consequence is given, my child can tell me the choices available for improving future behavior.
- My child knew of the positive or negative consequence prior to it being given.

Positive Consequences

It is not necessary to always reward your children with things bought from the store. Although they are powerful rewards, there are alternative options that can be even more powerful.

You may find some of the following ideas a perfect fit for your family. Use these ideas to get your creative juices flowing and don't forget to get your children's input when deciding on which rewards to use.

- Spend alone time with mom or dad doing a preferred activity
- Call a relative to tell them about good choices they made
- Have a friend over
- Go to a friend's house
- Have an extra snack
- Watch an extra television show
- Make ice cream sundaes
- Stay up 20 minutes past bedtime
- Earn points or tokens on a point system behavior plan
- Rent a movie or video game
- Go to the movie theatre
- Have extra outside time
- Have mom or dad do my chores
- Eat a meal different than the family is having
- Go on a family bike ride
- Choose to eat at a restaurant for a meal
- Take a trip to an arcade
- Go ice skating or roller blading
- Have a sleep-over
- Take a trip to the zoo

Negative Consequences

Negative consequences should fit the misbehavior. In other words, use a consequence that is related to the behavior that you are trying to change.

For example, if your child knows that they will serve a time-out and write an apology letter for pushing a sibling, they will be less likely to push given that they know what the consequences will be. This will be true ONLY if you follow through on the consequence every time the pushing occurs. As an added bonus, serving a time-out allows your child to be removed from the situation in order to make a plan for better behavior choices in the future.

Never give a negative consequence that includes hitting your child or calling them names. These behaviors serve as an unintended teaching tool.

Unfortunately, this teaching is the opposite of what we are going for here. If you use hitting or name calling to solve the problem of misbehavior, your children will likely follow your example to hit and call others names to solve their problems. Your children learn that these are acceptable behaviors because they are following your example.

~Negative consequences can be issued for failure to use these skills only **after** they have been learned, practiced, and used by your children. ~

Negative Consequences

Having pre-established negative consequences helps children know what to expect if they break the rules. Your consistency with initiating these consequences will make all the difference in them being effective.

Here are some of the most common negative consequences that work with kids:

- Apologize
- No bedtime snack
- Time-out
- Write a letter about future behavior
- No screen time
- Early bed time
- Strike on a behavior plan
- One warning
- Extra chore
- Re-do a task that was done poorly
- Practice appropriate behavior again and again
- Clean up a mess
- Any consequence that is directly related to the infraction

Personalized Behavior Plan

Example One

Job	Timer is set for	How long it took	Did I beat the timer
Finish my math homework	30 minutes	28 minutes	YES!!
Do the dishes	15 minutes	12 minutes	Yes!!
Feed the dog	3 minutes	5 minutes	No
Take a shower	15 minutes	10 minutes	YES!!

A chart like this one can easily be created by hand or on a computer. Just be sure to use it each time and tell your child that you are recording their time. Having a prearranged incentive attached to beating the timer will help your child succeed.

Personalized Behavior Plan

Example Two

Expectations

Points		Points	
10	No lying	10	No whining
10	No yelling	10	No name calling
10	Doing things when asked	10	Use coping box when needed
10	Complete homework	10	Feed the dog
50	Good day at school	30	Keep room clean

Incentives

Points		Points	
30	25 minutes of TV	10	See a movie
10	Extra snack	10	Rent a video game
10	1/2 can of pop	10	Stay up 30 minutes later
10	\$5 toward a toy	10	No chores the next day
50	Have a friend over	30	Meal different from the family

Expectations along with options of incentive rewards are easy to create given communication and compromise.

The “magic wand” goes to work when you are consistent by following through on this plan every day!

~Jump right in—you got this!~

Include Others & Consistency

Including Others

Plans work especially well when more than one child participates (frequently a sibling). This is because children tend to rise to the occasion of doing their best possible as they compete with other children. This healthy competition easily becomes a driving force in encouraging each child to meet their goals at every opportunity.

Consistency

Consistency is the foundation that will help your children stay within their boundaries and make positive choices. Just a few benefits that you and your family will reap from consistency include:

- Children quickly learn how to behave
- Children learn how to live up to your expectations
- Children have confidence in knowing where the boundaries lie
- Children have a greater chance of turning out to be a successful member of society.

You must show consistency between your words and actions – every time. If your words do not match your actions, your children will NOT take you seriously. As a result, your words will be ignored. They will interpret your inconsistency as permission to dismiss your attempts at discipline along with dismissing the requests that you make of them. Children base their beliefs and actions on what they see. If you are in a situation with your children where your words are being ignored, start now by matching your words and actions.

~If you have to repeat yourself several times, your child has already learned that they don't have to listen to you the first time~

Bonus: Magic Wand

Praising your children's positive choices along with holding them accountable for their negative choices are both extremely powerful tools.

This is especially true when you are looking for that ***magic wand*** that will mold your children into respectful, responsible, and successful individuals.

You have the power! Use it in the most loving and productive way possible. The way in which you deliver these messages of praise and accountability have a direct impact on the outcome of your interventions.

Magic from the beginning...

A big piece of magically preventing misbehavior before it starts, begins with acknowledging your child's positive choices. Want to get a jump start on this magic? Look at your children right now and hand over a specific praise. If they look at you funny or don't answer; don't worry. They heard you. Give out other praises before the day is over! Praise and acknowledgement of what they are doing well and what you are proud of given them positive attention and reasons for continuing to make positive choices.

~Be consistent and you will create your own magic!~

Positive Self-Talk

The thoughts we think and the words we say have a huge impact on how we feel and act when in the midst of a situation.

Positive thoughts of “I can do this”, “This might be fun”, “I am safe”, “I know how to get help”, “I don’t have to do that” and so on allows one to see the security in a situation and gives encouragement.

Negative thoughts of dread, worry, and sadness will likely result in negative experiences becoming a reality.

The best way to identify positive self-talk that will fit your child’s individual needs is to decide which statements will be most beneficial for them. These statements should be easy to remember in order for your child to use them as a daily confidence boost. Consider some of the following:

“I know I can do it.”

“I have been through this before and I was fine. I know I can do it again.”

“I am really good at math, I will get a good grade on this test.”

“If I need help I can ask _____. Everything will be okay.”

“I am strong and courageous.”

“Take it one step at a time.”

“In with the good thoughts and out with the bad.”

Talk with your child about what phrases will be the most beneficial. Have them try one or two for a few days and make note about times when they used a phrase and what the results were. Recording this information will help to further identify their needs and what strategies are most helpful.

~Positive self-talk is such a powerful tool and anyone can do it. Your child will just need you to show them how.~

Visuals

Children who see a picture of something and then hear (or read) words that match the picture, have a much better chance at understanding what is expected.

Take a picture of your child completing a task and paste it next to the written words. Pictures allow your child to understand what is expected rather than just trying to process the words. Listing the approximate length of time associated with completing each task can make it even more effective. For example, your child's morning checklist could include items such as:

- Get out of bed when your alarm sounds (2 minutes)
- Get dressed (3 minutes)
- Use the toilet (1 minute)
- Wash your hands, and face (2 minutes)
- Brush your teeth (2 minutes)
- Brush your hair (2 minutes)
- Sit down at the kitchen table (1 minute)
- Eat breakfast (15 minutes)

Visual plans can help your child to independently recall their tasks. These plans can also be used to help one remember to use coping skills such as taking breaks and using positive self-talk.

~Pictures on the plan of your child being successful bring more fun and willingness to accomplish their tasks.~