

Behavior Management Strategies

◆ Focus on the Positive

The best way to eliminate negative behaviors is to reinforce the positive behaviors consistently.

Example: praising your child for homework they already complete is more effective than yelling at them to hurry and complete current worksheet

◆ Positive Negative Positive

Correct and recognize behaviors but comment on something they do well (positive) followed by something they need to work on (negative) and follow up with a (positive)

Example: Good job getting your shoes on (positive), next time if we get them on without crying we would have more time to play on the phone (negative) but you did get your socks on so fast (positive)

◆ Tell them what to do instead of what not to do

It is more effective to give basic directions and tell them exactly what you expect.

Example: Saying “don’t hit your brother” is leaving a lot of other opportunities, such as kicking brother; saying “please have nice hands and feet” to make expectations more clear

◆ Offer limited, reasonable choices

When possible, offer choices to help them feel in control and in return be more willing to comply

Example: If it is time to go, ask if they want to put their shoes on first or their jacket.

◆ Avoid too much language

Make your demands short and avoid reasoning with them especially if they are having a tantrum

Example: “It’s time to get in the car” instead of saying why and where you are going

◆ Create a Simple List of Rules

Focus on the most important behaviors by creating a short and straight-forward list of rules. Warn your child with transitions and changes

◆ Let them know it’s almost time to be done with a task, or use a timer to help

Example: 5 minutes until it is time to turn off the TV

◆ Provide appropriate consequences

◆ Be careful not to over punish—your child will not remember why they are grounded after 2 weeks, and you have no leverage if your child has nothing that you can take away

If behaviors continue to be a challenge, consult or make an appointment with your child’s Occupational Therapist.

