

The ABC's of Positive Discipline!

The Critical Messages that Children need to Believe:

*I believe in you
I trust in you
I know you can handle this
You are listened to
You are cared for
You are very important to me*

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The Goals of Misbehaviour:

When I feel...	Child's goal...	Child doesn't feel...	Child needs to believe...
Annoyed, Irritated, Frustrated, Worried	Attention	Connected	He belongs
Provoked, Challenged, Defeated, Threatened	Power	Capable	He can do it, and you believe that he can do it too
Hurt, Disgusted, Disbelief	Revenge	That he Counts	That he has a voice and matters. That he is important
Like giving up, Inadequate yourself	Assumed Inadequacy/Avoidance of Failure	Courageous	To celebrate small successes

A... is for Active Listening and Ask Don't Tell;

- Echo/paraphrase, body language, use I sentences: Stop what you're doing, eye contact, and really listen!
- When a child is told to do something they are more inclined to present a power struggle and challenge you. When they are asked to do something they are more likely to cooperate.

B... is for Belonging;

- Everybody's primary goal is to belong; when children do not feel like they belong, misbehaviour becomes a mistaken approach to try and obtain feelings of belonging. See letter 'G' for more.

C ... is for Controlled Choices, Compliance vs. Cooperation;

- Although not everything is available, you can have this or that; this defuses power struggles.
- A cooperative child learns how to regulate (words/body/emotions) and that they are part of a team, while developing intrinsic motivation. A compliant child learns to do what they're told without thinking; which is not always a good thing!

D... is for Development, Dependent;

- Where a child is in his development tells us a lot about what misbehaviours we might be seeing. For example: Is a child acting out so that he/she can assert him/herself to develop a strong sense of independence? i.e. the toddler years? Maybe, he just hasn't reached the "Theory of Mind"
- A dependent child is a demanding child; never do for a child what a child can do for him/herself

E ... is for Encouraged vs. Discouraged;

- A discouraged child is in need of encouragement!!! The children who need it the most rarely get it!
- A discouraged child uses misbehaviour in an attempt to obtain goals of belonging. See letter 'G'.
- There is nothing more discouraging to a child than when they feel unloved, disliked or unwanted.

F ... is for Firm and Friendly;

- Say it once, say it nicely, and follow through; if you are inconsistent with following through you will create more misbehaviours than already present.

G... is for Goals of Behaviour; used when a child doesn't feel like they belong and need encouragement

- "When I seek *Attention*, I want to *Connect*"; you're feeling annoyed/frustrated
- "When I seek *Power*, I want to feel *Capable*"; you're feeling defeated/challenged
- "When I seek *Revenge*, I want to feel like I *Count*"; you're feeling hurt/disgusted
- "When I *Assume Inadequacy/Avoid Failure*, I need help to develop *Courage*"; you feel like giving up

H ... is for Helpful and Hurtful;

- Break deeds down into two categories: Helpful and Hurtful, opposed to good and bad.

I ... is for Ignore & Interaction Styles;

- Ignore the behaviour not the child: Separate the deed from the doer; best method for attention behaviour
- Authoritarian (Brick), Permissive (Jelly) or Authoritative, Active/Positive Discipline (Flexible); this interactive style incorporates the strengths of each style

J... is for Jobs;

- Responsibilities empower children to have more respect for themselves, you and their environment; increases feelings of connection, capability, importance and courage.

K ... is for Kindness and Kisses;

- There is nothing more discouraging than when a child thinks that they are not liked and/or that you like someone else better

L ... is for Logical Consequences;

- Consequence is directly related to the action/misbehaviour: i.e. when you throw your spoon that tells me you're all done – remove the spoon from the child; consequence is about the deed, not the doer

M ... is for Mutual Respect, Modeling and Meetings & Making Mistakes;

- The Golden Rule
- Model the behaviours you want (no hypocrisy!)
- Family/classroom meetings ensure democracy in the home/classroom; children are more likely to follow the rules that they create themselves! Limit the amount of rules you have and break them down into two categories: Safe and Respectful: *If what you're doing is not safe and not respectful then you shouldn't do it!*
- Meetings need to discuss: Problems, Solutions and Consequences; if the consequences chosen are safe, respectful and doable (meaning that they meet the needs of your situation) then you follow through firm and friendly when/if need be.
- Mistakes are for learning; we should strive to mistake our way to success every day! "Making mistakes is human. We must have the courage to be imperfect." (Adler Institute) "Mistakes are golden opportunities to learn valuable life lessons." (Family Information Services)

N... is for Natural Consequences;

- Consequence is a direct result, or a reaction, of the child's actions that do not involve you as the enforcer: i.e. if you don't eat your dinner then you will be hungry; consequence is about the deed, not the doer

O ... is for OWL: Observe, Wait, Listen;

- Ask a question, wait for an answer (even if it takes a while to get one), use active listening techniques to reflect comprehension

P ... is for Purpose & Praise vs. Encourage;

- All behaviour has a purpose and a goal; misbehaviour is the solution to the problem that a child thinks they have. See letter 'G'.
- When you praise the child it's as if you own their success; when you encourage the child you are celebrating their success with them

Q... is for Quit it;

- Quit worrying about making mistakes – of course you will!!! Mistakes are for you to learn too!

R... is for The 3 R's; Respect, Relevant, and Revealed, Rights and Responsibilities, Rescue & Redirection;

- Consequences need to be Respectful, Relevant to the deed and Revealed in advance
- If a child asks for a right then they need to be willing to accept the responsibilities that are attached to it! When the act of responsibility is not followed through, then the right goes away until the responsibilities are resumed
- If you rescue children from experiencing their consequences then they will never learn from their mistakes; provided that their consequences are safe and respectful!
- Not all behaviours require intervention. Sometimes the best way to change the behaviour is to distract the child and redirect their behaviour into something that is positive and meets the needs of the situation. (This is especially true for younger children.)

S ... is for Social Equality & Set-up your expectations;

- Felt plus vs. felt minus; live on a horizontal, opposed to a vertical of hierarchy.
- Children who aren't prepared for changes in their routine and/or did not know the consequence for their misdeeds, in advance, are more likely to temper tantrum and have power struggles.

T ... is for Take Time for Training

- Before you can expect a child to complete a task successfully, you must first teach the child **HOW** to do it!

U ... is for Useful;

- When children don't feel useful they use their behaviour to tell you; this supports our primary need to belong. Children who don't feel useful tend to act out in power or revengeful seeking behaviours.

V is for Valued;

- When children feel valued they are more cooperative; include them on rule making, let them contribute to duties/responsibilities around the house and classroom. When a child feels valued they feel like they count!

W ... is for When/Then Statements

- When this is done, then this can be done; "When your coat is on, then I'll know you're ready to leave."

X ... is for XX vs. XY;

- Yes there are gender differences! For example: Most boys, and even some girls, need to move to learn. Our focus should be on helping these children learn how to learn. Quite often we can create the very behaviours we don't want because of disrespecting the process in which children learn.

Y... is for Yelling;

- Yelling only makes you feel better, it doesn't solve the problem; model the behaviours you want!!! Yelling creates a "you can't make me" attitude or a child who is VERY compliant; *which is not always a good thing!*

Z... is for ZZZZZZ;

- Everyone sleeps better when they feel good about themselves!
- Most children could benefit from an extra hour of sleep: Sometimes misbehaviours are due to an inability to rationalize because of sleep deprivation.
- Some misbehaviours and/or ADD/ADHD symptoms are the result of allergies to red food dyes, gluten, preservatives etc.: Protein breakfast's in the morning can increase attention skills too!

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