

# Using Play Practice with Re-do's

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**First**, step back from challenging behavior. Work towards connection/support and co-regulation to help calm the situation.

**Then** look below the surface (Iceberg Reminder). Ask yourself: "What behavior would I *like* to see my child showing in this situation? What is the name of that behavior or skill that my child is lagging in that needs to be taught in a fun way through *play practice*? Are there any stressors or past possible traumas triggering my child that I should also be aware of?" (These need reassurance).

## **Examples of behaviors to identify/name:**

Self-control

Using words instead of hitting or hurting

Asking for a compromise (instead of being defiant)

Listening and following directions the first time

Sticking together with a safe adult (vs. "eloping" or running off)

Accepting "no" (instead of having tantrums)

Ask permission first (helpful with impulsiveness/need to control)

Being kind and gentle.

Asking not telling (instead of being bossy)

Asking with respect (Instead of being disrespectful)

**Play Practice: At a clam moment (not in the middle of a melt-down or outburst)** Explain to your child that you notice they are struggling with the

challenging behavior. You want to play a fun game to learn the new skill of \_\_\_\_\_ . (see list above for examples, but can be anything age-appropriate!)

In a fun way, use a toy figure, puppet, dolls, stuffed animals or role-play the *wrong way to show what tends to happen*. Use general terms like “The baby elephant” or “the parent”. Using toy figures or “props” can help the child engage, because it is a “third person” activity and less likely to trigger their shame. Then, *demonstrate the skill or ‘right’ way* you want your child to learn, *naming* the skill to work on.

Then explain you want your child to show you the wrong way (being silly and OK to exaggerate) and then applause and say “Great job showing the wrong way!” (for example, not accepting no, being disrespectful, not asking permission first, etc.). If they are hesitant, you can ask if they want to be the parent first. Never force “play practice”. *It is important that it be fun and feel safe.*

After applauding and praising their example of showing the wrong way, then say, “Now we are going to practice the right way”. Name the behavior, like “Asking Permission First”, or “Accepting No”. Then do another “skit” doing it the right way. PRAISE your kid for a great job of that specific skill. You can make a poster together naming the skill, also, as a reminder.

**Then**, if the child forgets the new skill or behavior and starts to slip, use a gentle reminder “Oops, did you forget to ask permission first?” or a Red-do: “Oops, let’s back up and try that again the way we practiced, asking permission first”. The Re-do gives parents a beautiful opportunity to PRAISE the positive effort, vs. negative comments about the wrong way. Using the phrase “Oops” helps us parents remember it’s just a mistake and is a wonderful opportunity to keep learning/practicing. “Oops” helps kids realize everyone makes mistakes.

Parents can model re-doing when they yell, or want to do better, too!