

Assertive Discipline

Saying 'No' Effectively

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What are some challenging behaviors we may see in our children?

Agenda

- Causes of Children's Behavior
- Brain Development
- Communication
- Setting Limits
- Effective Discipline
- Q and A



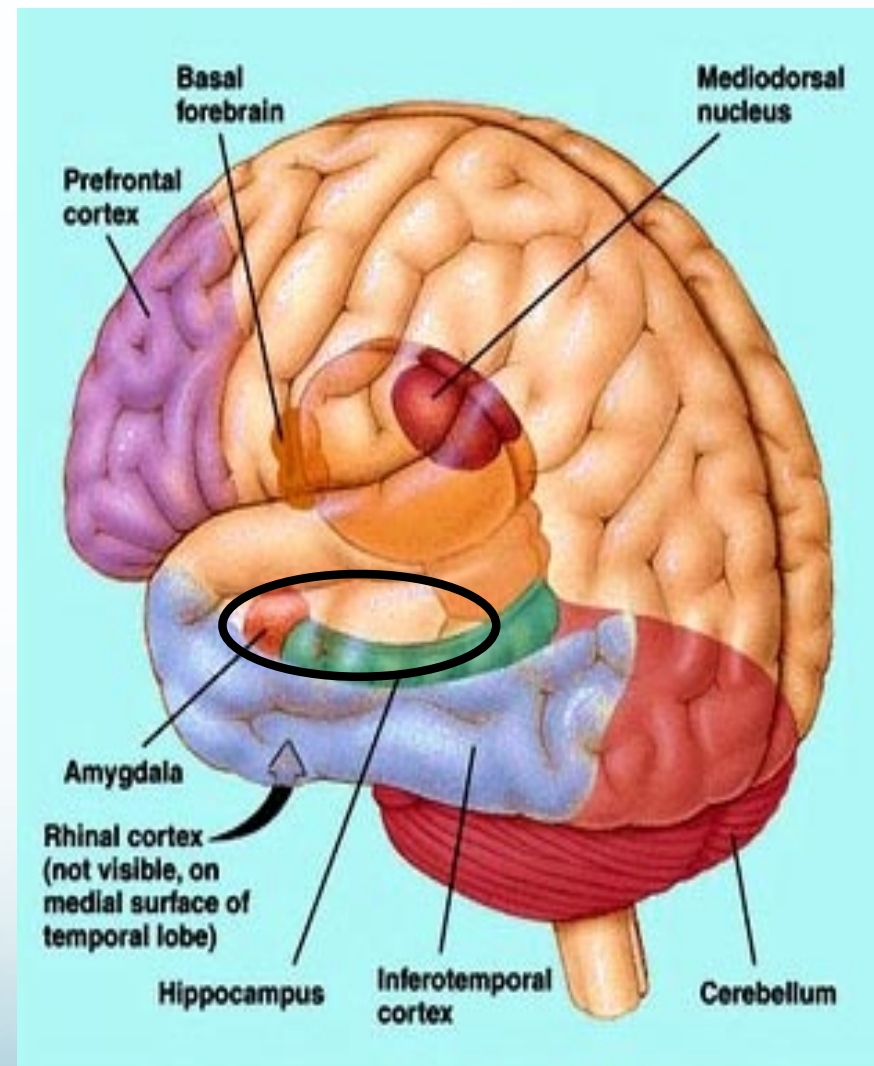
Causes of Children's Behavior

- ❖ Genetic Make-up
- ❖ Temperament
- ❖ **Family Environment**
- ❖ Previous Learning and Experiences
- ❖ Accidental Rewards for Misbehavior
- ❖ Developmental Stages
- ❖ Social Environment, Media Influences
- ❖ Stress, Anger, Depression, Anxiety, and other Underlying Feelings



Brain Development

- All of their basic needs must be met in order for kids to have concrete or abstract thinking.
- Children must feel safe and nurtured.
- Setting limits provides needed structure and predictability.
- Patterns and routines create healthy brain development and allow the brain to put energy in higher level functions.



Brain Development—How you can help your child learn and grow.

Frontal Lobe—Concrete Thinking (3 to 12 years)

Have me sort and categorize objects.
Encourage problem-solving. Let me be frustrated sometimes as I figure something out.
Help me notice patterns. (“When you do X, this always happens.” “After we do Y, we always...”)

Prefrontal Cortex—Judgment (12—22 years)

Give me choices (when I’m calm... I can’t make choices when I’m stressed or upset).
Talk to me about plans.
Help me break down big tasks into little steps.

Thought,
memory and
behaviour

Hearing, learning
and emotions

Temporal Lobe (Birth to 6 years) and Limbic System (8 months to 2 years)

Respond in consistent ways.
Show me unconditional love.
Experience joy with me.
Talk to me about my emotions. Give me the vocabulary to understand how I feel.

Parietal Lobe—Language (Birth to 6 years)

Talk to me, sing to me, read to me.
Listen to me and respond.
Read the same stories or sing the same songs over and over so I learn to memorize.

Parietal Lobe—Touch (Birth to 6 years)

Touch me—hug me, hold my hand, massage me.
Give me lots of objects to manipulate.
Let me explore the world hands-on—pulling, pushing, pouring, picking up, dropping, turning, twisting, opening, and closing.

Language
and touch

Visual
processing

Balance and
coordination

Breathing,
heart rate and
temperature

Brain Stem (Birth)

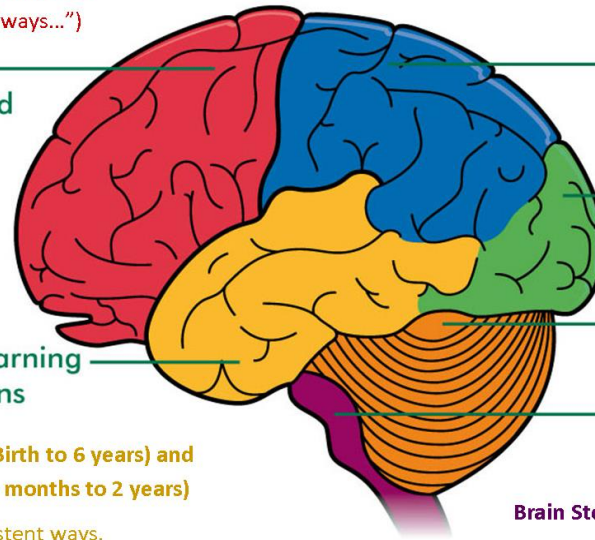
Help me feel emotionally and physically safe.
If I am frightened or stressed, my brain goes into survival mode (brain stem function), and the rest of my brain can’t grow and develop. When I feel safe, I can learn.

Occipital Lobe (Birth to 2 years)

Surround me with interesting things to look at.
Play games where I follow things with my eyes.
Make sure I have plenty of outdoor time to develop distance vision.

Cerebellum (Birth to 1 year)

Let me move—a LOT.
Take me to playgrounds and swimming pools..
Dance with me. Let me wiggle, roll, and jump.
Let me take some “risks” while I learn to move.



Note: Timeframe given is the “sensitive period” when that part of the brain is growing and developing the most. The brain grows and changes throughout our lifetimes.

Illustration: Macmillan Cancer Support 2012

What children need to know:

**The Awakened
Family by Dr.
Shefali Tsabary,
Clinical
Psychologist**

- **I am seen.**
- **I am worthy.**
- **I matter.**

Helping Foster Positive Development

- Develop positive relationships
 - ✓ Spend quality time with your child.
 - ✓ Talk with your child.
 - ✓ Show affection.



Helping Foster Positive Development

- Encourage desirable behavior
 - ✓ Praise your child. 1 to 5
 - ✓ 1 discipline comment
 - ✓ 5 Praise comments
 - ✓ Give your child attention.
 - ✓ Provide engaging activities.



Helping Foster Positive Development

- Teach new skills and behaviors
 - ✓ Set a good example.
 - ✓ Use behavior contracts.



Household Structure

- In a home with more than one caregiver, designate a time for the caregivers to communicate about household rules.
- All should be on the same page.
- Plan ahead for consequences as well as rewards.



What do you think?

- What information that was shared so far is important for you?
- What might you try to do?

Saying 'no' Effectively

“The way we speak to our children becomes their inner voice.”

–Peggy O'Mara

Ground Rules

- ❑ Children need limits and need to know what is expected of them and how they should behave.
- ❑ Establishing a few basic house rules (3) can help.
- ❑ You may choose to call a family meeting and decide on some rules with your family.
- ❑ Family meetings can also provide a ‘check-in’ to discuss weekly behavior of adults as well as kids.

Ground Rules

Rules should be:

- Few – 3-5
- Fair
- Easy to follow
- Enforceable
- Positively stated



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- Easy to follow
- Enforceable
- Positively stated

***What is a
ground
rule in
your
home?***

Your Ground Rules

◆ Think of an important family value.

- Examples: kindness, responsibility, fairness, respect

◆ Write your family value in a ground rule format:

◆ *“In this family we.....”*

● Example: Respect

- In this family we treat everyone with respect.
 - We speak in a pleasant manner.
 - We ask before using other people’s things.

Some Values

- **Accountability**
- Caring
- **Fairness**
- Forgiveness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Justice
- **Kindness**
- Love
- Open-mindedness
- Patience
- Perseverance
- **Responsibility**
- Self-discipline

What does responsibility look like?

- In this family we are **responsible**.
 - We follow the rules.
 - We go to school everyday.
 - We do our chores.
 - We do our homework.
 - We pick up after ourselves.

Other Rules

- In this family we are **kind**.
 - We use our nice words.
 - We help each other do chores.
 - We take care pets.
- In this family we are **honest**.
 - We tell the truth even when it is hard.
 - We ...
 - We ...

General Rules

Rules should tell children what **to do**, rather than what not to do.

Examples:

Say: Be home by 6 pm.

Not: Don't stay out late.

Say: Speak in a pleasant tone.

Not: Don't shout.

Say: Keep your hands to yourself.

Not: Don't fight.



What Rules Do You Have for These Routines?

- *Morning*
- *After school*
- *Bed-time*
- *Chores*
- *Play*

State them in a positive sentence.

Giving Directions for Rules

- Make statements:
 - The simpler the better.
“It’s time to do your homework.”
- Avoid explanations:
 - State the command quickly and avoid lengthy explanations about why your child must comply. Explanations provide an opportunity for the child to try to negotiate or escape the instruction.



Giving Directions for Rules

- State consequences:
 - “Do your homework or you will not be allowed to play your video games.”
- Follow-up:
 - Provide ample time for your child to complete and avoid repeating.



Giving Directions for Rules

- Follow-up with non-compliance:
 - Mean what you say.
 - Following through on your commands for compliance is critical.
 - It is better to not give a command rather than to give a command and not back up compliance with consequences.

“You did not do your homework and so you will not be able to play video games today.”



Giving Directions for Rules

- **Follow-up with compliance:**
 - Provide praise consistently when your child begins to comply, as well as while they are complying and after the child completes the task.
 - When applicable you should provide stated reward for compliance.

**“You did all your homework.
You are very responsible.
You can play your video
game for 10 minutes.”**



Giving Praise

- **Benefits include:**

- increasing appropriate behavior
- decreasing inappropriate behavior
- contributing to positive self-esteem/self- image
- motivating your child to persevere in mastering new skills or accomplishing difficult tasks.

- **Use labeled praise**

- For example, **“I like the way you got your homework done.”** conveys more information than “Good job.”

- **Use enthusiasm:**

- Praise with a sincere and enthusiastic tone and use non-verbal rewards, such as ‘high-5’s’, smiles and hugs.

Giving Praise

- **Avoid criticism:**

- For example, a parent might say,
 - “Good job on doing your homework quickly-why can’t you always do that?”
 - “It’s great that you made your bed, why do you always complain about it?”

- **Find opportunities to praise:**

- The use of praise in instances when your child behaves appropriately, or follows rules without being asked to do so, is *especially important in increasing the likelihood of compliant behaviors in the future.*

Catch them being good.



Consequences
vs.
Punishment

Consequences vs. Punishment

- **Complete these sentences...**
- **A consequence is...**
- **A punishment is...**

Consequences vs. Punishment

- **Consequence:** a result or effect of an action or condition.
 - Consequences are intended to **teach** children about cause and effect.
 - They enhance **internal control** and develop a sense of right and wrong.
 - They can be delivered with **empathy** and love.

Consequences vs. Punishment

- **Punishment** is the act of making a wrongdoer **suffer**, the state of being made to suffer for wrongdoing.
- Punishment creates a **power and control** dynamic.
- Can be **shaming**.
- Often **backfires**.

Logical Consequences

- Keep consequences **related to the situation.**
- Teach the consequence of that behavior.
- Examples:
 - Child takes a game from another child.
 - Take the game away.
 - Child drops and breaks a plate.
 - Child helps with clean-up.
 - Child takes something from the store.
 - Child has to use some of allowance money to pay for the item.

Logical Consequences

- What would be a good consequence?
 - Child leaves their belongings on the floor.
 - Child...
 - Child hits a sibling.
 - Child...
 - Child uses inappropriate language.
 - Child...

Choosing Logical Consequences

- Back up your instructions with logical consequences
 - Choose a consequence that fits the situation.
 - If possible remove the activity or toy that is at the center of the problem (5-30 minutes).
- Withdraw the activity
 - Do not debate or argue the point with your child.
 - Act as soon as the problem occurs. Explain why you are removing the toy/activity.
 - “You are not sharing the puzzle, I’m putting it away for 5 minutes.”
 - “You are still arguing over the TV, TV is off for 10 minutes.”

Choosing Logical Consequences

- **Return the activity**
 - Keep to the agreement. When time is up, return the activity/toy so child can learn to behave appropriately. Review expectations.
- **Use another consequence, if necessary**
 - If a problem happens again, follow up with longer removal time.



Mild Problem Behaviors

- **Directed discussion**

- Talk the child through the rule and walk through another attempt -- “try again”.
- Best used when a child occasionally forgets a basic house rule.

- **Planned Ignoring/Active Ignoring**

- Deliberately avoid paying attention when there is a minor problem behavior being demonstrated (i.e. a whiny voice)

Clear, Calm Instructions

Physical

- ✧ Get close – within an arm's length.
- ✧ Get down to your child's eye level.
- ✧ Gain your child's attention – say his/her name.
- ✧ Get eye contact whenever possible.
- ✧ Use a calm voice.



Clear, Calm Instructions

Implementation



Verbal

- ✧ Say exactly what you want your child to do.
- ✧ “Heidi, it’s time for dinner. Come to the table.”
- ✧ Pause briefly to give time to comply*
- ✧ If complying, **praise!**
- ✧ If not complying, repeat the instruction once – if still not complying, back up with **consequence.**

Children Will Flourish...

*With clear,
consistent and fair
rules children will
behave in ways that
will make them
compassionate and
productive members
of our society.*



Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism
They learn to condemn
If children live with hostility
They learn to fight
If children live with ridicule
They learn to be shy
If children live with shame
They learn to feel guilty
If children live with tolerance
They learn to be patient
If children live with encouragement
They learn confidence
If children live with praise
They learn to appreciate
If children live with fairness
They learn justice
If children live with security
They learned to have faith
If children live with approval
They learn to like them selves
If children live with acceptance and
friendship
They learn to find love in the world



Dorothy Law Nolte

**WHICH OF THE IDEAS WE
DISCUSSED DO YOU THINK MAY
WORK FOR YOUR FAMILY?**

*Any questions or
comments?*



Thank you for
coming and
sharing your
ideas!