

THE TOOLBOX

POSITIVE PARENTING SOLUTIONS

MIND, BODY AND SOUL TIME SESSION 1

Time spent with each child individually, when you are emotionally available to him and doing what he wants to do. The goal is 10 minutes, 2 times per day, with each child. However, start with the schedule that feels do-able to you. Mind, Body, & Soul Time is the most important tool in The Toolbox for increasing the child's feeling of belonging and significance and the most effective means for reducing negative attention-seeking behaviors. *(See tips for scheduling and managing Mind, Body & Soul Time in the Session 1 Workbook.)*

CALM VOICE SESSION 2

Your children hear much more from your tone than from the words themselves. Use the same respect and tone of voice with children as you would use with friends and co-workers. Remain in the Adult Ego State and use your calm voice. It will diffuse power struggles and reduce your overall stress. Use "sticky note" reminders around your house and in your car to keep "calm voice" top of mind.

TAKE TIME FOR TRAINING SESSION 2

Making time to intentionally train the child on appropriate ways to behave, on household tasks and on skill development. Taking Time for Training helps the child feel competent, significant, and empowered.

ENCOURAGEMENT SESSION 2

Phrases that inspire a child to find his inner courage, to help him feel a sense of belonging and significance for who he is (unconditionally), not for what he does and to help him develop the skills so he can realize his full potential.

DECISION-RICH ENVIRONMENT SESSION 3

Meet a child's inborn need for power and control by creating a Decision-Rich Environment through the use of positive choices. This tool gives kids a feeling of control over their own lives, the ability to change their circumstances and the feeling of being capable. Offering choices in the moment will also diffuse power struggles. As the child carefully considers the choice at hand, it temporarily takes the focus off the behavior that you either want to enforce or put a stop to. When your child has a couple options to consider, putting up a struggle might not even cross her mind.

CONTROL THE ENVIRONMENT SESSION 3

You can't control the child but you can control the environment. This refers to the physical environment like making certain things available (TV, sweets, etc.) and controlling the routine. The parent determines the order in which events occur. *(See When-Then Routines)* While you still can't control your kids, you can foster greater cooperation by managing their environment.



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WHEN-THEN SESSION 3

WHEN-THEN ROUTINES SESSION 3

TWO-WAY ROLE PLAY SESSION 3

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES SESSION 3

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES SESSION 3

To delay or deny a *normally occurring* privilege until a task is done. Used when you want your child to take action and do something he doesn't want to do. Acts as a highly potent tool to diffuse power struggles because it gives your child positive power and still accomplishes your goal. It's simply another way to control the environment. You're not controlling your child, but you are adjusting the order of events. (See ground rules for When-Then in Session 3.)

By establishing When-Then Routines for the morning, after school and evening, one event naturally follows the next, complimenting your child's natural desire for predictability and structure. Parents benefit from When-Then Routines because it reduces the need to nag and remind children about what to do next and the less desirable tasks must be completed before the more enjoyable part of the routine. When your kids complete the items in the routine, then they get to enjoy a normally occurring privilege (TV time, play time). When-Then Routines are a win-win situation for parents and kids. Not only do they cut down on power struggles and negotiations, they set the stage for an orderly home.

Whether you are working on a new routine, or revealing how you will respond to whining, kids learn best by practicing. Role play each step in a new bedtime routine start-to-finish or pretend your child is having an all-out manipulative tantrum and role play how you will calmly walk away without words or eye contact. Then, take the learning to the next level and switch roles – you pretend to be the child and let your child play the role of parent. Let her lead YOU through the new morning routine or let her respond to your whining by covering her ears and walking away without words.

A Natural Consequence is a negative event that you allow to play out as a result of a child's repeated misbehavior - not a one-time bout of forgetfulness. It's what happens if you do nothing to rescue your child from his own poor choices, and it allows real life to teach your child appropriate behavior by letting him face the undesirable results of his negative actions.

Logical Consequences are used when Natural Consequences aren't available or practical, such as in matters of health and safety (wearing a bike helmet or taking medication), or if a Natural Consequence would take so long to play out that the lesson would be lost (not brushing teeth).

A Logical Consequence is engineered by the parent, but it should still relate directly to the misbehavior so that your child can easily make a cause-and-effect connection. To be fair and effective, a Logical Consequences must include the 5 R's: Respectful, Related to the misbehavior, Reasonable in duration, Revealed in advance and Repeated back to you.



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EITHER-OR SESSION 3

A type of Logical Consequence designed to give a quick and simple consequence-based choice to kids that will put an end to a misbehavior without inviting a power struggle. You can use Either-Or consequences as misbehavior is happening, in the heat of the moment. "Either you two can figure out how to share the toy, or the toy will go in a box in the closet and no one will be allowed to play with it for the day."

STOP TALKING AND TAKE ACTION SESSION 3

First, train your child in the expected behavior, and reveal the consequence for not following the rule. If the misbehavior happens, don't give warnings or lectures. Instead, calmly follow through with the consequence you previously revealed in advance. The Stop Talking and Take Action tool relies on your silence to make it effective. Reminding your child over and over what kind of behavior is expected will only make her parent-deaf, which happens when kids learn to tune out your words because there's no real reason to listen.

IGNORE UNDUE ATTENTION SESSION 4

Undue attention is a demand for attention that is not appropriate for the situation. The adult typically feels annoyed or irritated. Upon reprimand or correction, the child typically stops the behavior for a time but starts again shortly thereafter. To remove the payoff to the child, the adult must ignore the demands for undue attention. No words; just walk away and ignore the undue attention. Be sure to give plenty of positive attention (Mind, Body and Soul Time) at other times when the child is not demanding your attention.

AVOID SPECIAL SERVICE SESSION 4

This tool is used when kids act helpless or ask you to do things you know they are perfectly capable of doing for themselves. Instead of giving into demands for "special service," train your child on the task. Reveal in advance that she will be responsible for handling that task in the future and then withhold help when you know the child is capable but acting helpless. By NOT providing "special service," you reinforce that you have faith in her capabilities, and you avoid allowing her to manipulate you to get her way.

THE RE-DO TOOL SESSION 4

A subtle non-verbal gesture or signal you devise with your child to be a cue between the two of you. Circling your finger serves as a reminder for your child to "re-do" or try again in a more positive way. You can also use other non-verbal signals. An example may be, putting your hands over your ears or over your heart to offer gentle coaching in the moment.



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ATTENTION OVERLOAD SESSION 4

“Loading the child up” on positive attention so the child is less likely to demand undue attention during inopportune times. Used when you have an important commitment that’s ripe for interruptions from a child seeking attention - company coming over, a conference call, working on taxes, etc. Parent spends 10-15 minutes of intensive, one-on-one time, proactively filling the child’s attention basket before the upcoming event. Use Attention Overload just before your commitment is planned. If you use it too far in advance, the effectiveness will be reduced. This tool helps you proactively prepare your child as best you can, and set her up for success. When her need for a sense of belonging is met in advance, she’ll be less likely to seek it in negative ways.

WITHDRAW FROM CONFLICT SESSION 4

Counteracting power-seeking misbehaviors as they’re happening requires you to completely remove the payoff your children would receive if you argued, battled or negotiated with them. When a child is trying to engage an adult in a power struggle, the adult should withdraw from the conflict—walk away and remove yourself from the situation.

When you withdraw from conflict, you’re sending the message that you refuse to engage in their misbehavior. You remove the “power trip” she’d normally receive by battling it out with you, which is the payoff she’s looking for. You withdraw from the conflict, not the child. When the child is calm, you are happy to talk with her.

This tool only works if you use it in conjunction with some of the more empowering tools, such as Mind, Body and Soul Time, Take Time for Training, When-Then Routines and a Decision-Rich Environment. If you don’t proactively replace the negative power with positive power, you and your child will continue to suffer and the problem could worsen into one of Revenge.

SET LIMITS AND STICK TO THEM SESSION 4

Children, like adults, need limits to know how far they can go. They are the guardrails of their life. When you set limits, be sure to reveal in advance the rules and follow through when the limits are tested. Remain firm, and with a calm voice and actions, follow through with the consequences without warnings or reminders. Otherwise, if parents give in on a previously established limit, it sends the message that the rules really don’t matter and that you can be easily manipulated by their dose of whining, complaining or negotiating.

DECIDE WHAT YOU WILL DO SESSION 4

Start by deciding what you’re willing to do, and what age-appropriate responsibility needs to be on your kids’ shoulders. Make sure you’ve done any necessary training. Then, in a calm moment, reveal in advance, “I’m happy to make you a lunch every morning for school, as long as your lunchbox has been emptied out and is on the shelf in the pantry or on the counter. If the lunch boxes are clean and in their place, I’m happy to make your lunch. If it’s not cleaned out or not in its place, it’ll be up to you to make your own lunch.”



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ASKED AND ANSWERED SESSION 4

(ADAPTED FROM LYNN LOTT –
CO-AUTHOR OF THE *POSITIVE
DISCIPLINE* SERIES OF BOOKS)

INVITE COOPERATION SESSION 4

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN FOR? SESSION 4

ASK, DON'T TELL SESSION 4

(DEVELOPED BY POSITIVE
DISCIPLINE CO-AUTHORS JANE
NELSEN, EDD & LYNN LOTT)

When you've already given a "no" answer to a child and he starts nagging, negotiating or begging to get what he wants, use this tool instead of repeating yourself or jumping into a lecture.

Step 1: Ask, "Have you ever heard of 'Asked and Answered'?" (He'll probably say no.)

Step 2: Ask, "Did you ask me a question about having another cupcake?" (He'll say yes.)

Step 3: Ask, "Did I answer it?" (He'll probably say, "Yes, but, I really")

Step 4: Ask, "Do I look like the kind of mom/dad/teacher who will change her/his mind if you ask me the same thing over and over?" (Chances are he'll walk away, maybe with a frustrated grunt, and engage in something else.)

Step 5: If he asks again, simply say, "Asked and Answered." (No other words are necessary!)

Once this technique has been established, these are the only words you should need to say to address nagging questions.

Sometimes, the difference in whether we (readily) get cooperation from our kids or not is simply in the way we ask. This tool will help you rephrase your requests to appeal to your kids' need for control and significance, which will go a long way in avoiding power struggles. With this tool, you adapt your tone of voice and the words you choose to be respectful rather than demanding. Instead of directing, say things like, "Anything you can do to help clean up the kitchen would be much appreciated." This allows your child to complete a task in a meaningful way, but also save face and not feel like he's being ordered around. It empowers your child to help out on his terms, but still get the job done.

This is the tool you'll use when you'd normally be inclined to REMIND. Instead of reminding your child about the impending due date on the science project, ask: "What is your plan for finishing your science project?" It's a way to keep your child on top of a task without nagging or reminding (or shouting), while letting him know you have confidence in his abilities. This tool allows your child to save face and complete a task or project on his own terms.

Instead of TELLING your kids what to do (get dressed so you don't miss the bus!), which often falls on deaf ears, try changing your command into a question. When your child runs out the door without a coat in the middle of winter, try asking, "What do you need to keep warm outside?" Or, what comes next on your morning checklist? When we TELL kids what to do, their brains naturally tell them to resist, and a potential power struggle is created. By changing your order into a question, your child becomes engaged and her brain begins to search for an answer instead of resisting. Plus, by using "asking" statements we can save our commands for times when it's really important!



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EMPATHIZE AND APPRECIATE SESSION 4

Sometimes kids just want to know we “get it.” The next time your child complains or gives a big sigh about unloading the dishwasher, empathize and appreciate: “I hear ya! That’s one of my least favorite jobs too. You know, your help really makes a big difference around here – thank you!” This is the tool you’ll use when you’d normally be inclined to REMIND. Instead of reminding your child about the impending due date on the science project, ask: “What is your plan for finishing your science project?” It’s a way to keep your child on top of a task without nagging or reminding (or shouting), while letting him know you have confidence in his abilities. This tool allows your child to save face and complete a task or project on his own terms.

IGNORE BAD HABITS

When annoying habits like nose picking, belching and the like occur, the less attention the child receives, the less likely he will become infatuated with the behavior. When you fuss or remind the child every time he performs the annoying behavior, you are rewarding the habit.

When the behavior occurs the first time, train him by letting him know that it is not acceptable. After that, ignore the habit but give him encouragement for other positive behaviors when they occur. (You can’t expect the established habits to disappear overnight, but once the fascination wears off and he discovers that parental attention is not gained, the behavior will usually stop.)

If the behavior is truly annoying and infringes on your rights (to enjoy meal time - for example) you can reveal the Logical Consequence in advance - when he belches on purpose at the table, he experiences the consequence of dinner being over.

SIBLING MIND, BODY & SOUL TIME SESSION 5

Just like the Mind, Body and Soul Time tool, this is one-on-one time between siblings. When used on a regular basis, it deepens emotional connections and helps foster empathy, while minimizing competition. It’s a win for everyone!

IGNORE THE FIGHT IN THE MOMENT SESSION 5

Ignoring fights removes the payoff for sibling fighting—to get the parent’s attention. It gives children the opportunity to work out the problem for themselves and gives parents time to assess whether our involvement is really necessary. (See Session 5 for more on this tool and for guidelines on when it is necessary to intervene.)

TRAINING ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION SESSION 5

If kids are going to be successful working out their own disagreements, we must Take Time for Training on Conflict Resolution strategies. Outside the heat of the moment, train your kids on the many tools they can use to control themselves and work out conflicts with their siblings. Kids don’t become proficient in conflict resolution overnight, but with consistent practice and role play, eventually they’ll be able to work it out without you playing referee. (Review Session 5 and the *Sibling Bullying Expert Series* module for many conflict resolution tools you can teach your kids.)



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RULES FOR COMMUNITY LIVING SESSION 5

To avoid sibling arguments over property, implement three house rules to help your kids protect (or share) their personal property:

1. When I choose to play in a common area, I am choosing to invite my siblings to play with me. If I want to play alone, I can play in my room or private space.
2. When I choose to leave my things in a common area, I am sharing them with my siblings. If I don't want my siblings to play with them, I need to keep them in my room or private space.
3. Play fighting is allowed only by mutual consent. In the case of this rule, you'll need to develop some family-recognized words or phrases that everyone must respect, such as "Stop Now," to put an immediate end to the roughhousing when one child is done (or getting hurt). Role-play this several times with each child.

"I FEEL" STATEMENTS SESSION 5

Used by parents and children to express feelings without finger pointing, blame or shame. You'll instead begin a respectful conversation that can be used to solve the underlying problem. An "I Feel" statement has three parts:

1. I feel... (hurt, angry, annoyed, disrespected)
2. When you... (throw my..., forget to...).
3. I wish... (you would be more careful..., you wouldn't take my...)

THE SECRET SIGNAL SESSION 5

Similar to the Re-Do Tool, the Secret Signal is a subtle non-verbal gesture or signal you devise with your child to be a cue between the two of you in the heat of the moment. Putting your hands over your ears can be a signal for your child to use her "normal" voice. Placing your hand over your heart can be a signal for "I'm sure you didn't mean it to sound that way, but your tone of voice felt disrespectful/hurtful." You can also use non-verbal signals to offer gentle coaching in the moment during a sibling argument without you getting too involved.

HELPFUL ADULT INTERVENTION SESSION 5

Used to help children work through sibling or other conflicts. The parent facilitates the problem solving process without taking sides. The goal is to open the blocked channels of communication so the children can resolve the issue. (Also called: SPORTS CASTING)



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ALL IN THE SAME BOAT SESSION 5

All in the Same Boat is when all participants in an argument experience the same consequence. Use the All in the Same Boat tool when they've hit a wall, and they can't work out a win-win solution.

All in the Same Boat is a basic "Either-Or" choice: "Either you guys can work it out, or if I have to get involved, everyone will lose video privileges for the day."

PULL OVER AND WAIT SESSION 5

The best strategy for handling your kids' car conflicts is to first reveal in advance that, "It's not safe for me to drive when you guys are fighting. In the future, if you fight in the car I'm going to pull over and wait until you're finished. When I hear quiet, then we'll continue on." Ask your kids to repeat that back to you.

When the next fight happens, don't say a word. Simply pull over to the side and wait with a good book that you've stashed in your glove compartment. Reading will keep you busy and allow you to appear unfazed, no matter how late you're running to the choir concert. (It's best to use this strategy the first time when the destination is somewhere your kids want to go.)

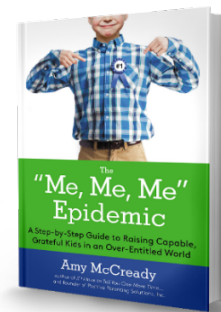
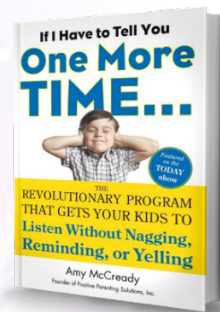
FAMILY MEETINGS SESSION 6

Weekly "meetings" when everyone in the family gets together to connect, review schedules, solve problems, and have fun together. The basic elements of the Family Meeting are: Compliments & Appreciations, Review Weekly Calendars, Allowance, Snack, and a Family Fun Activity.

Additional agenda items (general issues and problem solving) can be added as the family is more comfortable with the process.

HAVE YOU READ AMY MCCREADY'S BOOKS?

Amy's best-selling books are filled with tools and real-life examples to support your learning in the course.



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