



PARENT'S TOOLSHOPSM

**INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES
FOR
PARENT EDUCATION GROUPS**

compiled/edited/written by

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Parent's Toolshop Tour Guide
Interactive Activities
for Parent Education Groups

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Parent's Toolshop Tour Guide

Interactive Activities

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Introductions

* Idea contributed by Jody Pawel

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

First session: to help group members get to know each other better.

Instructions:

1. Pair up with someone you don't know. Learn as much as you can about this person in 3 minutes.
2. You will introduce each other, so share information you don't mind the group knowing. Ask questions about your partner's personal interests and talents, instead of just focusing on the person as a parent or asking questions about the person's children.

Process:

- Introduce your partner to the group. In 30 seconds or less, share as much information as you can about your partner.

The "Ideal" Teen (or Tot)

* Idea from Jane Nelsen, author of *Empowering Parents of Teens* leader manual.

Supplies needed: 4 markers, 4 sheets of flip chart paper, and tape, timer.

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Introductory session of T.I.P.S. for Teens (or Tots) class: to reveal beliefs about teens/tots

PU Toolset: to stimulate discussion about age-appropriate behavior

What to do: Break into 4 groups. Give each group colored markers and a sheet of flip chart paper.

Instructions:

Your group has 5 minutes to draw your assigned picture.

Group 1: Draw the "typical" teen/tot

Group 3: Draw the "typical" parent of a teen/tot

Group 2: Draw the "ideal" teen/tot

Group 4: Draw the "ideal" parent of a teen/tot

Process:

Each group describe their picture to the rest of the class. Possible discussion questions:

- Why do teens/tot do these "typical" things?
- Would the "ideal" teen be a *healthy* teen/tot?
- How do teens/tot react to the "typical" parent?

Variation:

- Give each group a bag containing assorted trinkets*, straws, labels or tape, empty toilet paper rolls or paper towel rolls, cotton balls, and rubber bands. *Build* the "ideal" parent and teen/tot and "typical" parent and teen/tot.

* Get trinkets from a dollar store, party supply store, find common objects from home. Some examples are miniature hats, clothes pins, feathers, etc.

"Hammer" (A demonstration)

* Idea developed and contributed by Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: screwdriver, claw hammer, nail (Optional: tool transparency with 6 mistakes listed)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Introductory session: to illustrate the reasons the tools might not work and/or common parenting mistakes.

Instructions:

Hold up the nail. Say, "I want to hang a picture, so I need to get this nail into this wooden wall." (If there is no wall, say there is an imaginary wooden wall.) Ask, "Does everyone here know how to do that?" (They'll all nod "yes.") Well, I'm going to play dumb. I'm going to make mistakes while trying to get this nail in the wall. Whenever you see me making a mistake, I want you to stop me and tell me what I'm doing wrong."

What to do:

1. **Take the screwdriver and use it on the nail.** When they say you have the wrong tool, say "Oh! It's the wrong tool? But this is the only tool I have!" Parents often have **too few tools or use one tool for everything**. For example, time-outs or grounding for everything. Then ask, "What tool do I need?"
2. **Hammer the wall without putting the nail up.** When they stop you, admit this is a ridiculous thing to do; no one would do this task without a nail, but it *is* a very common parenting mistake. **Some tools work best if we use them after other tools**. For example, listen before giving your side of an issue.
3. **Take the hammer and use the claw end on the nail.** When they say you are using the tool the wrong way, say "Oh! So I have the best tool for the job but I'm misusing it!" Parents often learn effective tools, but not the best way to use them, so they **misuse** the tool. Ask, "How many of you have seen people using discipline in harmful ways?" Then ask, "So which end should I use?"
4. **Act like you are wildly hammering the nail — missing the head of the nail.** When they say you need to be more controlled, say "Oh, so I need to use controlled strikes!" Draw the analogy that parents often **react, rather than planning responses** to problems.
5. **Hit the nail once.** Stop and say, "I hit it but it didn't go in!" They'll say you need to hit it more than once. Say "But I hammered a nail into plasterboard and it only took a couple of strikes!" They'll say, "But wood is harder than plaster, so you need to do it longer." Draw the analogy of people seeking quick fixes and not using tools long enough to see progress. Say, "Oh, this is a harder problem, huh? So I **need to use the tool long enough** to see progress!"
6. **Say "I think the nail is just being stubborn!"** They'll tell you it's not, that it takes a few hits to get a nail into a wall." Draw the analogy of how our beliefs about a situation can affect our response. Use the examples of believing in the "terrible twos" or that all teens are difficult. If we hold these **beliefs**, they *will* come through in our attitudes and nonverbal body language.
7. **Ask, "Now what if there was a brick wall behind this wooden wall?"** (You need a different kind of nail.) Say, "If I don't look and see the brick wall, I won't know there is a deeper problem going on." Draw the analogy that if there are **deeper problems**, we may see limited progress until we figure out what the problem is and resolve *it*.

Variation: If you have a very large group and they can't see what you are doing, or if you just want more direct interaction, make or find giant soft or inflatable tools (screwdriver and hammer) and use a volunteer as a "human nail." Let them know the volunteer won't get hurt, but might get his/her hair messed up. Instruct the human nail to remain stiff, like a real nail.

"House of Sticks"

* Idea originally from Odyssey of the Mind. Adapted by Denise Jenkins and Jody Pawel.

Supplies needed: bag of mini-marshmallows, box of toothpicks, brown paper lunch bags, plastic baggie, timer (optional: straws, computer labels)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- **Quick Tour (Chapter 1).** To illustrate the universal laws, followed in an individual way, to build a unique structure.
- **Foundation-Building Toolset (Chapter 2): To draw analogies between**
 - ▶ the stability of the actual structure built and the stability of the different parenting styles.
 - ▶ their interactive group roles and parenting (leadership) styles.
- **Cooperation Toolset (Chapter 5):**
 - ▶ To discuss competition versus cooperation
 - ▶ To reveal beliefs about rules, authority, and perfectionism
- **Problem-Solving Toolset (Chapter 8):** to illustrate the problem-solving process.

What to do:

- Break into small teams of at least 2-5 people.
- **Give each group a lunch bag containing at least 10 marshmallows in a plastic bag and 10 toothpicks.** (You can also add 4 straws and a couple of computer labels.)

Instructions:

"You have 3 minutes to build the tallest structure you can, using your group's supplies."

* Time them. Give them notice when there's 1 minute left.

(Do *not* tell the whole group the following instruction (if you choose to allow it): they *may* use a group member to build the tallest structure. You *may* tell an individual this information, *if* asked.)

Process:

- (Tour & Foundation-Building Toolset (F-B)) How did you decide the best way to build your structure? What kinds of problems did you have? Why?
- (Tour & F-B) What kind of structures were the most stable? (a broad, balanced foundation usually works best)
- (F-B) How does this relate to parenting styles? (page 43)
- (F-B & Cooperation Toolsets (Coop)) Did anyone become a leader in your group? How was the leader "selected"? How did that person lead your group? Did anyone resist the leader's suggestions?
- (Coop & Problem-Solving Toolsets (P-S)) How many people *assumed* the rules and restrictions? Did anyone ask clarifying questions about the directions? How did this extra information affect your outcome? How did it affect your creativity?
- (P-S) How many of you looked at what other groups were doing? How did this affect your group?

"I Can't Hear You!"

* Idea from Jane Nelsen, author of *Positive Discipline*.

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Foundation-Building Toolset - to *hear* how the different parenting styles sound different and feel different to children.

What to do:

- Ask for 6 or 8 volunteers, ½ parents and ½ teens
- Have them stand in rows, parents facing teens.

Instructions:

1. You will do this exercise three times.
2. Each time, the teens will say drug words (ie., "pot," "get high," "beer," "smoke") while moving toward the parent they are facing.
3. Parents, your response will be different each round. (*Before each role play, give the parents their instructions. Stop after each role play to process with questions below.*)
 - *Over-controlling response* - Parents, stand still as the teen moves toward you. Respond with controlling comments such as "I won't have that in my house!" (*After role play, process with questions below.*)
 - *Under-controlling response* - Parents, walk toward the teen as you respond. Talk about something else or turn your back. (*After role play, process with questions below.*)
 - *Balanced response* - Parents, put your arm around the teen and say "I don't understand. Tell me how you're feeling." (*After role play, process with questions below.*)

Process:

- Teens, how did you feel? What were you deciding to do because of how you felt?
- Parents, how did you feel? What were you deciding to do because of how you felt?
- What was the outcome?

"Can You Do It?" I

* Idea contributed by Mary Kay Marsh and developed by Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: a timer and the tools listed below

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- **Quick Tour of *The Parent's Toolshop* (Chapter 1):** People might try to use the only tool they have or misuse it to reach their goal
- **The Universal Blueprint (Chapter 3):** People must figure out what tool they need and select the best tool for the job, then use it appropriately to reach their goal.
- **Cooperation Toolset (Chapter 5):** People must cooperate and share tools to reach their goal.

What to do:

Give people sets of mismatched tools, objects and project goals:

<u>Tool</u>	<u>Object</u>	<u>Project/Goal</u> (write this on paper or an index card)
One-headed hammer	nail in wood	"Remove the nail"
Wire strippers	screw	"Put screw into wood"
Claw Hammer	stake	"Split the wood"
Screwdriver	wire	"Strip the plastic off the wire"
Mallet	nail	"Put the nail into the wood"

Instructions:

"You have 3 minutes to accomplish the goal that is stated on the your paper/card.

Your tool may not be used for more than one goal. You may not speak to another person."

(Don't tell them this, but if someone asks, they can use *nonverbal* communication to suggest trading tools.)

Correct matching:

<u>Tool</u>	<u>Object</u>	<u>Project/Goal</u>
Hammer	nail in wood	remove the nail
Screwdriver	screw	put screw into wood
Mallet	stake	split wood
Wire	wire strippers	strip the plastic off the wire
One-head hammer	nail	put the nail into the wood

Process:

- How many of you tried to reach your goal with the tools you were given?
- Did you misuse the tool to make it fit your goal?
- Were you able to accomplish the goal with the incorrect tool? Was it less effective?
- Once you had the correct tool, did it take more then one attempt to accomplish your goal?
- How did you find the correct tool? How did you get the tool you needed?
- How does your experience compare to choosing tools to meet your parenting goals?

page 16-18 describes common parenting mistakes, using a similar tool analogy.

page 60 summarizes steps of identifying problem types, then choosing the most appropriate tool.

"Compliments"

* Idea contributed by Jody Pawel

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Self-Esteem Toolset (Chapter 4): To see the effects of praise (pressure, insincerity) and encouragement

* It helps if group members know each other a bit before doing this exercise.

What to do:

- Break into two groups.
- One group sits or stands in an outer circle, facing the center of the circle.
- The other group stands or kneels in an inner circle facing the other group.

Instructions:

1. Each person in the inside circle will receive a compliment from the person they are facing and say, "thank you" or some other positive acknowledgement.
2. Do your best to offer compliments that are descriptive or focus on internal qualities.
3. Then the inside circle moves one person to the right.
4. Continue until everyone in the inner circle has received a compliment from each person in the outer circle.
5. When the first group is done, trade places with the outside group and do the exercise again, so everyone in the class receives a compliment tonight.

Process:

- How did you feel when you were receiving compliments?
- Did anyone feel embarrassed?
- How hard was it to say "thank you"?
- Did anyone receive a compliment that sounded insincere?
- How different did it feel to receive a compliment about your personal qualities versus something like your clothing?
- How difficult was it for you to compliment others? Did you ever feel you were being insincere or superficial?
- What did you learn about using and receiving descriptive encouragement?

"You Can't Make Me!"

* Idea from Jane Nelsen, author of *Positive Discipline*.

Supplies needed: chairs

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Cooperation Toolset (chapter 5): Cooperation versus Obedience and power/control tactics.

What to do:

Get into groups of three. 1 person is seated in a chair (the child). 2 people are behind the chair with their hands on the child's shoulder.

Instructions:

"Parents, your job is to keep the child in the chair. Go!"

(Wait about 20 seconds. Most parents try to force the child to stay in the chair.)

Process:

- "Children, how did you feel? What were you deciding to do because of how you felt?"
- "Parents, how did you feel? What were you deciding to do because of how you felt?" What did you try?

(pause)

- "Did I say to use force? Did anyone *ask* the child to stay in the chair?"
- How could the parents have motivated the child to *want to* stay seated?

"Can You Do it?" II

- * Variation 1 contributed by Deanna Todd, Parent's Toolshop Tour Guide
- Variation 2 contributed by Kathy Vanderhorst, Parent's Toolshop Tour Guide Applicant

Supplies needed: Timer. (Variation 2: enlarge/copy drawings on the last page of the packet.)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Independence Toolset - teaching skills without taking over

F-A-X Listening Toolset and Clear Communication Toolset - giving clear directions and listening to directions.

What to do:

- Pair off. Have each person sit in a chair back to back. Decide which person will be the "instructor."
- To instructor: "Your task is to instruct your partner to recreate a design. You may *not* do any of the following:
 - ▶ You can't say what the design is or name any part of the design. (For example, you cannot say, "make a cross." You *can* tell the partner how many pieces to use and where to place them.)
 - ▶ You can't look at each other, each other's hand motions, or each other's designs.
 - ▶ All instructions must be verbal and use terms that give location direction, numbers, angles.
- * There are two variations; choose *one*.

Instructions:

Variation 1:

- Put another chair in front of each person (or provide some other flat surface of equal size). Give each person identical supplies (no more than 20 items). (For example, 8 dominoes and 8 toothpicks or a set of identical Lego pieces.)
- The "instructor" creates a design on his/her surface (the chair in front of him/her).
- To instructor: "Your task is to instruct your partner to recreate that design on his/her surface (the chair in front of the partner).

Variation 2:

- Prepare two folders. Put a dot on one folder label. In the folder with a dot, put a picture/design that uses a combination of geometric shapes. In the other folder, put a blank piece of paper the same size.
- Have partners sit the same as in Variation 1, without a separate surface in front of each.
- The instructor will describe to the partner how to draw the design on his/her blank sheet of paper.

For both versions: Stop the exercise when the task is accomplished or when one pair is hopelessly lost. If more than five minutes pass, stop the exercise and process.

Process: How did you do? What worked? How did you get confused? What would have been more helpful?

Applying the "Independence Toolset" (Group Practice)

* Contributed by Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: Notepad paper and pen for each small group. Timer.

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Independence Toolset: applies Independence Toolset to participants' real-life situations.

What to do:

Variation 1: Break into groups of three to five people each.

Variation 2: Break the entire class into three groups.

Instructions:

Variation 1:

1. For 1 minute, each small group brainstorms skills, tasks, behavior, or values they want their children to learn.
2. Each group chooses one item from their list.
3. For 5 minutes, list ways to use the Independence Toolset to teach this skill, behavior, or value. (Refer to the Summary Sheet, page 164)
4. If people have time left over, they can do another item on their list.

Variation 2:

1. Break the whole group into three groups. One group focuses on physical tasks/skills, one group focuses on behavioral skills, and one group focuses on values.
2. Same directions for brainstorming and listing ideas.

Process:

A spokesperson from each group shares the group's ideas with the whole class.

"Catch This!" (A demonstration with a volunteer)

* Idea developed and contributed by Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: a ball that looks spiky or bumpy.

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- **Beginning of Child Problem Toolbox:** To illustrate the concept of "keeping the ball in the child's court."

What to do:

1. **Get a volunteer (Choose a way):**
 - Ask for a volunteer.
 - Hand the ball to whoever is sitting closest to you that you think will play along.)
 - Throw the ball into the group. Whoever catches it is to bring it to you. (You can give this instruction before throwing the ball, to assure that whoever catches it is willing to volunteer.
2. **When you have a volunteer holding the ball, ask the following questions:**
 - How do you feel about catching that ball and coming up here?
 - Tell me about that ball.
 - What's it like to have that ball?
 - It looks spiky/bumpy; does it hurt to hold that ball?
 - What do you think you could do with that ball?
3. **Then change your attitude and responses.** Ask several probing questions quickly, without time to answer, like you are grilling him/her. "Where did you get this ball? Why did you take it?" Then **grab** the ball, saying "You know what? I had a ball just like this when I was a kid. I know just what to do with this ball." Take the ball from the volunteer. If they resist, pull harder, insist on taking the ball.

Process:

1. When I was asking you about the ball how did you feel?
2. Did you feel like sharing and talking to me?
3. How did you feel when I wanted to take the ball from you?
4. (If the person easily allowed you to take the ball, also say "You let me take your ball! Why?" Make the point that children often let us rescue them. Why not? It's easier that way. They don't have to solve the problem!)
5. If I took every ball you showed me, would you continue showing me your new balls?
6. Draw analogies between problem ownership with balls and problems. Make the following points:
 - Problems are like balls.
 - Sometime children let us solve their problems for them. Is this good? What is the long-term effect?
 - If we focus on feelings and ask helpful questions, people often share more information.
 - When someone shares a problem with us, it does not mean they are asking for help, advice, or for us to solve the problem *for* them.
 - Simple stories and small problems are little tests of how much we can be trusted with bigger, more difficult problems.
 - If we let children resolve problems on their own, they learn responsible problem-solving and decision-making skills. If we let them to make poor decisions/mistakes in less critical decisions or problems, it may prevent poor decisions/mistakes when the stakes are higher.

"Telephone" I

* Childhood game adapted by Jody Pawel

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- **F-A-X Listening Toolset (Chapter 7):** To illustrate what can happen when if clarify messages.

What to do:

- Everyone sits in a circle. (If there are more than 20 people, split into groups no larger than 150)
- The instructor separates the "beginning" and "end" of the circle.

Instructions:

1. I will whisper a statement to the first person in the circle. (Have the statement be somewhat of a tongue twister or one that has words that could be easily misheard.)
2. The first person whispers the message *one time* to the person on his/her left.
3. The person receiving the message cannot ask for clarification, no matter how unclear or ridiculous it sounds. You must immediately tell the person on your left the message you *think* you heard.
4. This will continue around the circle, until the last person receives the message.
5. At the end, the last person will repeat what he/she heard and then (after everyone stops laughing) the first person will say the original message.

Process:

- What happens when we don't clarify messages?
- Share analogy of a fax machine and discuss importance of clarifying messages before we react or respond to them.

"Team Parenting"

* Contributed by Jody Pawel

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

F-A-X Listening/Problem-Solving Toolsets (Chapters 7 & 8): to practice F-A-X language, the process of reading people's emotional codes, correctly interpreting them, and responding helpfully without taking over.

What to do:

- Turn to page 232 in the book (practice exercises)
- One person volunteers to be the child in one of the practice situations.

Instructions:

- To the "child": Just react the way a child would really respond. This includes your body language.
- The "child" will say the opening line from the book.
- The rest of us will be one collective team parent. We'll discuss the various options, so the child also needs to remember what the child's last statement was, because we often forget where the conversation left off.

Process:

After the child's response, ask helpful questions to guide the group to a helpful response. Here are some examples:

- How is he/she feeling and why?
- What [new] clues do you have now?
- Can you check that out?
- If the parent is anxious to give advice or sooth the hurt, ask, "Is there a way you can ask a helpful question that will help the child figure that out for himself (herself)?"
- If a "child's" response shows that he is "stuck" or is trying to figure out what to do, stop the role play or discussion temporarily and ask, "What step is the child at now? NOW we can problem-solve. Ask, 'What do you think you could do about it? What are your options?' If you want, you can continue through the problem-solving process with your example."

"Get the F-A-X"

* Contributed by Jody Pawel

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

F-A-X Listening/Problem-Solving Toolsets (Chapters 7 & 8): to practice F-A-X language, the process of reading people's emotional codes, correctly interpreting them, and responding helpfully without taking over.

What to do:

- Break the group into four or five groups.
- Pass out the role plays on the next page. (You can either type these role plays onto index cards or make a copy of the next page and cut into strips.)

Instructions:

- Each group has been given a problem situation and the player's feelings/thoughts about the situation.
- You have 3-5 minutes to plan a role play that shows an effective way to use F-A-X communication to resolve the problem without taking over the problem.
- Be realistic in the child and parent's responses.

Process:

- You can coach the parent if he/she falls into ineffective habits or gets stuck. Whisper a question or suggested response in the parent's ear or ask the group for ideas.
- After each role play: identify the skills they used, the problem-solving steps (the 1-2-3 steps and brainstorming) they followed.

Homework: (2 people: parent and child)

Parent: Your child (you decide gender/age) is having a hard time completing homework on time. He/she "forgets" or remembers late at night or right before school that they had homework.

"Child": You can decide (without revealing to your "parent" until the role play) *why* you aren't getting your work done.

Plan a role play in which the parent keeps the "ball" in the child's court and encourages the child to plan his/her own homework schedule and reminders. (Hint: be careful about what you volunteer to "help" with. Also, avoid the word "we." Find out what "you," the child, plans to do about this problem. Try to avoid moving into the Parent Problem Toolbox or revealing discipline. Use problem-solving instead.)

Sibling mediation: (3 people: 1 parent, 2 kids)

Siblings: The two siblings were arguing and calling each other names. (You pick the gender, age, and issue.)

Parent: Do sibling mediation. Look for the "real" issue, which is usually deeper than the surface complaint. Guide the children through the problem-solving process. You decide, based on time, their ages, or the issue, whether to do problem-solving on paper or not.

(If one of the children is not very verbal, your role will be harder. You must "translate" for the younger child, without taking his/her side. Explain to older children that "children __ years old sometimes don't understand . . ." Don't say (name of younger sibling) doesn't understand . . . " This sounds like you are taking sides.)

Peer problem-solving: (2 people: 1 parent, 1 child)

Child: You have been getting teased at school. You can make up the circumstances and details.

Parent: Do F-A-X listening and problem-solving. (Hint: Don't rush listening and avoid advice. Do not protect or rescue child.)

School behavior: (3 people: parent, teacher, and child.)

Parent: Your child's teacher has asked you and your child to come to a conference to discuss your child's misbehavior in class. The teacher will try to "put the ball in your court." Whose problem is this? The teacher and child's. Mediate the teacher and child's conflict (two-party mediation, like siblings). (Hint: be careful what you agree to or accept responsibility for.) Plan a role play of this conference.

Child: You feel your teacher is unfairly picking on you. Whatever she accuses you of, you have seen others do and *they* don't get in trouble.

School bus problem: (3 people: 1 parent, 1 fourth grade boy and 1 fifth grade neighbor boy)

Parent: Your fourth grade boy and his neighbor friend come home from school, complaining about a problem on the bus. Briefly reflect feelings and explore alternatives. (Hint: Find out what they've already tried. Be careful about taking over or rescuing.)

(1 fourth grade boy and 1 fifth grade neighbor boy)

Children: You are a fourth grade boy. You and your fifth grade neighbor arrive home from the bus, complaining that a third grade girl is picking on both of you on the bus. She pesters you the entire way home and tries to trip you as you walk off the bus. The bus driver doesn't believe you, because you are "older boys" and the "problem child" is a younger girl. When your parent explores alternatives with you, explain that you've tried ignoring the girl, but she gets in your face. You've tried to be assertive, saying "Stop it" but are ignored. You want your parent to talk to the bus driver so she'll move the girl's seat.

"Thermometer"

* Idea from Jane Nelsen, author of *Positive Discipline*

Supplies needed: masking tape (optional)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- **F-A-X Communication:** establishing trust and avoiding roadblocks
- **Clear Communication Toolset:** how problem solving can result in win/win solutions
- **Discipline Toolset:** how suffering and criticism inhibits learning from mistakes

What to do:

- * *Choose an issue for the child's opening statement. Here are some possible statements:*
 - Cooperation: "I don't feel like cleaning my room."
 - Communication: "I don't want to come home at 11 o'clock. I want to stay out until one o'clock."
 - Discipline: "I broke your stereo" or "I wrecked the car."
1. (Optional) Use tape to establish a separation line between parent and child.
 2. Pair off or get two volunteers to demonstrate. Decide who is the parent and who is the child.
 3. Face each other with fingertips touching. Where the fingertips touch, there is an imaginary line (If you don't use tape.) that represents the child's feeling of closeness and trust toward the parent. Drop hands.

Instructions:

1. The child will make a statement and the parent will respond.
2. With each response, the child will take one step closer or farther away from the parent, based on whether the statement made the child feel more or less trusting of the parent.
3. You will do this exercise twice.
4. The first time, the parent will use typical unhelpful responses to the child's comment.
5. Do the exercise. (30 seconds is usually long enough to get the point across.)
6. The second time, the parent uses trust-building communication.

Process:

After *each* role play, ask the same questions:

- Parents, how did you feel? What did you choose to do, based on your feelings? Did it help or hurt communication?
- Children, how did you feel? What did you choose to do, based on your feelings? Did it help or hurt communication?

"Labels Stick"

* Idea contributed by Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: Post-it notes with roles/labels written on them or pieces of paper and tape. (A timer is optional.)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Self-Esteem Toolset (Chapter 4) or sibling relationships (Chapter 8): to experience the effects of positive and negative labels

What to do:

Put one label on each person's back, using post-it notes or tape.

Possible labels:

spoiled	athlete (jock)	cute	crybaby
genius	handicapped	shy	druggie
"big mouth"	trouble maker	bully	gay (homosexual)
responsible	brat	messy	promiscuous (sleeps around)

Instructions:

- Mingle with each other for about 5 minutes. (It's fun to do this during a refreshment break! ☺)
- React to others according to their labels.
- Do *not* tell others what their labels are, simply treat them according to their role.

Process:

- How did you feel?
- Who thinks they had a negative label? How did that feel? What did you consider doing, because of how you were treated?
- Who thinks they had a "positive" label? How did that feel? Did you feel pressured? Are "positive" labels really positive?

Cover the section on freeing children from labels/roles (Chapter 4, page 97) or bullies/victims (chapter 8, page 222)

"Chain Reaction"

* Contributed by Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: one box (approximately 24) of dominoes for *each* small group. A timer.

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Keep Your Cool Toolset: the anger cycle

* Do the experiential exercise *before* discussing the anger cycle.

What to do:

Break into small groups of no more than 5 people.

Give each group an ample supply of dominoes (minimum of 12, ideal is 24 dominoes)

Instructions:

- You have 3 minutes to construct the most creative domino chain reaction your group can make.
- You may test your chain reaction, but at the time limit, your chain reaction should be ready to show others.
- We will all watch each group's chain reaction work. Ready? GO!

Process:

- *To a group whose chain failed:* What happened?
 - *To a group whose chain succeeded:* Where did you need to put your dominoes so they would fall?
 - Why did some of them not fall? ("Too far apart" is an answer you will build on.)
 - When one domino didn't fall, what happened to the chain reaction? (It stops.)
 - If you had one really large or heavy domino in the middle of your chain, what would happen? (It would stop the chain reaction.)
- * Draw the analogy of the anger cycle being like a domino chain reaction. Make the following points:
- Anger is like a chain reaction. One event can cause a chain reaction of emotions and reactions.
 - If we can space out or slow down the time it takes between one step and the next, we can better control or even stop the reaction.
 - If we change our belief about or our interpretation of the event, we can stop the chain reaction.
 - Healthy beliefs are like putting a more sturdy barrier in the chain reaction that can change or stop an unhealthy reaction.

"Telephone" II

- * Idea from "Spontaneous Problems by Ohio Kids - 1996" from Odyssey of the Mind.
Modified by Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: 5 unusual objects, a set of index cards, timer.

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

F-A-X Listening Toolset: the importance of clarifying messages

Clear Communication Toolset: not all communication has to be verbal

What to do:

- Choose 5 unusual objects. Make a set of index cards, each with the names of 1, 2, or 3 of the objects, in any order. Repetitions on the cards are allowed.
- *Setup:* Arrange 5 chairs in a circle, backs facing the center. The first chair should be within reach of the cards, the last within reach of the objects. The first and last person should *not* be able to see each other.
- (The instructor can stand at the separation of the semicircle.)

Instructions:

1. Your task is to create a nonverbal communication system to tell the name and order of the objects on the cards.
 2. Each of you will sit in a chair.
 3. The first person will choose a card and nonverbally communicate the object names and their order to the next person.
 4. The second person will nonverbally communicate the names and order of the objects to the third person, and so on.
 5. The last person will pick up the objects and place them on (the floor or a table) **in order.**
- You have 2 minutes to discuss and decide on a nonverbal communication system. All members may talk during this time.
 - You will have 3 minutes to perform the task. No one may talk during the demonstration time.

Process:

- How did you decide to communicate?
- If someone didn't communicate the message correctly, what happened?
- What can we learn from this exercise that might help us improve communication with our children?
- Do we always need to use words?
- If children tune out long-winded lectures, what are our other options?

"Bad Boy, Bad Girl"

* Idea from Jane Nelsen, author of *Positive Discipline*

Supplies needed: chairs. (A timer is optional.)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- **Cooperation Toolset:** Cooperation versus Obedience
- **Clear Communication Toolset:** how it feels to receive blameful or shameful reprimands

What to do:

- Break into pairs.
- One person (the parent) stands on a chair. (Partners are spotters.)
- The other (the child) sits on another chair.

Instructions:

Parents, you are to scold the child with a pointed finger for one minute. (If you exaggerate a bit, we can stop early.)

Process:

- Children, how did you feel? What were you deciding to do as a result?
- Parents, how did you feel? What were you deciding to do as a result?
- How effective is scolding and ordering?
- What are more effective and respectful alternatives?

Behavior Goals (Role Play)

* Idea from Jane Nelsen, author of *Positive Discipline*

Supplies needed: Prepare signs ahead of time. (You can laminate the signs at the end of the packet, add holes, and string.)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

PO Toolset (Chapter 12):

- To see how typical reactions to PO behavior can escalate or payoff misbehavior.
- To practice seeing clues to identify different types of PO behavior and respond helpfully.

What to do:

1. Break into four groups, one for each goal. (The group can know their goal, but not the rest of the class.)
 2. Have each group choose a common behavior motivated by their assigned goal. (Check each group's plan, as they sometimes misidentify the goal.)
- * You can also *assign* a different problem to each group. (One for each PO goal. Possible problem situations for each goal are as follows:
- attention - child keeps interrupting the parent while the parent is on the phone
 - power - child wants to play but hasn't finished cleaning room. Child tries to talk parent into letting him/her play *without* cleaning first.
 - revenge - parent wouldn't buy an expensive toy/clothing. The child is mad and gives the parent "the silent treatment."
 - giving up - parent is trying to help child learn how to ____ (hit a baseball, for example). The child keeps saying "I can't!"

Instructions:

- **You will role play this situation twice.** The first time, you will role play the *typical, unhelpful reaction* to this behavior. After we process what happened, you will replay the scene. The child will wear a special sign that offers clues to the parent about a more helpful, appropriate response.
- Spend the next 5 minutes deciding who in your group will role play the parent and child and how you will act out both role plays. (Repeat "The first role play is to be a typical, unhelpful response.")

Process:

After the first, unhelpful, role play:

- To parent: How did you feel? What did you do? How did the child respond?
- To child: How did you feel? What did you decide to do, based on your feelings? What happened when you did this?
- To class: What is the goal here? What were your clues? What would be a more helpful response?

Put the appropriate sign around the "child's" neck and have the "actors" replay the scene using an appropriate, helpful response.

After the second, more helpful role play:

- To child and parent: How did this experience feel different?
- To class: What was different? Any other suggestions for helpful responses?

"Problems Are like Onions"

- * Variations of "The Jungle," an activity developed by Jane Nelsen, author of *Positive Discipline*. Modifications by Jody Pawel.

Supplies: chairs. (Hershey Hugs® for self-esteem version, PO signs for PO version.)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

PO or Self-Esteem Toolset: Discouragement is the root of misbehavior

What to do:

- Ask for 7-10 volunteers. 2 will be children. Before they volunteer, explain that this exercise can be quite powerful and some people get upset. They will not get hurt, but they can change their mind and not participate if they choose.
- Explain the activity in private while others are setting up chairs (enough chairs for volunteer parents, in a circle facing out). You can also explain the instructions in front of the group.
- Ask other group members to "spot" the parent volunteers as they stand on chairs and at the end, when they get down.

Instructions:

1. The two "children" will go around the circle three times. To each adult, they will say "(statement varies with the session focus. See specific instructions that follow.)" The adults will stand on the chairs and respond to the children with put downs parents often give to children when they are misbehaving. If parents exaggerate the responses, it gets the message across faster and we can stop the exercise earlier.
2. Then the adults will get off the chairs and the children will go around three times again, saying the same statement. This time, the adults will give encouraging statements. Throughout the exercise, the audience is to observe the adults and children's reactions.
3. (Repeat the children's statement. Have each child start on opposite sides of the circle.)
4. (After the children go around the circle once, give specific instructions to some of the parents, such as "compare the child to a sibling," "turn around and ignore the child," or "call the child names.")
5. Parents can get off the chairs. (Process the first round with questions below.)
6. Now the child will go around three times and the adults will stand on the floor and respond with encouraging statements. What can the adults say that would help the child feel (the goal is different with session focus. See specific instructions that follow.)?
7. (Begin the exercise. Process with the questions below.)

Process:

- Ask the children, "How did you feel? Did you feel you were capable? Like you were noticed? That you were important? That you had something worthwhile to contribute? What did you feel like doing?"
 - Ask the parents, "How did you feel?"
 - Ask the audience for their observations.
 - Ask everyone, "If a child came up to us and said this, what would we say? Would any of us reject a child who said this? Probably not, but really, that's what their behavior is saying. (Can remind them of the analogy of problem behavior is the skin of the onion, their feelings are the core.)"
- * Sometimes this activity stirs up childhood memories. Spend some time processing and affirming. Ask how the second-round responses felt to them. (Their answers might surprise you!) Get back on task; don't let this processing turn into an individual therapy session.

"Problems are Like Onions" ~ Self-Esteem version (addendum)

Supplies: Hershey Hugs®

Child's statement: "I'm discouraged and disappointed" or "I want to belong."

Goal focus: Before the second round (helpful responses), ask "What can the adults say that would help the child feel important, capable, and loved?"

Specific instructions for processing exercise:

- Ask the children, "How did you feel when receiving *descriptive* encouragement? Did you feel valuable and worthwhile? What do you feel like doing as a result of how you feel? Why?" (Use this last question to reinforce the *internal* motivation that results from encouragement.)

Special notes:

- * Observe what happens during the first round of encouraging statements. There are usually quite a few parents who give *praise* or try to rescue the child. The child might react as though he/she feels good about the response. For example, a parent might say, "You're really such a handsome boy" or "You're so smart." *Stop the role play after one round if this occurs.* Ask the child how he/she felt and what he/she might do as a result. Does the child *feel* smart? Do they believe the statement? Did the child pick up on any hidden or implied messages? Make the point of fostering *internal* motivation. We want our children to feel we love them *conditionally*, only *if* they get good grades, etc. Review the specific language of using encouragement (*descriptive* comments or those that focus on the *child's* feelings). Instruct them to *describe* the child's efforts.
- * Many parents feel bad about their criticisms, but don't usually know each other well enough to give the "child" a hug. Pass out Hershey Hug® candies to each adult in the circle. Tell them they can use them to give the child a hug if they feel like it. (Give everyone a few "hugs" before they leave the class.)

"Problems are Like Onions" ~ Child Problem version (addendum)

Give the class this situation (or ask for/choose another common Child Problem): The "child" put off doing a school project. They quickly did the project the night before and did put a lot of effort into it — but they still got a poor grade on the project. (For preschool children or toddlers, use the example that they were trying to make a dog out of clay and it doesn't look at all like a dog. In their frustration, they pounded the clay with their fist and yelled, "This is stupid." You can add that they threw the clay.)

Child's statement: "'I got a 'D' on my school project." Or "This is stupid clay!"

Specific instructions:

Before the first round (unhelpful responses): Brainstorm typical comments and reactions parents would make in these situations.

Goal focus: Before the second round (helpful responses), ask "What can the adults say that would help the child feel encouraged and supported?" The parents can give descriptive encouragement that focuses on effort and improvement and can use the F-A-X process.

Specific instructions for processing exercise:

- Ask the children who solved their problem and how they feel about the solution.

"Problems are Like Onions" ~ PO version (addendum)

Supplies: chairs. (Optional: PO goal signs at the end of this packet. Laminate them, punch two holes in the top, and put a string for them to wear it around the neck.)

Specific instructions (The same general instructions for the format: circle of chairs, parents/children)

- Do the role play *four* times, focusing on a different "goal" of misbehavior each time.
- The two "children" go around the circle two times, revealing the purpose behind their misbehavior. (The child's statement and goal-focused instructions differ with each goal. See "goal specific instructions" that follow.)

Specific instructions for processing exercise:

After the *unhelpful* response round, ask:

- Children, "How did you feel? What did you decide to do as a result of how you were feeling?"
- Parents, "How did you feel? What did you feel like doing? What happened when you did that?" (These are the questions we use to identify the clues behind PO behavior.)
- Ask the audience for their observations.

After the *helpful* response round, ask:

- Children, "How did you feel? What did you decide to do as a result of how you were feeling?"
- Parents, "How did you feel? How did you respond? What happened when you did that?"
- Ask the audience for their observations.

Special notes:

- * Change the situation each time, to focus on different "goals" behind misbehavior. If the situation suggested below is inappropriate for the parents in the group (they all have teens, for example), choose another typical goal-specific behavior that is common among children that age.
- * Sometimes parents can't think of anything to say when they are in the role play. Ask the class, "What would the typical parent say?" before the exercise starts. Have them write responses on index cards, which the parent volunteers can use when they are doing the role play.

Goal-Specific Situations:

- * *The next page offers detailed instructions only for attention-seeking behavior.* For subsequent goals, follow the same instructions, replacing the child's statements and hypothetical situation for each different goal.

Attention:

- *Possible situation:* a child is interrupting them while on the phone.
- *Child's sign or statement:* "I am a child and I want to be noticed and involved." Or, the child can wear the PO sign that says "I want to belong. Notice me! Involve me!"
- Do the role play, with parents standing on chairs, using unhelpful reactions. Process with clue-finding questions ("How do you feel, etc.).
- After the first round (unhelpful responses), ask the group, "*What are more helpful responses we can use when a child is seeking (attention)?*" (Change the goal with each round.)
- Adults stand on the floor and the *child goes around two more times*. Parents give *helpful responses* this time. Process with the questions on the previous page.
- * **Follow the same steps for each goal, replacing the child's statement or sign and the situation for each.** Possible situations and child comments for the other three goals are as follows:

Power

- *Possible situations:* "You want your child to . . . fold towels *your way*." ". . . clean his or her room," ". . . pick up his or her toys," . . . come home at eleven o'clock, not midnight, as the teen wants.")
- *Child's sign and/or repeated statement:* "I want some control. Give me some choice!"

Revenge

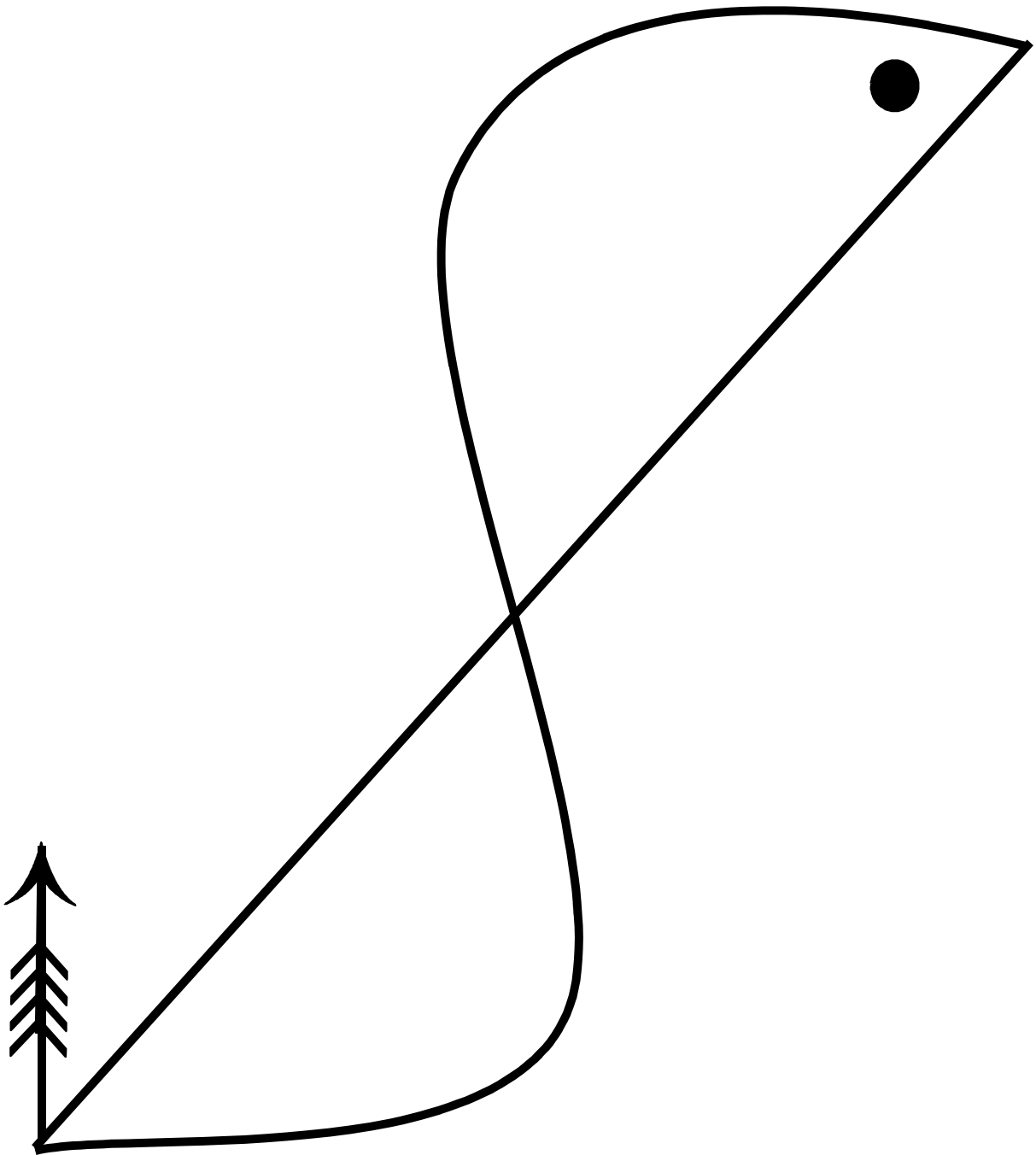
- *Possible situations:* A child is angry with the parents so he/she gives the parent the silent treatment. The child reacts to a lost power struggle (show the power struggle before the revenge). A child uses "defiant compliance," for example, you ask the child to put away toys, so the child puts them under the bed or the parent *makes* the child mow the lawn, so the child mows the lawn — and the rose bed. If you choose to show revenge between two siblings, you'll need to demonstrate the F-A-X process to mediate. Still make sure you address the hurt. You may also choose another situation.
- *The child's sign and/or repeated statement:* "I'm hurting. Listen and build trust."

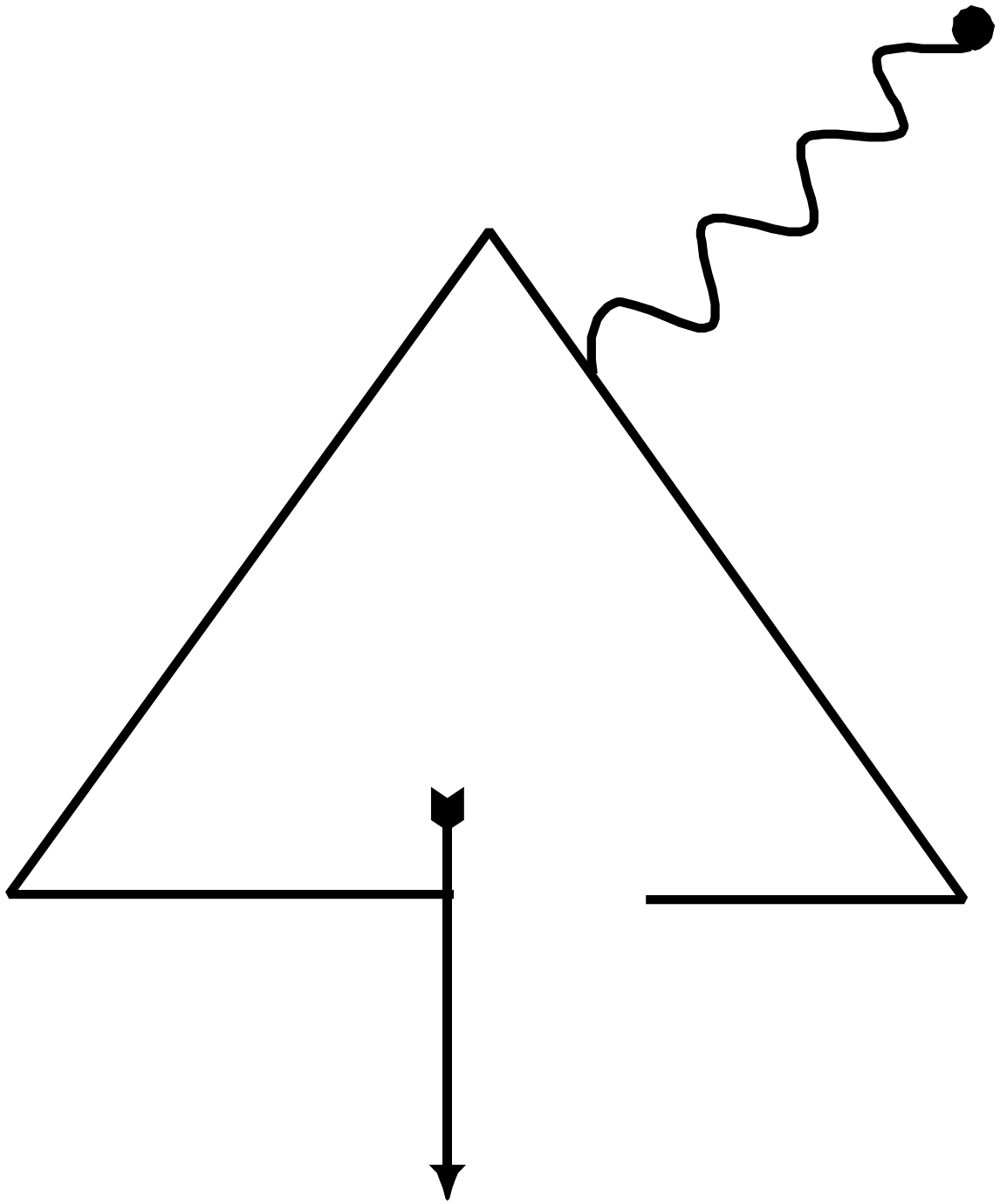
Giving Up

- *Possible situations:*
 - ▶ The child is confused about a homework assignment. Despite your efforts to explain the homework, the child insists "I can't do it!"
 - ▶ You are trying to teach your child how to hit a baseball and they keep missing it. Despite your efforts to offer "helpful hints," the child insists, "I'll never be good at this!"
 - ▶ Your child had soccer practice and when he/she comes home, the stack of newspapers for his/her route are waiting for him/her. He/she is tired, hasn't eaten dinner yet, and has homework to do. The papers must be rolled and delivered in one hour. The child decides to just skip it this time.
- *The child's sign and/or repeated statement:* "Believe in me! Encourage me."

Drawings for “Can You do It? II” follow on the last page.

(If color signs are not included at the end of this packet, please contact Jody Pawel at 1-877-748-4541.)





Parents Toolshop Interactive Activities

Bonus Packet

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We are always looking for fresh ideas. We love it when parent educators share the interactive activities *they* use with great success. If you’d like to share *your* ideas, just send us directions for your activity, following a similar format as this manual, plus the name and title of the contributor.

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Parenting “Style Show” (A role-playing demonstration)

* Idea developed and contributed by Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE 2000
See a video of this activity at: <http://www.jodypawel.com/video/StyleShow/>

Supplies needed:

<i>Power Patrol:</i> hard baseball hat, military officer’s hat crown (in prop kit)	<i>Perf. Super.:</i> clipboard (in prop kit) timer	<i>Balanced:</i> ruler (in prop kit)	<i>Over-Indulger:</i> silver platter (in prop kit)	<i>Avoider:</i> ear muffs (in prop kit) rose-colored glasses or giant sunglasses (in prop kit)
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Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Foundation-Building session: to illustrate the 5 parenting styles in an exaggerated fun way

What to do:

- Ask for 5 volunteers who are willing to hold or wear a prop and read from an index card. Line volunteers in a row in front of the group/class.
- Distribute appropriate index card and prop(s) so characters are standing in order as shown in the book’s “balancing scale” diagram on page 48 (2000 edition) or from left to right as listed above.
- Give instructions for them to read their cards in the following order: Power Patrol, Perfectionistic Supervisor, Avoider, Over-Indulger, Balanced Parent.
- Applaud, have volunteers return to their seats and process/teach parenting style differences. (Recommend not teaching between each performance as volunteers will be standing up there too long.)

Index Card text:

POWER PATROL (GO FIRST)

(Wear your prop. Give a salute as you introduce yourself.)
I’m the Power Patrol parent. My kids do things my way or hit the highway! I’m hard headed. *(Knock on your hat.)* I don’t listen to their opinions or ideas. They do what I want because I said so. Fear is good. If they don’t do what I say, I’ll make *sure* they *really* pay.

PERFECTIONISTIC SUPERVISOR (GO SECOND)

(Set your timer for 1 minute. Press the start button when I ask the first volunteer to introduce him/herself. When it beeps, say “Time’s up! My turn!” You can also act like you are checking things off your clipboard as you speak.)
I’m the Perfectionistic Supervisor parent. I’m *very* organized and know the *right* way to do *everything*. I get my way with bribes, incentives, payoffs and lectures. I have a good reputation and my kids had better not spoil it. I’ll *make sure* they never stray. If they do I’ll give a guilt trip right away.

AVOIDER (GO THIRD)

(Wear your props.)
I’m the Avoider parent. I *hate* inconvenience and kids *so* troublesome! I hear *(point to earmuffs)* and see *(point to rose-colored glasses)* what I want, so I can avoid conflict. Hey, my kid didn’t do it and it’s *your* problem to solve! I don’t want my kids to expect much from me. In return, I let them run wild and free.

OVER-INDULGER (GO FOURTH)

(Hold your prop. Curtsy or bow when you introduce yourself.)
I’m the Over-Indulgent parent. I love my kids and will do *anything* for them. I’ll deliver homework, solve their problems, and fix *any* meal they want—on a silver platter. *(Hold out tray.)* I understand their feelings so well, I can keep them happy all the time. I give them respect, I’m sure of that. So why do they treat me like a door mat?

BALANCED (GO FIFTH/LAST)

(Balance the ruler as you speak.)
I’m the Balanced parent. I want to raise responsible *self-disciplined adults*, so I teach my children the skills they need to succeed in life. They learn self-control, decision-making skills, the value behind my rules and are part of the family team. I set respectful, reasonable boundaries and let my children make choices within my bottom-line limits. I help my children *learn* from their mistakes by holding them accountable for the outcomes of their choices. All this *prevents* a lot of problems, but when they arise we find win/win solutions. My kids can share their feelings and have a say, but might not always get their own way.

“Backwards Day”

* Idea from Jody Pawel

Supplies needed: your clothes

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Self-Esteem Toolset (usually more appropriate for parents of young children)

What to do:

Wear your clothes improperly. For example, wear socks or shoes of a different color or style, wear shoes on the wrong feet (if not obvious), wear your pants or shirt backwards or inside-out, button up your shirt or jacket crooked, wear two different earrings or cuff links, pantyhose with a run in them, style your hair in crooked pigtailed . . . or all the above! If you will be doing this activity in the middle of the workshop, choose imperfections that aren't obvious.

Instructions:

1. Present D.I.P. Describe, Internal focus and Positive (what IS right?)
2. Present the three-step process for avoiding “constructive criticism.” When there is something wrong that needs corrected, avoid “You did a good job, but ...” Instead:
 - a. Give a D.I.P.
 - b. Pause and allow the child to feel the positive feelings.
 - c. Later (decide how much...seconds, minutes, hours, days) teach skills by *asking questions* that get the *child* to discover the mistakes on his/her own, if possible.
3. Then say: “What if I’m four-years-old and I come in the room and say to you, ‘Look! I dressed myself!’ but _____ (start listing and revealing all the imperfections on you). What can you say to me?”
4. First, have them apply the D-I-P descriptive encouragement technique in this situation. Have them practice on you:
5. Then give scenarios for *when* you teach skills (whether to point out the mistakes or not) and, if you do, *how* to ask questions.
 - a. What if it was a Saturday and I was going to watch TV?
 - b. What if it was a weekday and you were taking me to day care? What would the day care providers say? (Look for Perfectionistic Supervisors who can’t stand imperfection or care too much about what people think. BTW, day care workers usually say “Did you dress yourself?” and positively view the parent for allowing the child to dress self.)
 - c. What if we were going to an amusement park? (Would have to change shoes, but can kick off in the car and teach skills when you get there.)
 - d. What if we were heading out the door to take a walk around the block. (Walk out of the room to get your jacket and then walk back in and ask a question.)

“What Makes it ‘Good’?”

* Idea from Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

Supplies needed: for each participant

2 photos of “good” vacation spots + 2 photos of children doing something “good” + 2 photos of children doing something *partially* “good” (tried to do something but made a mistake)

1 set of directions (next page. If you print to a full sheet label, you can adhere to back of photo.)

* *Can purchase photos in Photo/Video Bonus Pack*

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Self-Esteem Toolset, practice descriptive language of encouragement

What to do:

- Have participants pair up and decide who is Person 1 and Person 2
- Give each person Round 1 directions and 2 photos of vacation spots.
- After Round 1, give each person Round 2 directions and 2 photos of children doing something “good.”
- After Round 2, process.
- Give each person Round 3 directions and 2 photos of children doing something *partially* good.

Instructions:

Have participants pair up. They each will take turns doing the exercises on the following page.

Round 1:

1. Give each person 2 photos of attractive vacation spots. Decide who goes first.
2. Read the directions (see next page).
3. *Give 1-2 minutes, then stop and switch roles.*

Round 2:

1. Give each person 2 photos of children doing something “good.” Decide who goes first.
2. Read the directions (see next page).
3. *Give 1-2 minutes, then stop and switch roles.*
4. *When done, process Rounds 1 & 2 using guidelines below.*

Round 3:

1. Give each person 2 photos of children doing something only *partially* “good.” Decide who is parent first. Partner is child.
2. Read the directions (see next page).
3. *Give 1-2 minutes, then stop and switch roles.*
4. *When done, process Rounds 3 using guidelines below.*

Process:

After Rounds 1 and 2:

1. When your partner said you did a “good job” did you know what made it good?
2. When your partner *described* what made it good, did you understand better?
3. If you just tell children they did a “good” job, how do they know *what* made it “good”?
4. Whenever you are tempted to only say “good job,” what do you want to say instead or add on to your comment? (*A description of what made it “good.”*)

After Round 3:

1. When someone tells you “you did a good job, but...” do you feel encouraged or discouraged?
2. If the person waits to correct you, are you more open to the correction and less defensive?
3. Were you corrected in a way that made you *feel bad* or that you just *made a mistake* and you *know how to correct it* or avoid it in the future?

ROUND 1: (Decide who goes first.)

1. *Without showing your photo*, say, "I went on two 'good' vacations. Do you know what made them 'good'?"
2. Partner will probably say "no."
3. Describe one vacation photo and ask, "Now do you know why it was "good"?"
4. *If the partner says "yes," show the photo and describe the other photo.*
5. *After Person one finishes, switch roles and the other person follows the same process with his/her photos.*

ROUND 1: (Decide who goes first.)

1. *Without showing your photo*, say, "I went on two 'good' vacations. Do you know what made them 'good'?"
2. Partner will probably say "no."
3. Describe one vacation photo and ask, "Now do you know why it was "good"?"
4. *If the partner says "yes," show the photo and describe the other photo.*
5. *After Person one finishes, switch roles and the other person follows the same process with his/her photos.*

ROUND 2: One person is the "Parent" and the other is the "Child."

1. *Without showing your photo*, say, "You did a "good job. Do you know what you did that was 'good'?"
2. Partner will probably say "no."
3. Describe what the child in the photo is doing or did that was good. Then asks, "Now do you know why it was "good"?"
4. *If the partner says "yes," show the photo and describe the other photo.*
5. *After one person finishes describing both photos, switch roles and the other person follows the same steps with his/her photos.*

ROUND 2: One person is the "Parent" and the other is the "Child."

1. *Without showing your photo*, say, "You did a "good job. Do you know what you did that was 'good'?"
2. Partner will probably say "no."
3. Describe what the child in the photo is doing or did that was good. Then asks, "Now do you know why it was "good"?"
4. *If the partner says "yes," show the photo and describe the other photo.*
5. *After one person finishes describing both photos, switch roles and the other person follows the same steps with his/her photos.*

ROUND 3: One person is the "Parent" and the other is the "Child."

1. Show one photo to your partner/child and say, "You did a "good job" but ... (*and describes what was not good about what the child did*). " (*pause*) "Now how do you feel about what you did?"
2. Partner answers (Probably "bad.")
3. Describe *what* the child in the photo did *well*.
4. Then say, "Later I would say..." and say *what* you would say to correct the child.
5. Now ask, "Now how do you feel about what you did?"
6. If your partner *doesn't* feel bad, do 1-3 for the other photo. If your partner *does* feel bad, reword your description of what wasn't "good" in a less critical way until the partner/child doesn't feel "bad."
7. *After Person one finishes, switch roles and the other person follows the same process with his/her photos.*

ROUND 3: One person is the "Parent" and the other is the "Child."

1. Show one photo to your partner/child and say, "You did a "good job" but ... (*and describes what was not good about what the child did*). " (*pause*) "Now how do you feel about what you did?"
2. Partner answers (Probably "bad.")
3. Describe *what* the child in the photo did *well*.
4. Then say, "Later I would say..." and say *what* you would say to correct the child.
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7. *After Person one finishes, switch roles and the other person follows the same process with his/her photos.*

“M&M Arm Wrestle”

* Idea from Dorothy Balancio, PhD

See video of this activity at: <http://www.jodypawel.com/video/MMpower/>

Supplies needed: 1 bag/box of “snack” pack M&Ms, enough for 1 bag/person.

If doing with only 2 volunteers, have 2 chairs on opposite sides of a front table and 1 big bag of “loose” M&M’s.

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Cooperation Toolset. Cooperation vs. Obedience, choices in limits.

What to do:

Ask who likes M&M’s. (raise hands)

Ask if anyone has shoulder, elbow, wrist injuries/problems and let sit out and be timer.

Ask if anyone is allergic to peanuts before using peanut M&Ms.

Have people move seating depending on option you choose to do:

1. If demo: Ask for two volunteers who would like to win some M&Ms. Have them sit at table in front.
2. If doing entire class activity, have people sit across from each other at tables.

ROUND 1 Instructions:

Demo: Split room into “teams” of cheerleaders for each volunteer

For both variations:

- Tell volunteers/participants, “You can win an M&M each time you win an arm wrestle. You can win more than once in 30 seconds. GO!” (*Intentionally rush them into the activity.*)

Process:

“Who won?”

“Did the “loser” work just as hard?”

“How could you have won more M&Ms?” Get audience ideas until someone suggests taking turns winning. Let them do it again. See how high a number they can get.

ROUND 2 Instructions (for 2 people or entire class):

When they have the idea to cooperate, do activity again.

This time, their goal is to see how fast they can go and how high a number of M&Ms they can win.

At end: Give a bag of M&Ms to each participant. If you had volunteers do the demo, they can split the big bag.

“Chinese” Power Struggles (A demonstration)

* Idea developed and contributed by Cambra Mockabee, Parent’s Toolshop Tour Guide, 2001

Supplies needed:

“Chinese finger cuffs,” which are woven straw tubes (available in the “Interactive Activity Tool Kit”)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

Cooperation Toolset: to illustrate what a power struggle is like and how to get out of one

What to do:

When talking about power struggles, give each person a pair of Chinese finger cuffs. These are woven straw tubes. When you insert an index finger into each end and pull, they tighten and you can’t get your fingers out. Only when you push the fingers towards each other does the straw relax and release the fingers.

Explain that when involved in a power struggle, each person pulls harder and harder to get their way. They work against each other and nothing happens. They just get locked into the power struggle even more. Use the Chinese finger cuffs to demonstrate that when you try to pull your fingers outward, the cuffs get tighter and lock onto you fingers. In order to get out of them, you have to relax and be willing to meet in the middle, to give *in* a little bit. Then, your fingers slide out easily.

“Simon Says ‘Don’t’”

* Idea from Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

Supplies needed: Timer, whistle

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Cooperation, “Don’t Say ‘Don’t’” - practice the language skills

What to do:

- Have the participants pair up and stand facing each other.
- Have them decide who will be “Simon” first.

Instructions:

“This game is almost exactly like the game “Simon Says” that you played as a child:”

Round 1: (about 1 minute for Person 1, then blow whistle, switch and have partner be Simon)

- Simon will give his/her partner commands of what TO do. Simon is not allowed to use the words “Don’t, Stop, Quit or No.” If the partner hears any of those words, they are to ignore what Simon said and *not* follow the command.

Round 2: (about 1 minute for Person 1, then blow whistle, switch and have partner be Simon)

- Whoever is *not* Simon does whatever he/she wants to do. (Such as jump, stand, or walk.)
- Simon must make the partner stop that action and do an opposite action (such as “stand still, sit, or run) *without touching the partner or using the words “Don’t, Stop, Quit or No.”*

Process: (ask the group)

1. Which kinds of commands are easier to follow, those that tell you want TO do or those that tell you to stop/quit/don’t do something?
2. Which kinds of commands are easier to *give*, telling people don’t/stop/quit or telling them what you want them TO do?
3. If you think it’s easier to use don’t/no/stop/quit, but know someone is more likely to do what you want them to do if you use positive words, are you willing to make the extra effort to give descriptions that help them cooperate faster and better?

“The Individuation Backpack”

* Idea from Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

Supplies needed: backpack, rocks (optional), slips of paper (copied from statements below).

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Independence Toolset (individuation), especially in Parenting Teens class
- * Facilitator should read page 159 of *The Parent's Toolshop* prior to doing this activity

What to do:

- Pass out strips of paper to participants that have statements below on them. Ask for volunteers who are willing to read out loud. (For added effect, the statements can be taped to small rocks.)

Instructions:

1. The facilitator wears an empty backpack. He/she explains, “Children are born with a backpack on their backs. As they go through life, people put things in their backpacks—rules, roles, identities, values, and beliefs.”
2. Each person reads aloud the statement on their slip of paper and then puts the paper (attached to a rock) in the facilitator’s backpack.
3. When all statements have been read, the facilitator explains, “Some children examine and question each belief that goes into their backpack. They want control over their backpack from the toddler years on. Other children misunderstand what is put into their backpack. Later in life, problem behaviors can arise from these inaccurate beliefs. Finally, there are some children who don't question what others put into their backpack, until it becomes heavy or they realize people are sticking things in without the children knowing what the things are. By the teen years, their backpacks are getting rather heavy and teens figure, ‘If I have to carry this thing around the rest of my life, I want to know what's in it.’”
4. The facilitator takes each statement (and rock) out of the backpack, reads it again and chooses one of the following options:
 - a. Agrees with the belief/value statement and puts it back into the backpack (without the rock)
 - b. Questions the belief/value statement and decides to put it back in the backpack to examine and test (with the rock still attached)
 - c. Rejects the belief/value statement and discards the statement (and rock).

Process:

Discuss the individuation process and its healthy purpose.

Discuss the appropriate and inappropriate ways teens individuate.

Discuss how parents feel when their teens test or seem to reject their parents values or beliefs.

Discuss the power struggles parents can get into with their teens by forcing their beliefs on them.

Children should be seen and not heard.

Look both ways before you cross the street.

Education is important.

Crying is a sign of weakness.

Do it because I said so.

You're the oldest child so you have to set a good example.

Change your underwear every day in case you are in an accident.

Openly Model Behavior

* Idea from Heidi Stolz, PhD, Cal-State, San Bernardino

Supplies needed: none

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Independence, “Openly Modeling Behavior”

What to do:

- Show the group how grip a golf club, having them follow your demonstration. (You can use another task — as long as it is something that it’s *very* helpful to have someone *show* you)
- Next, select someone you think can do the following:
 - Ask the person to count the windows in his/her house — but they must say out loud *every single thought* they have to do this *mental* task.

Process:

- Emphasize that some tasks are visual and be learned through modeling behavior
- Others are internal skills or mental processes children need to learn.
- Have the group list these types of tasks (i.e., organization, procrastination, anger management)
- For internal tasks or mental processes, parents need to use the “Openly Model Behavior” tool in the Independence Toolset
- Explain the tool and apply it to examples they gave.

Angry Volcano Eruptions

* Contributed by Lynn Stephens, Director of Program Services at Okaloosa-Walton Child Care Services, Ft. Walton Beach, Florida.

Supplies Needed:

2 clay/playdoh volcanos
2 baby jars (inside center of volcanos)
salt
baking soda
vinegar with red food coloring

Directions:

- Make two volcanos out of clay or playdoh
- Place one baby jar inside the center of each volcano
- Pour a small amount of colored vinegar in the jar
- Describe each type of anger as you demonstrate the reaction.
 - “Flash fires are . . .” (Put one spoonful of soda in the flash fire volcano to cause immediate eruption)
 - “Smoldering embers are . . .” (put in several spoonfuls of salt, which cause no reaction, as you describe a frustrating day).
 - put in one spoonful of soda for the “final straw,” causing the Smoldering Ember eruption.

“Toothpaste”

- * Idea from Sharon Hicks, Bradford, Ohio

Supplies needed: a paper plate and tube of toothpaste per participant

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Communication or anger management

What to do:

- Give each person a paper plate and tube of toothpaste
- Instruct each person to draw a picture on their plate with the toothpaste — use *all* of it.
- Have group members share their drawing.
- Then ask members to put the toothpaste back in the tube. Wait. Let them struggle.

Process:

- Make the analogy that once words are spoken or anger unleashed, you can't take them back or put them back in, like toothpaste.

“Draw Development”

- * Idea from Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

Supplies needed: Flip charts (1 per developmental stage), set of markers/group (at least 4 colors)

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- PU (Problem behavior that is Unintentional), Developmental stages and common PU behaviors

What to do (set-up and prep):

- Prepare 7 flip chart sheets with the developmental stages (from book) written at the top. There will be 7 if a larger group. If small, do 3 groups (1. inf/todd/pre, 2. elem, 3. M/HS.)
- Break up class into small groups, one for each developmental stage/flip paper. Have at least 2 people per group.

Instructions to participants:

Round Robin Wall Version

- *Hang* the flip paper on the walls of the room. Each group stands in front of one flip sheet.
- Group writes developmental tasks of children that age. Give 2 minutes each paper (or until each group has written 2-3 ideas) Then rotate to next flip paper until all groups have contributed ideas to each stage.
- *Optional round (all the way around again): common behaviors you see as a result of that developmental tasks or issue*

Small Group Version

- *At a table*, give each group a flip chart paper and markers.
- Draw the outline of a child of that age/stage that will fill about half the page (so room to write inside and outside outline.) They can get creative and add faces, hair, accessories, etc.
- *Inside* the outline. Write the developmental tasks/issues of children that age.
- *Outside* the outline/child, write the common PU behaviors you might see as a result of the developmental tasks/issue. (i.e., Inside = control body. Outside = potty training accidents)

Each group shares as a ways of conveying/teaching content. Instructors expands, explains and does Q&A.

“What Were You *Thinking?*”

- * Idea from Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

Supplies needed: for each pair of participants

About 20 photos of children doing something dangerous or “wrong” but all in the name of “fun”
(They are either 100% Parent problems or Child/Parent “Combo” problems.)

- * You can purchase a set of hilarious photos in the Photo Pack

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Misbehavior Toolset, practice identifying misbehavior and applying PASRR Formula.

What to do:

Do this activity as a large group, if possible.

- If you have a large group and an LCD projector and laptop, display photos on screen
- If you do not have A/V and a small group, sit in a circle so everyone can see each other and pass cards out to each participant until all the cards are distributed.

Show each picture to the group. After the hilarious roar of laughter dies down, have each participant take a turn (1 per photo) telling the group:

1. What type of misbehavior do you think this is? PU, PO-Attention, PO-Power, PO-Revenge, PO-Giving Up
2. What would you say, using PASRR Formula (Acknowledge feelings, set limits, redirect using best 5-star tool from Misbehavior Table. No Discipline if you haven't covered content.)

“Cuff ‘Em”

* Idea from Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

Supplies needed: handcuffs

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Discipline Toolset — at the very beginning of the topic or before the discipline versus punishment content

OPTION #1: No volunteer - quick, no/low risk

What to do:

- Hold up handcuffs and say, “Imagine that when you sat down for this workshop you got handcuffed to your chair:
 - How would you feel about me?
 - How well could you concentrate on what you were learning?
 - Many people believe people have to suffer in order to learn a lesson. Does added suffering help or prevent learning?
- Tie in with difference between discipline and punishment and that when we add suffering, it:
 - Turns the discipline into punishment
 - Shifts the focus from the lesson they need to learn to who is making them suffer

OPTION #2: With a volunteer — takes longer, is high risk, but powerful

It is best to do this version of the activity if you are teaching a full-length class where you’ve had a chance to get to know the participants, you know one of the participants or you have a good sense a participant will play along and not get their feelings hurt.

Instructions:

- Explain to the volunteer ahead of time in private what you will do, without the class knowing your plan
- The volunteer is to “act up” during class. They could criticize the instructor or talk to others during class.
- The first time, threaten to punish the volunteer if he/she does this again.
- Volunteer does it again.
- Say in an angry voice, “I’m tired of you (the misbehavior). I’m going to teach you a lesson so everyone knows I mean business.”
- Put a chair in front of the room
- Tell the volunteer to sit in the chair
- Ask the volunteer his/her age
- Handcuff the volunteer to the chair
- Tell the volunteer he/she has to sit in the chair and not talk or move 1 minute for every year of his/her age.
- Check the audience’s reaction. If they are laughing and not taking you seriously, continue with your presentation. If/when audience seems serious, concerned or distracted from lesson, process.

Process:

- Tell the class that the volunteer was in on the ruse.
- Ask the volunteer the same questions and make the same points as option 1, except ask if he/she would feel humiliated.
- Tie in activity with discipline versus punishment — and using timers with time-outs. Ask volunteer, “Would you have a hard time not talking or moving 1 minute for every year of your age?” After his/her response, “If adults would have a hard time doing this, imagine how children feel during power/control timeouts.”
- End the activity with a handshake, pat on the back, hug (if appropriate) of the volunteer to show they were in on it and there are no hurt feelings.

Interactive Activities: contributed by Dorothy Balancio, PhD

Trust Walk

- 1 blindfolded & mute
- 1 leads and tells story 3-5 minutes (happened within 6-9 past months, must convey so listener experiences as much as possible)
- switch
- De-brief: must trust before listen. Second listener often more sensitive to making listener comfortable first, because were distracted when first listener

Venters & Conquerors

- 1 Venter (Feelings & Ask non-factual questions) validate with no solutions
- 1 Conqueror (factual questions and offer solutions/advice) instruct to solve
- 1 observer (optional)
- + 1 “problem” sharer.
- Have one (V or C) leave and “problem” shares. Then trade places. Debrief: more helpful if V first? Which style prefer? Why?

Sibling Roles or Gender roles and Perceptions

- break into M/F or First/Middle/Youngest/Only children
- What do you think other group will say bothers them most about you? (I.e. Men list what women will say bothers them most about men)
- Prioritize the list
- Come together and compare and see if accurate.

Collaboration:

Oranges

- 2 people - brief separately
- 1 must have ALL juice of the orange (1 orange or 1 crate)
- 1 must have ALL rind of the orange
- give 3-5 minutes to work out a solution/agreement
- can't split the orange—need it all
- collaborative solution = 1 takes juice and 1 takes rind.

Ending With a Bang!

* Idea from Lynn Stephens, BA, MEd., Director of Program Services at Okaloosa-Walton Child Care Services in Ft. Walton Beach, FL.

Supplies needed: uninflated balloons, review questions below cut into strips

Session(s) to use this exercise and purpose it serves:

- Review activity for Early Childhood Educators Topic Packet
- Review activity for end of full-length parenting class
- Review activity for any topic program or parenting class!

What to do:

- Cut review questions into strips and place in uninflated balloons. Inflate balloons and tie. (paper strips are now inside inflated balloon.)

Instructions:

- As a review activity have participants pop the balloons and answer the review questions. Give each participant one or more inflated balloons to pop.
- The balloon “popper” can read the question and answer the question or the entire class can volunteer answers.
- Note: Any number of questions can be added to the review questions to apply to any Toolbox or Toolset.

Review Questions for Strips:

What are two types of over-controlling parenting (or teacher/caregiver) styles?

What are two types of under-controlling parenting (or teacher/caregiver) styles?

How do you determine if a problem is a Parent (Caregiver) or Child Problem?

What is PO behavior?

What is PU behavior?

What is self-esteem?

What is descriptive encouragement?

Why is praise not as effective as encouragement?

Why are stickers/behavior charts an ineffective motivator for positive behavior?

How can we help children be more independent and self-sufficient?

What are the steps in F-A-X listening?

What causes anger?

How can you break the anger cycle?

What are the four purposes of PO behavior?

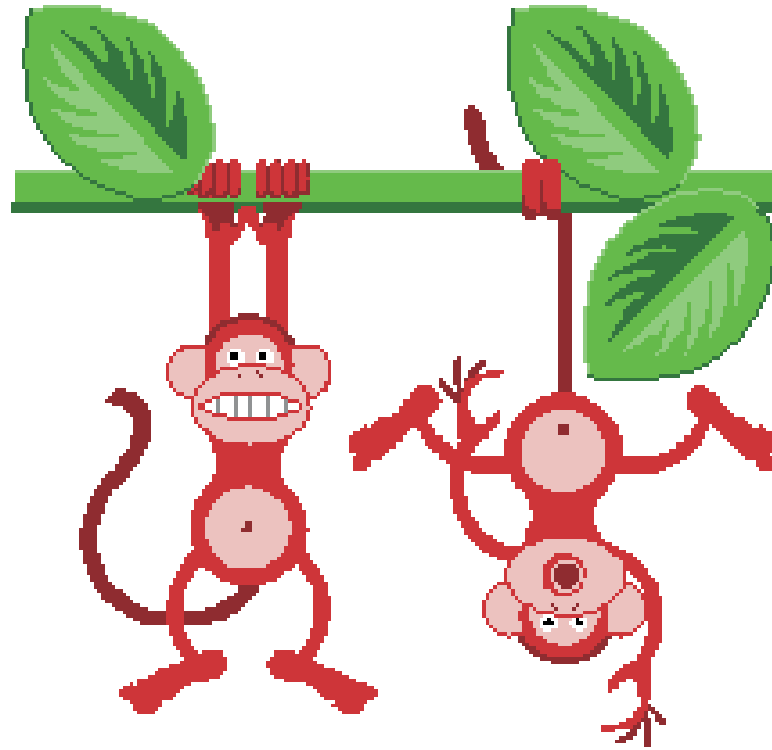
What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

What is the difference between punishment time-outs and appropriate use of time-outs?

When can time-out be used effectively?

How long should time-out be?

Notice Me!
Involve me!

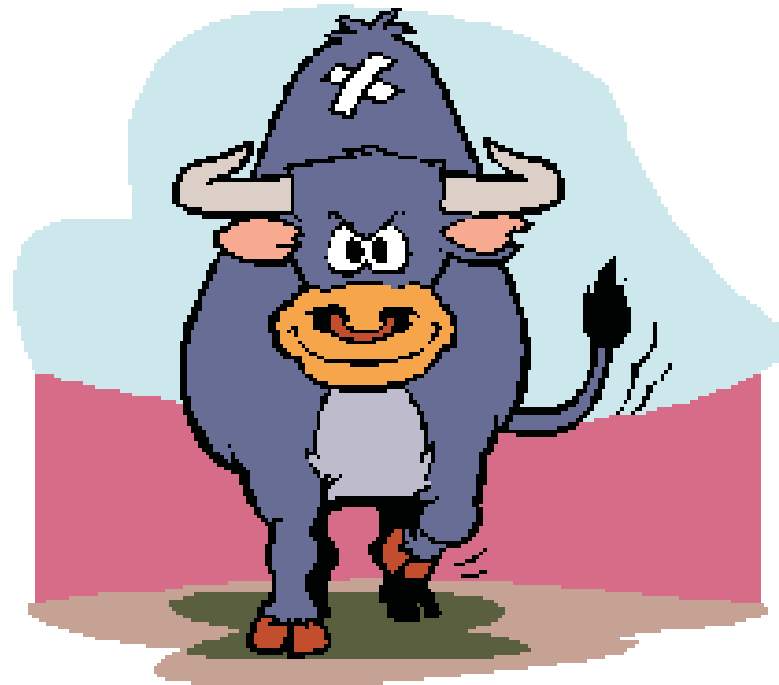


I want some control!
Give me choices!



I'm hurt!

Listen and rebuild trust.



Believe in me!

Encourage me!

