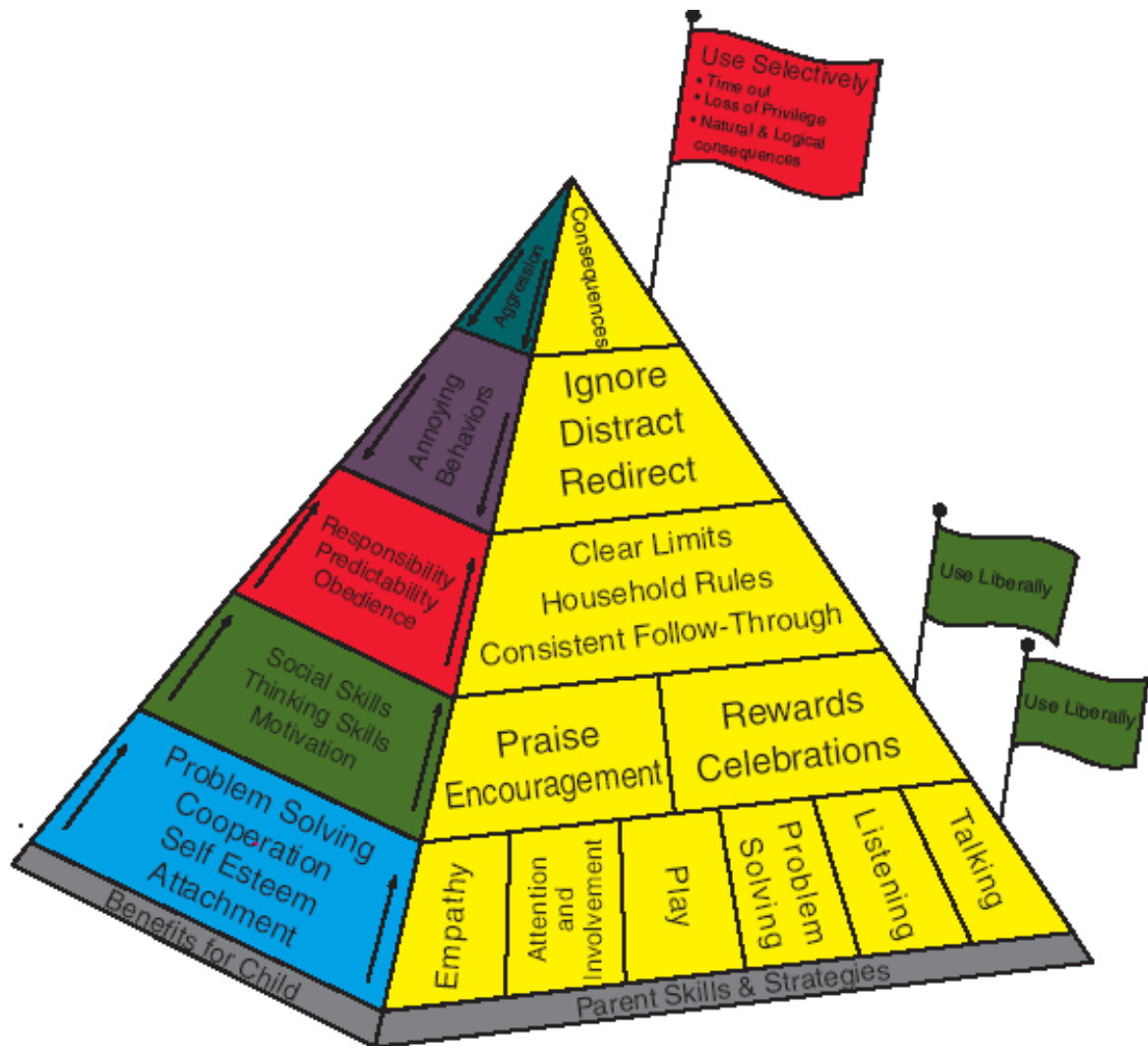


PARENTING PYRAMID



HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR

There are two ways to decrease the frequency of your child's undesirable behaviour:

- 1) Increase his/her desirable behaviour**
- 2) Decrease his/her undesirable behaviour**

The advice in this leaflet is divided in two phases:

- Phase 1 : Child Game
Phase 2 : Parent Game

The focus of the Child Game is to increase the time your child spends behaving in a friendly and co-operative way. This will leave less time for them to behave in ways you dislike and the skills learned are essential for the second phase in which we focus on teaching your child to comply with what you say.

What Phase 1 skills can do

1. You can teach your child which behaviours you like, so that he/she can do them more often. Punishing bad behaviour only tells your child what you don't like.
2. You can learn to observe your child's behaviour closely and to notice good things that he/she does. You will find your child has many desirable behaviours, not just undesirable ones.
3. These skills can help you to relax and have fun playing with your child. This will help to make time you spend with your child "quality" time.
4. As your child begins to enjoy being with you more, he/she will try harder to please you by doing things you like.
5. You can be a model of good behaviour for your child.

What you will learn

1. You will learn to give your attention after desirable behaviour.

You will specifically learn two types of positive attention:

- (a) Describing your child's behaviour
- (b) Praising or rewarding

2. You will learn when not to give your attention to your child (ignoring after undesirable behaviour). Remember that ignoring can only be used when the behaviour is not harmful or destructive. Your child must be kept safe.

3. You will learn consistent use of attention and ignoring.

This advice is based on research that shows:

- (i) Much of a child's difficult behaviour is **LEARNED**.
- (ii) If behaviour can be learned, it can also be **UNLEARNED**.
- (iii) We can improve children's behaviour by:
 - **INCREASING** their friendly and co-operative behaviour
 - **DECREASING** their unfriendly and unacceptable behaviour
- (iv) Being **REWARDING** to a child when they are behaving well will make it more likely that they will behave well again soon.
- (v) **ATTENTION** is rewarding to children.
- (vi) Children will work for attention, **ESPECIALLY** from **PARENTS**.
- (vii) Shouting, nagging and hitting **ARE** attention too.
- (viii) **PUNISHMENT** may stop behaviours, but it doesn't teach your child what you want them to do instead.

SO CATCH YOUR CHILD BEING GOOD AND GIVE THEM ATTENTION AND PRAISE.

PHASE 1 : THE CHILD GAME

In this phase the advice will help:

- Parents and children to be friends
- Parents to control children

PLAY

Try to find 10 or more minutes each day to play with your child.

The child chooses a few toys (this increases the child's interest)

You both play together for ten minutes.

DO's that are helpful for this game:

- DO Praise
 - "Clever girl"/"Good boy"
 - "You're putting all the bricks away, well done"
- DO Ask the child what they want YOU to do. (It is their special play time)
- DO Join in with the child's game
- DO Copy
- DO Smile
- DO Cuddle or touch
- DO Ignore silliness and other behaviour you don't want, providing it is safe to do so.
- DO Give attention
 - Say what the child is doing:
 - "You're putting the animals into the farm".
 - "Here comes the red bus".
 - Say how they appear:
 - "John – you're smiling so much today".
 - Say where they are:
 - "You're sitting next to the doll's house".

DON'Ts

- DON'T Give commands }
- DON'T Ask questions }
- DON'T Teach } These interrupt for control the child's play.
- DON'T Criticise }
- DON'T Say no }

PRACTICING FOLLOWING AND GIVING ATTENTION

Rules for the Child's Game

1. **Child's Activity** – Allow your child to choose the activity (not board game). Do not introduce any new toys or arrangements into his/her play. If your child changes activities, follow along but do not change the activity yourself.
2. **Follow** – Watch with interest what your child is doing.
3. **Give attention** – Describe enthusiastically what he/she is doing.
Attention can be thought of as a running commentary on your child's activity.
4. **Join and copy** – Take part in your child's play by handing him/her materials or taking turn. Be careful not to begin organising the activity yourself. Another way of joining in is copying his/her play and noises. Remember that your child's activity is to be the focus of your attention, so keep describing their play while you join in. You can also imitate what your child says. This lets them know you are interested in what they are doing.
Ask what your child wants you to do. This shows the child very clearly that they are leading the play.
5. **No commands or questions about what the child is doing** – don't ask any questions about what your child is doing or tell them what you think they should do. This interrupts and/or controls the child's play.
6. **No teaching** – Don't use this time to teach your child or to test their knowledge.

EXAMPLES OF GIVING ATTENTION

Descriptions of the Child's Activity: Some examples:

1. "You've got a round block"
2. "You found me"
3. "You're playing quietly"

Although the next three examples do not mention the child specifically they comment on what the child is playing with at the moment.

4. "Here comes the bus"
5. "That's a long road"
6. "The tower is getting bigger"
7. CHILD: (picks up the book)
PARENT: "Oh, you've got the book"
8. CHILD: (registers 10p on the till)
PARENT: "That's 10 pence"
9. CHILD: (building with bricks)
PARENT: "You will have them all built before long"

Descriptions of where the child is: Some examples

1. "There you are"
2. "You're hiding behind the curtain"
3. "You're sitting by the doll's house"

Descriptions of the child's appearance: Some examples

1. "Oh, Johnny. You're all flushed"
2. "You're smiling so much today"
3. "You're wearing your red top today"

You can give attention for desirable behaviour throughout the day – the more the better.

Remember:

Your child chooses the activity;

You are to praise, give attention to and follow desirable behaviour;

There should be some imitation and participation on your part;

No questions, commands or teaching should take place.

PRAISE AND REWARDS

1. **Labelled verbal praise** – this includes statements of exactly what your child did that you liked, e.g. “Good boy for picking up the bricks”. This helps your child to know how you would like them to behave and so it should be used more often than unlabelled verbal praise.
2. **Unlabelled verbal praise** – although this does not tell your child exactly which behaviour is being rewarded e.g. “That’s great”.
3. **Physical rewards** – such as hugs, kisses, pats and so on, can be paired with praise to make it even more powerful.

Praise and rewards are not supposed to replace attention. Rather they are to be used together. Remember that they are both types of positive attention.

EXAMPLES OF PRAISE AND REWARDS

Praise: some examples

1. “I like it when you
2. “That’s a beautiful” – whatever the child is making.
3. “Good boy for” – picking up the bricks, doing what I asked.
4. “Hey, you’re terrific, you”
5. That’s great, it really looks like
6. “Wow!”
7. “That’s really good, I wish I could do that.”
8. “You’re doing just what Mummy wants you to do”.
9. “You’re stepping round (the dog) so well”.
10. “My! That (road, tower) was so nice”.
11. “You do a good job at”
12. “That’s very nice (or good)”. (whilst pointing at the object)
13. “You’re such a big boy/girl when you”
14. “Mummy’s very proud of you for”
15. “Look at what nice things you do”.
16. “Those (pictures, patterns) are really pretty”.
17. “I like playing this with you”.
18. “This is such fun”.
19. “You’re so good for closing the door quietly”./ “You’re so good for not slamming the door”.
20. “Thanks for clearing your bowl straight away”.
21. “I’m really pleased that you talked quietly with Jane”. / “I’m really pleased that you and Jane played without shouting”.
22. One word “quickies”: “Beautiful” / “Fine” / “Great” / “Super” / “Brilliant”

Physical rewards: some examples

1. Pat arm, shoulder
2. Hug
3. Rub head
4. Squeeze arm or waist
5. Give a kiss

PRAISE AND REWARDS SHOULD ALWAYS BE PAIRED WITH TELLING A CHILD EXACTLY WHAT THEY DID OR ARE DOING THAT PLEASES YOU.

IGNORING

This is a major way to decrease your child's inappropriate behaviour. However, it is very important that you use ignoring every time the particular behaviour you are targeting occurs, otherwise the behaviour will become worse instead of better.

There are a number of things you should do when you ignore your child's unwanted behaviour:

1. **Give no eye contact or other expressions of disapproval**, such as frowns, raised eyebrows, etc.

Turn your head away, so that you can watch from the corner of your eye.

Cross your arms and, if necessary, your legs.

All of these methods prevent you giving attention to your child.

2. **Make no verbal contact**

Once you have started ignoring, do not say anything to your child. If you do, you are no longer ignoring him/her, instead you are rewarding your child for behaving inappropriately.

Make no physical contact

You may have to stand up or even leave the room to avoid giving physical attention to your child.

3. **Do something distracting to help you ignore.**

4. **Stop ignoring, as soon as the inappropriate behaviour has stopped.**

Give attention or praise for the first appropriate behaviour your child displays.

When you ignore a problem behaviour, it may get worse before it gets better.

Remember, there are some behaviours you should not ignore. For example, whenever there is chance of harm to the child, someone else, or to property, a punishment procedure is appropriate.

PHASE 2 : THE PARENT GAME

As already noted, there are two ways to decrease the frequency of your child's undesirable behaviour:

1. Increase his/her desirable behaviour, using the skills you learned in Phase 1;
2. Decrease his/her undesirable behaviour, using the skills you will now learn in Phase 2.

Phase 2 skills are used in two ways:

1. To get your child to do the things that you tell him to do;
2. To get your child to stop doing the things you find undesirable.

Be sure to:

1. Continue to praise and give attention to your child's desirable behaviour;
2. Continue to ignore your child's minor problem behaviour;
3. Be consistent with the behaviours you decide to ignore.

Phase 2 skills are effective only when used in combination with Phase 1 skills

You will need to:

1. Give clear commands – one at a time – say what you want them to do – put it in a positive way;
2. Praise your child's compliance with your commands;
3. Say "I will count to five and then" (e.g. child who will not put shoes on goes out in bare feet);
4. Give warnings;
5. Back up your instruction with logical and natural consequences – this has to be within reason and preferably discussed with the child sometime before the conflict happens.
6. Have clear rules and be consistent;
7. Consider withdrawal of privilege (e.g. no watching TV for the day)
8. Instead of shouting or smacking, it would be better to use Quiet Time or "Time Out". See separate advice.

Good luck