

# HANDOUTS

## Explosive & Defiant Children and Adolescents

presented by  
**Ray Levy, Ph.D.**

### AGENDA

#### Monday

- 8:15a.m. Registration (continental breakfast)
- 9:00 **A New Approach for Explosive and Defiant Children & Adolescents**
- Differentiating defiance from other childhood disorders
  - Causes of defiance
- 10:20 Break (coffee & tea)
- 10:35 **The Vicious Cycle of Defiance Getting the Most Out of the First Session**
- Retaining control of therapy
- Noon Lunch (on your own)
- 1:30 p.m. **Teaching Appropriate Behaviors and Effective Coping Skills**
- Why remediating skills work better than punishment
  - Consequences vs. Punishment
- 2:45 Break (snack, soda, coffee/tea, iced tea)
- 3:00 **Making Consequences More Effective “The Academies”**
- 4:30 Adjournment (pick up one day certificates)

**Ray L. Levy, Ph.D., P.C. & Associates**  
17480 Dallas Parkway, Suite 230  
Dallas, TX 75287  
Phone (972) 407-1191  
Fax (972) 407-1305  
levyporter@aol.com  
www.drraylevy.com

#### Tuesday

- 8:15a.m. Registration (continental breakfast)
- 9:00 **The 4 Types of Consequences**
- Why consequences often ‘don’t work’ for these kids
- 10:20 Break (coffee & tea)
- 10:35 **Developing a Relationship with Challenging Children**
- Why ‘praise’ and ‘building self-esteem’ will backfire
  - Reversing demoralization
  - The use of play
- Noon Lunch (on your own)
- 1:15p.m. **Solving the Motivation Problem**
- Determining whether the client is a *Camel* or a *Horse*
  - Consequences as *Motivators* vs *Teachers*
  - Motivators for children
  - Motivators for adolescents
- 2:30 Break (snack, soda, coffee/tea, iced tea)
- 2:45 **Disengaging Defiance and Avoiding Power Struggles: 4-Step Approach**
- Zip it and clip it: Going ‘brain dead’ to avoid arguments
  - Cool it: how to stay calm and in control; predict, prepare, prevent
  - Giving effective choices
  - Never telling them the lesson they just learned: avoiding the ‘face-saving’ battle
- 4:15 Adjournment (pick up certificates)

Sponsored by  
**J&K Seminars, LLC**  
1861 Wickersham Lane  
Lancaster, PA 17603-2327  
(800) 801-5415  
JK@JKSeminars.com  
www.jkseminars.com

# Table of Contents

## **Myths**

**Characteristics of Strong-Willed Children**

**Motivation**

**Parenting Styles that Exacerbate Defiance**

**Noncompliant Interaction**

**Getting the Most Out of the 1st Session**

**Skill Building: “The Practice Academies”**

**How to Design an Academy**

**Academies Worksheet**

**Guided Compliance**

**Punishment Vs. Consequences**

**4 Types of Consequences**

**Worksheet for Consequences**

**Time Out**

**Hold Down**

**Developing Relationships with Challenging Children**

**Tightening the Bond Worksheet**

**Acknowledgment vs. Praise**

**Reinforcing Small Changes**

**Reinforcing Small Changes Worksheet**

**Yeah, Do More of That!**

**Disengaging Defiance**

**Zip it and Clip it:**

**Pulling In The Reins**

**Cool It**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

# Myths

- If I can just figure out why he acts like he does, then I can stop his misbehavior.
- My child's happiness is my responsibility.
- He must know what the rules are exactly before we give him a consequence.
- He's got to discharge his anger somewhere, so it's o.k. if he yells at me after school.
- I can't do anything because over at his father's (or mother's) house, they let him get away with anything.
- Maybe he's bipolar (or the diagnosis of the day).
- Why doesn't he/she just get it? We've had the same routine for years!
- I don't know what he can and can't do because of his disability, or what he can control and what he can't control. I just don't feel comfortable giving him consequences.
- If I repeat it enough times, it will just sink in and he'll get it!
- He needs to take responsibility for his actions!

---

Ray Levy, Ph.D. & Associates 17480 Dallas Parkway, Suite 230

Dallas, TX 75287; (972) 407-1191 Fax (972) 407-1305

e-mail: [levyporter@aol.com](mailto:levyporter@aol.com)

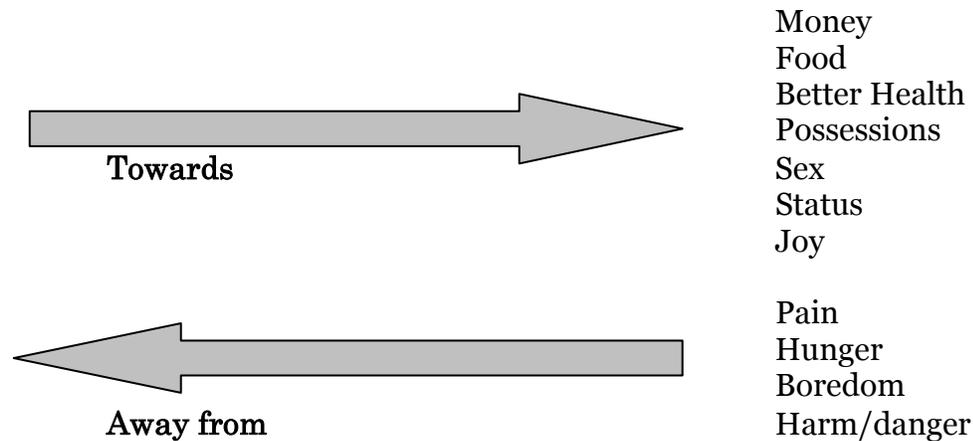
©2001,2002, Ray Levy

# Characteristics of Strong-Willed Children

1. A dominant theme in personality is need for control.
2. Blind to their role in problems.
3. Ability to tolerate negativity.
4. Socially exploitive.
5. Competitive
6. Difficulty in acknowledging sadness.

# MOTIVATION

❖ People are either motivated towards a desired experience/goal or away from an unpleasant/unwanted experience.



❖ Children are primarily motivated towards one of three goals:



❖ **Oppositional children are primarily motivated towards control. Use this desire for control to change their behavior. Give them as much control as possible by providing choices. When the child makes inappropriate choices, reduce the range of choices. This is called “pulling in the reins.”**

# Parenting Styles That Exacerbate Defiance

1. Parenting out of control/order.
2. Parenting out of convenience/efficiency.
3. Parenting out of fear.
4. Parenting out of friendship.

---

Ray Levy, Ph.D. & Associates 17480 Dallas Parkway, Suite 230

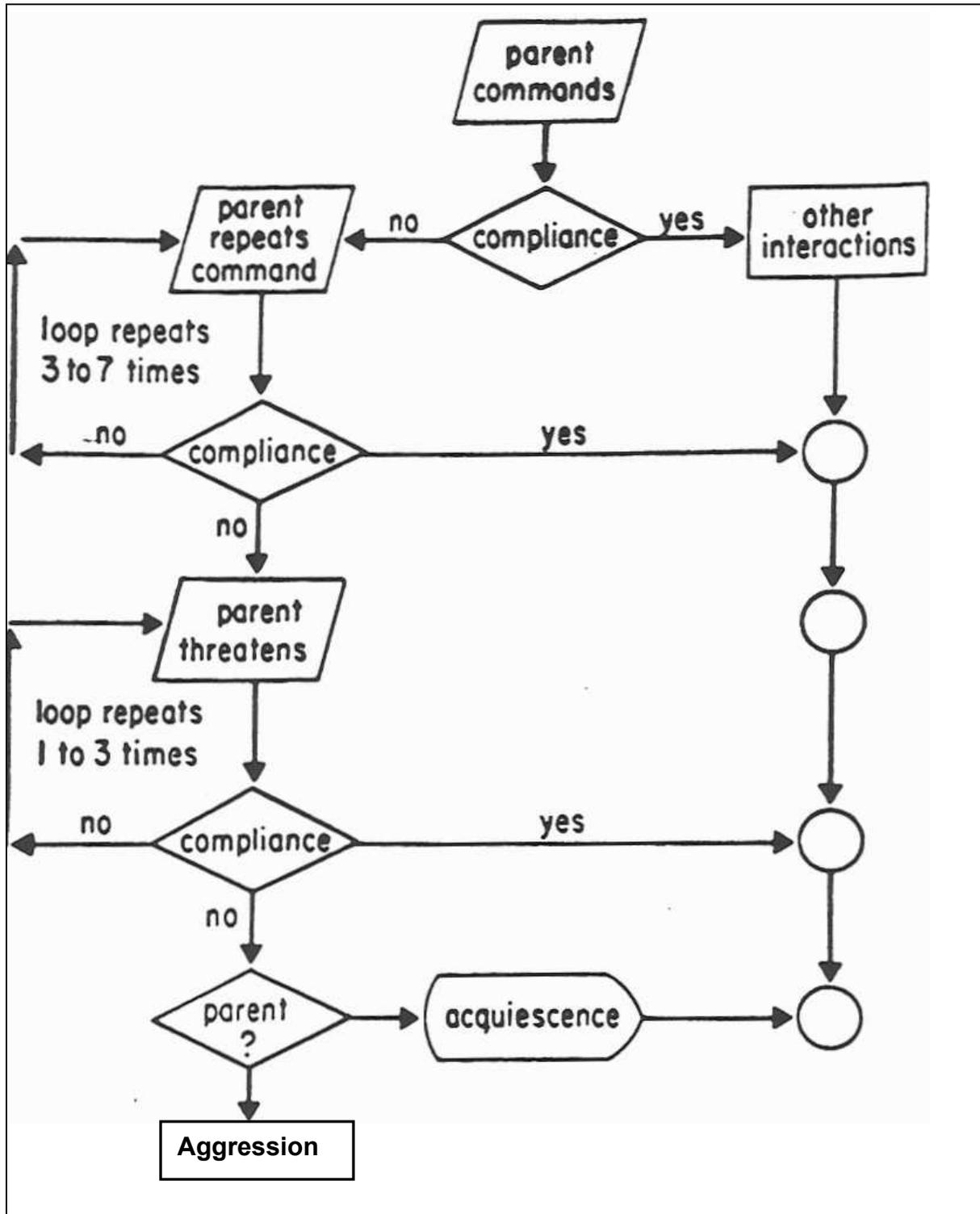
Dallas, TX 75287; (972) 407-1191; Fax (972) 407-1305

e-mail: [levyporter@aol.com](mailto:levyporter@aol.com)

©2001, 2002 Ray Levy, Ph.D.

# Diagram of Noncompliant Interaction

Reprinted by permission Guilford Press



# Getting the Most Out of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session

## 1. *Define goals*

- a. Find out what specifically children and parents want.
- b. Help them clarify vague complaints into specific problems.
- c. Ask what behaviors they want to see *instead*.
- d. How will they know therapy is over?

## 2. *Redefine therapy*

- a. Intense kids need intense interventions.
- b. Find out what parents perceptions of therapy are.
- c. How do they expect you to achieve these goals; individual, family, group?

## 3. *Retain control of the session*

- a. Kids may try to control session with their behavior.
- b. Adults often try to control sessions by dictating how you will work.

# Skill Building: “ The Practice Academies”

One of the most successful techniques to use with the ADHD and/or defiant child is to help them *practice* the skills and procedures that they fail to use. We refer to these practices as "Practice Academies". The purpose of an “academy” is to practice a desired behavior so that the child *really* learns it. Having the child learn to implement a procedure/skill by repeatedly practicing it, becomes both a consequence and an ordeal, but most of all, a *skill builder*. Here’s how to do a Practice Academy:

## 1. Name That Practice Academy

When a child misbehaves or fails to engage in a desired behavior, calmly say to them what ***their*** behavior is telling you about what they need, ***not*** what you are going to do. Figure out what behavior you WANT and start your sentence with, "Your behavior is telling me you need a (desired behavior) Practice Academy."

**For example:** (said with sadness or unemotionally) "Uh oh! Your behavior is telling me that you need a ‘Cleaning your room’ Practice Academy."

- ❖ **Remember: *It Is How You Say It.*** (Use sadness in your voice, or at least be calm. This is 9/10<sup>th</sup> of the battle, otherwise it can turn into a struggle between you and the child.)

## 2. Pick A Time

Select a time when it would be convenient for **you** to supervise them. They need to practice until they have clearly mastered the procedure/skill **and** are bored. The best time to get their attention and make the learning more effective is during a time when your child would rather be doing a favorite activity: such as, playing with friends, watching their favorite television program, or going to soccer practice. If you are a teacher, the best time may be during recess, lunch, or after school. Determine which time you think will have the most impact on the child.

## 3. Practice, Practice, Practice!

Practice repeatedly (e.g. 5-8 times or more), until they have clearly mastered the procedure/skill **and** are bored. Having them practice until they are bored helps them learn the skill better since they are learning to handle their frustration and complete a task at the same time. After all, that is what the problem was in the first place.

- ❖ Remember, practice doesn’t make perfect. ***Perfect practice makes perfect.*** So have your child practice the task perfectly many times, and with a good attitude.

## HERE'S HOW AN ACADEMY MIGHT GO:

**Problem behavior:** *Your child is constantly late for school because they are not getting up and getting ready on school mornings.*

1. You respond, "Uh oh! What your behavior is telling me is that you need a 'getting up and ready' Practice Academy. Don't worry about it, I have time to let you practice it this afternoon after school."
2. After school, instead of letting them watch T.V. or play outside, instruct them to that it is time to do their Academy. (\*The more favored the activity, the greater the impact of the Practice Academy.)
3. Have your child get in his/her pajamas, turn the lights out and lie in bed. After 30 seconds, you announce that it is time for them to get up. With a good attitude, he/she will get up, get dressed, brush teeth, come downstairs, pretend to eat cereal, get backpack on and tell you that they are ready. ***You must monitor this entire process.***
4. Next, tell them they did a good job and to "undo" it and get back in bed. Your child is then to put the backpack away, go upstairs, undress, get in pajamas and crawl into bed pretending that they are asleep. At that point, you again wait 30 seconds and announce it is time to wake up and they start the entire process over again.

**Be patient.** Do not expect children to have mastered the desired behavior or skill after one "academy." A Practice Academy may need to be repeated several times over several days and again, at various times throughout the year. Only have them practice when they show the problem behavior. Permanent behavior change will occur gradually.

*The purpose of a Practice Academy is  
two-fold:*

- ◆ **To teach your child a skill**  
- and/or -
- ◆ **To motivate your child to use that skill**

# How to Design an Academy

1. What is the problem behavior?
  - a. E.g.: “He refuses to start his homework.”
  - b. “She tantrums and yells whenever told ‘no’.”
  - c. “He’s never ready in the morning.”
  
2. What behavior do you want to see instead? Don’t say what you don’t want to see; e.g., don’t hit. This isn’t clear to your child. Be specific on what behavior you desire.
  - a. E.g.: “I want you to sit down and start your homework 20 minutes after you get home.”
  - b. “I want you to let me know you are upset by using appropriate words and then doing what I say.”
  - c. “I want you to be ready for school by 7:10 a.m.”
  
3. Ask yourself can the desired behavior be practiced? If it can, determine a time to practice an Academy. Remember, you can delay an Academy to up to 3 days later. Have your child practice during a time when both of you are calm and it is inconvenient for him/her.

# Academies Worksheet

**Situation:** Your son is often not ready to go to school on time. Each day you have to nag and badger him to wake up, brush his teeth, etc. You believe that he wouldn't get through the 1<sup>st</sup> step of getting ready if you didn't constantly hound him. In addition, you often end up yelling at him and you are frequently late to work.

1. Is this a behavior that you can do an Academy on?
2. How would you set it up? What would you say to your son?
3. Could you predict this behavior, and therefore be prepared?
4. What steps do you want to have him practice? Outline them.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f.
5. When would be the best time to have your son practice it?
6. What if he refuses – what is your backup plan?
7. What will you say to him at the end of the Academy?
8. Do you think your child will need only one Academy?

# GUIDED COMPLIANCE

**Guided Compliance** is a technique for use with children 3 years and older to increase their compliance and develop better attending skills.

**1) Give a command.**

- ❖ Give small, simple tasks that will take less than 10 seconds to complete.
- ❖ The command should be a directive and not a request.
- ❖ Give one command at a time.
- ❖ Use an even tone of voice.

Example: "Come here and let me tie your shoe."  
"Hand me the salt."

**2) If your child follows the command, praise him/her.**

**3) If the child doesn't follow the command within 5 seconds:**

- ❖ Repeat the command in exactly the same wording and tone.
- ❖ Physically guide the child through the action you have requested.
- ❖ Compliment the child as if he/she had completed the command the first time.
- ❖ Do not repeat the command without physically guiding them.
- ❖ The only difference between the first and the second command is voluntary vs. involuntary control for your child.

**4) Conditions for placing your child in time out.**

a. If your child passively resists by going limp.

-or-

b. If your child actively resists by digging in his/her heels or fights you.

Ray Levy, Ph.D., P.C. & Associates 17480 Dallas Parkway, Suite 230

Dallas, TX 75287 (972)407-1191 fax- (972)407-1305

Website: [www.DrRayLevy.com](http://www.DrRayLevy.com)

©1997 Ray Levy, Ph.D.

## ***Punishment vs. Consequences***

1. Punishment rarely teaches the child what you want them to learn.
2. Punishment is usually delivered with anger.
3. Punishment often backfires, kids will get revenge.

## 4 Types of Consequences

To make discipline easier, it helps to divide consequences into four types: **Natural, Relevant, Related** and **Significant**. These consequences are in order of effectiveness, from most to least. Consequences allow children to learn by making decisions and experiencing the natural or social outcome of those decisions. The key to the effectiveness of consequences is that they be given with respect and empathy, or sadness. Whenever possible, allow the consequence to teach the lesson and say nothing when the child realizes what s(he) has learned.

**NATURAL CONSEQUENCES**: those that allow the child to learn from the natural order of the physical world. Consequences that occur as an act of nature and not as an act of mankind. This is the most powerful and effective consequence. When possible, let the natural consequence be their teacher.

**E.g.** If a child stays up too late, he will be tired the next day. If a child goes without food, she will be hungry.

*This type of consequence cannot be given by us, only blocked.*

**E.g.** Instead of a child going hungry for lunch when they forget their lunch, we run their lunch by their school.

**RELEVANT CONSEQUENCES**: those that are directly related and relevant to the misbehavior and move a child **closer** to the desired behavior.

**E.g.** the child who is continually late getting up in the morning and ready for school, has to practice getting up and ready many times then he comes home from school, also missing play time with his friends due to the practice.

**RELATED CONSEQUENCES**: those consequences that are not directly relevant but have a “kinship” or relationship to the problem behaviors.

**E.g.** A child who has set a fire at school has to learn about fire safety, paint the fire zones, and give a presentation to his classmates

**SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES**: those consequences that are not directly related to the misbehavior, but motivate the child to perform the appropriate behavior by withdrawing or preventing certain things the child wants.

**E.g.** Time Out, or restricting time playing computer games.

# Worksheet for the 4 Types of Consequences

*What kinds of consequences are given in the following scenarios:*

1. Your two children are fighting in the backseat of the minivan. You tell them that if they continue, they won't go to Braum's later for ice cream.
2. Jeremy continually leaves his backpack in the car, on the floor of the kitchen, in the dining room, on the stairs, i.e. anywhere except where it is supposed to go.
  - a. You continually nag him to put his backpack in his room.
  - b. The next morning, when he can't find his backpack and is panicking, you don't help him find it, and instead, just say, "I'm *sorry*, but my car leaves in 3 minutes"
  - c. Later, you tell Jeremy that his behavior is telling you that he needs a "*putting his backpack in the proper place*" Practice Academy.
  - d. His father comes home and lectures Jeremy on the importance of organization and why he needs to put his backpack in his room immediately upon entering the house.
3. Your two children are fighting over a computer game and who is going to play first. As a result of their struggle, they break the control and end up throwing things at each other. The younger one comes crying to you with a bloody forehead. You:
  - a. Take the computer game away from them for a month.
  - b. Send the older one to his room for throwing something at the younger one.
  - c. Send both to their rooms.
  - d. Have each right letters of apologies and how they can handle the situation better next time
  - e. Practice negotiating with each other during an inconvenient time for both.
4. Your daughter's table manners are atrocious. It is bad enough at home, but in public, at restaurants, you are embarrassed. The more you tell her to chew with her mouth closed or to use her fork, the more she defies you and does the opposite. The natural consequence of her poor etiquette is what to you, and what to her? As a consequence, you:
  - a. Tell her that her manners are telling you that she needs etiquette lessons, which will take place sometime in the next day or so.
  - b. Tell her that if she doesn't behave, you will leave the restaurant right now!
  - c. Inform her that continued bad manners means that she can't have a sleep over this weekend because you don't want her embarrassing herself in front of her friends.
  - d. Look away, try to ignore her and make excuses for her behavior, "Oh, she has ADHD, she can't remember to use her napkin."

5. Your son is caught shoplifting at the local supermarket. As part of his sentencing:
  - a. He has to take a “first offender” course where he learns about the justice system and how to be a more responsible citizen.
  - b. You ground him in addition to being caught, because he has shown you he is not responsible to be out in public by himself.
  - c. You steal something from him.
  - d. You send him to military school.
  
6. You find out your daughter has lied to you about completing her homework. In the school conference, you find out that the problem is that she is not even writing the homework down. You:
  - a. recommend that she gets ISS, or in-school suspension
  - b. ground her at home from the TV and computer until all her work is completed
  - c. meet her after school and have her go to all her classes writing down her assignments repeatedly until she can do swiftly and with a “good attitude.”
  - d. Have her teachers email you her homework.
  
7. Bedtime is a nightmare. Every night you have to remind, prod, cajole and nag your children to put on their pj’s, brush their teeth, etc. You:
  - a. Nag, prod, and finally lose your temper and yell at them.
  - b. Tell them that what their behavior is telling you is that they need practice getting ready for bed and have them practice the following afternoon instead of going outside to play when they get home.
  - c. Move them along with a cattle prod.
  - d. Take a Valium so you aren’t as upset and barely notice.

# Time Out

Time Out is most effective in moving a child from an emotional state; such as tantruming, to a thinking state. It does not teach children new skills, only allows them time to regroup, calm down, and decide if they want to comply or not. The full name for time out is *Time Out From Positive Reinforcement*; that is, time out from positive attention and all the other interesting and fun things that children usually enjoy.

- This does not mean time out from nagging, yelling, or complaining. Be careful not to get into a pattern of timing your child out after you have been nagging or complaining, otherwise you are actually giving your child a break by taking him away from that unpleasant situation.
- Never threaten time out. If you tell a child to go to time out, follow through.
- THIS IS THE ONE BATTLE YOU DEFINITELY WANT TO WIN.**

**Example:** If you tell your child they have to go to time out and they say, "No, I'll make my bed," then tell your child, "You can make your bed after you sit in time-out." Any activity should be done only after time out is completed, including going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water. If you let them make the bed instead of going to time out, then you have lost the battle.

- Give time out with sadness or neutrality, instead of anger. This will keep the struggle from being between you and your child.

## THREE RULES FOR TIME OUT

**Rule 1. Child must serve the minimum time.** This is 1-2 minutes per year of age. This does not mean that 2 minutes per year of age is the maximum.

**Example:** An 8 year old child should be in time out for 8-16 minutes. If after 5 minutes, he/she say they are ready to get up, your response can be, "I'm glad to hear that, I'll see you in a few minutes," or you can just say nothing.

**Rule 2. Your child must be quiet before you approach him/her.** A general rule of thumb is that he/she must be quiet 2-3 minutes before you approach them. That is, your child cannot be kicking, scratching, screaming, yelling obscenities, or asking you when are they are going to get out of time out.

**Example:** You are walking towards your child in time out and he/she yells, "When do I get out?" You can walk away and say, "Oh bummer! I'll see you in a couple of minutes."

\* Exception: It is not unusual for younger children to soothe themselves by talking or singing to themselves during time out. Do not extend their time under these conditions as long as they are not being disrespectful, loud, or obnoxious.

**Rule 3. Your child cannot get out of time out until you approach him/her and ask them one question which they must answer with a "yes."** If they respond with anything besides "yes," break eye contact, turn around, and come back after the specified time has been served. Do not set a timer and let them get up when the timer goes off.

**Example:** You approach your child and say, "Are you ready to apologize for hitting your sister?" or "Are you ready to (whatever got them into time out originally)?" Wait for a "yes" before allowing them to leave time out. Silence from the child should be interpreted as a "no."

**NOTE:**

Sometimes children do not grasp the concept the first 5-10 minutes that they are in time out, and often require more time (up to an hour or more.) Children are not in jeopardy of starving or any other serious physical or psychological problems from sitting in time out for longer periods of time when they have been out of control. If time out consistently is lasting over 45 minutes, consult your therapist.

# Hold Down

The Hold Down is a process for holding your child in Time Out when they refuse to go or stay.

## **HOW TO:**

In a hold down, sit on the floor with your child sitting between your legs with their back to your chest. Keep the child as close to you as possible to avoid attempts to butt you with their head. Cross their arms (not yours) in front of them until their elbows touch. Place your legs over their legs to keep them still. Be careful not to put too much pressure or weight on their legs. While this position is difficult to describe, the child looks as if they are wearing you as an imaginary straitjacket.

## **WHEN TO USE:**

If your child refuses to go to time-out, give them the choice, "Would you like to sit in time-out by yourself or with my help?" At times, it may come down to physical force; that is, you exerting your force over your child to help them stay in time-out. Use a hold down if your child gets out of time-out before they should, refuses to go, or if they move around the floor. The criteria should be that if you can slip a piece of paper between their bottom and the floor, then your child is out of time-out.

## **THREE RULES FOR HOLD DOWNS**

The rules for hold downs are similar to the rules for time-outs.

**Rule 1. Child must serve the specified time in a hold down.** This is 30 seconds per year of age.

Example: A nine (9) year old should be held for 4-5 minutes minimum.

**Rule 2. Your child must stop struggling before they can get out of a hold down.** It is not so important that your child stop yelling or crying. Children do not like losing their independence and mobility and will often try to retain their dignity by yelling. Allow them to. Let them signal their readiness by stopping their struggling instead.

**Rule 3. They must answer "Yes" to the question, "Are you ready to sit in time-out by yourself?"** If your child says "no," tries to negotiate sitting in a different place, or gives any answer except "yes," then continue to hold them for the minimum time. If your child says "yes," then place them in time-out and let time-out start all over again.

**Note:** The sequence of events that works best is:

1. Give your child the opportunity to sit in time-out voluntarily.
2. If they will not go or stay, the next step is to hold them down.
3. Once they have completed the hold down, they must return to time-out and successfully complete it before being allowed to resume their activities.

This technique can be very helpful for both parents and children. However, it is also possible to go overboard. It is strongly recommended that you keep in close contact with your therapist and review reasons and frequencies of time-outs and hold downs.

# Developing Relationships with Challenging Children

1. Understand their strengths or “island of competence,” or find something to love about them
2. Reinforce small changes
3. Use *Acknowledgments* when praise backfires
4. Play and hugs

# Tightening the Bond Worksheet

**Identify 3 strengths or interests of your child.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Interview your child and find out what they find interesting about each one of their strengths/interests.**

**How has your child improved on that skill in the last few months?**

**Who else shares their passion or understands them? (i.e. peer, coach, teacher, etc.)**

**Think of 2 situations in the future where you will have the opportunity to acknowledge his/her strength. E.g. watching him skateboard after school.**

- 1.
- 2.

## Acknowledgment VS. Praise

TECHNIQUE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLES
<b>PRAISE</b>	<b>A comment on the child's desired/ appropriate behavior that also has a value judgment or feeling from the commentator.</b>	<b>"Oh, what a pretty picture." "You are such a good boy!"</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</b>	<b>A <u>description</u> of the child's desired/ appropriate behavior. Must be specific (video-talk) and without value or feeling statements. Give as a "hit and run" (say quickly and exit the scene or be quiet).</b>	<b>"I notice that you two boys are sitting quietly in the back seat." "You are using your napkin!"</b>

- ❖ By using acknowledgment, the child is more likely to accept the statement. With praise, a child with poor self concept is likely to reject your statement because it does not fit with his/her self-concept.
- ❖ Because acknowledging statements are short and sweet, many can be given over the course of a day, making it easier to achieve and maintain the important 10:1 ratio (ten positive statements/interactions to one negative) necessary to build a relationship.

# Reinforcing Small Changes

It is just as important for children and adolescents to know when their behavior is appropriate as it is to know when they are misbehaving. Many of these children do not know how to behave and get demoralized because they think they are doing better, yet we, their parents, just note that their behavior is still not good enough. We need to pay closer attention to the specific, concrete evidence that their behavior is improving. By doing so, we help the child exercise their common sense "muscle" and build these important skills.

**1. Decide on one specific misbehavior that you want to change.**

e.g. not getting dressed on time in the morning,

-or-

hitting little brother.

**2. Describe the behavior you would like to see your child do *instead*.**

This must be an active description of the behavior you want, not an exclusion of a behavior; such as, "not hitting anymore." ("Not hitting" is what he *won't* be doing.) What do you want your child to be doing instead?

e.g. sharing with his brother

-or-

getting dressed for school on time in the morning.

**3. Note to yourself the first sign of change:** This is the toughest step.

a. Imagine how your child is at his/her worst.

b. Ask yourself, "What would be the slightest improvement from his/her worst behavior?"

e.g. putting on one piece of clothing in the morning without you nagging him.

-or-

playing quietly with his brother for 2 minutes.

**4. Look for that smallest sign of change,** even if he/she has shown it in the past. Just observe and note that slight improvement in your child's behavior, no matter how minor it is.

**5. At a later time**, tell your child that you noticed this slight improvement.

**e.g.** In the car on the way to school, you say to your child, "You know this morning, you had your underwear and socks on without me reminding you."

-or-

"At breakfast, your little brother was trying to annoy you and you waited a little bit before you yelled back. I can see that you are trying to use self-control."

This can be stated up to 1 day after you observed the better behavior. It is best not to state it when your child is engaging in the behavior since they are expecting to hear just criticism.

**6. Monitor your child's positive changes** in a journal so you can keep track of progress and not get discouraged.

# Reinforcing Small Changes Worksheet

**Situation:** Your son comes into the house “mad at the world” because his new bicycle has a flat tire and he wanted to go to the park. He is throwing pillows in the family room and knocks over some valuable decorations off the coffee table.

1. What is the behavior you would like changed?
2. What behavior would you like to see instead?
3. What will you tell your child (when he is calm again) about the problem behavior and the desired behavior?
4. What will be the first sign of change? Be specific.
5. When will you let your child know that you saw a small change?
6. How can you change your perceptions so that you continue looking for these small changes?
7. How will you monitor you child’s positive changes?

## **Yeah, Do More of That!** **Reversing Demoralization and** **Increasing Motivation in Your Child**

Many times, in our effort to see children succeed, we will push them or require that they put in “more effort.” We comment on many aspects of their performance- trying to be constructive. Children and adolescents commonly see these comments as micromanaging, criticism, or as evidence that we care more about their grades and performance than we care about them. They frequently end up feeling demoralized and adopt a “what’s the use?” attitude.

We must remember that what we consider “helpful” comments may be perceived as criticism and negative. Our efforts to help them may result in feelings of hopelessness, a drop in morale, self-esteem, motivation and, ultimately, a strain in our relationship with them.

To reverse this drop in morale and strain in our relationship, we must:

### ***Limit the number of comments***

**First**, remember that it is better to note the positives. If you feel compelled to comment, then limit your “constructive comments” to one per event, whether it be homework, athletics, or friendship skills.

**Example:** “Keep your eye on the ball, just like you did on the last pitch.”

**Instead of:** “Keep your eye on the ball, elbow up, choke up on the bat, plant your foot, follow through, etc.”

### ***Notice movement in the right direction***

**Second**, it is most important to note behavior(s) that show your child that they are moving in the right direction (even though their performance may be far from adequate, much less, perfection.) *Without some encouragement even small changes will cease to exist.* Big changes and substantial improvements only occur from a succession of small changes.

**Example:** “I noticed you got these 4 problems of your homework done by yourself (even though child has 25 more problems to do, only comment on the ones he/she has completed.)

**Or:** “You’ve gotten both socks on without being reminded!”

### ***What behavior you want to see***

**Third**, comment when your child is doing some behavior you want to see more of, as opposed to a behavior you want to see less of.

**Example:** Your adolescent often talks to you in a disrespectful tone.

Rather than telling him/her repeatedly to **stop** talking to you in that tone, let him/her know when they are talking in a tone that you like or prefer. "There Jeremy, just now, you were talking to me in a respectful voice. I like that very much."

### ***Their actions made the difference***

**Fourth**, acknowledge that it was something different about the child's behavior that resulted in the change. You're helping them see the connection between their behaviors and the response they get.

**Example:** "Seems like you did something different to get your grade up from a 50 to a 65 in Math. Wonder what it was."

"You kept your eye on the ball and really connected!"

"When you talk to me in a respectful voice, it's much easier for me to listen to what you're saying!"

### ***Stop right there!***

**Fifth**, note their improvement, shut up and walk away. We tend to spoil the moment when we continue talking and asking them how they plan to do even better.

**Example:** "Way to go! Do more of that. You are heading in the right direction."

**Not:** "Way to go, you improved your score. Now, what are you going to do to get an 'A'?" or "See what you can do when you try harder?"

## ***Disengaging Defiance***

1. Zip it, or clip it – Go “brain dead.”
2. Cool it.
3. More choices equal fewer struggles.
4. Never tell them the lesson they just learned.

Note: Remember, our job is to prepare them for a world that exists.

## Zip it and Clip it: Avoiding Arguments

Children will naturally argue to avoid consequences. **This is a normal developmental process** and does not necessarily mean that anything is wrong with your child.

Children will do more arguing either when they are strong-willed or find you, the parent, teacher or guardian, an easy target. They do this by engaging you in ridiculous discussions, ones that often defy logic and reasoning. To avoid unnecessary arguing, respond to their attempts to quarrel with "**brain-dead phrases**," phrases that tells your child that you are **not willing** to reason with him/her.

- ❖ Do not try to get them to "understand" your position. This will only provoke more arguing. They are trying to manipulate you, not reason with you.
- ❖ Remember to respond with indifference or sadness, but never respond with anger or sarcasm since that will only encourage them to argue more.
- ❖ With adolescents, paraphrase their argument and feelings first, and then use a brain-dead phrase.

The following are just 4 "brain-dead phrases" that you can use in many different situations, and can be altered to fit the situation.

- **"Good try"**
- **"Could be so"**
- **"Thank you for letting me know how you are thinking (feeling) about that"** or (a variation) **"Sorry you feel that way"**
- **"I see"**

The following are examples of situations and brain-dead responses you can use.

1. Child disputes the facts.  
Child: "I was only 30 minutes late!" (Child was actually 2 hours late from curfew)  
Parent: [Calmly, and with a smile] **"Good try."**
2. Child challenges the rule.  
Child: "Time Out doesn't work, it's stupid."  
Parent: **"Could be so."** (said in a matter-of-fact tone)
3. Your child adamantly claims he/she was not responsible for his/her behavior.  
Child: [After he/she destroys their room in a fit of rage] "It was your fault that I wrecked my room, you made me mad."  
Parent: (with indifference, not sarcasm) **"Thanks for letting me know how you are thinking about that."** (then administers the consequences anyway)

4. Arguing about the fairness of the rule or consequences.  
Child: "That's not fair, I shouldn't be grounded for a week, I just missed one assignment."  
Parent: "**I see.**"
5. Your child personally attacks a quality of your parenting.
  - a. Your intentions  
Child: "You're mean and you're just a power junkie and you're just doing this because it makes you feel good."  
Parent: "**Thanks for letting me know how you are thinking about that.**"
  - b. Love/devotion  
Child: "You wouldn't do this to Michael, you love him more than you do me."  
Parent: "**Sorry you feel that way.**"
  - c. Values  
Child: "You're cheap, that's why you won't buy me that video game."  
Parent: (with a smile) "**Good try,**" or "**Could be so.**"
6. Your adolescent tries to bargain or negotiates about the consequences.  
Child: "O.K., I'll take the grounding, but not this weekend because I have tickets already for the Nine Inch Nail concert. I'll stay in next weekend."  
Parent: "I know that you want to go to the concert, and I'm sure you are angry and frustrated, but you are still grounded. **Good try, though.**"
7. Your child attempts to use terrorism to get you to give in.  
Child: "If you take my phone line out then I'll run away."  
Parent: (calmly) "**Sorry that you feel that you have to resort to that.**" Parent then breaks eye contact and walks away. **Never** negotiate with a terrorist.

# PULLING IN THE REINS

Pulling in the reins is a technique to decrease the struggling with your child. By giving him/her choices, and encouraging appropriate actions, your child learns that if he/she does not make a choice, you will. Pulling in the reins helps the child learn to make decisions and to be responsible for the choices he/she makes.

## HERE IS HOW TO "PULL IN THE REINS":

1. When the child's behavior is creating a problem for you, begin by giving a choice with wide parameters.  
**e.g.** Your child is complaining, nagging, and trying to get you to give in. You say, "feel free to complain all you want someplace else, or stay here and be quiet (or talk about something else).
2. If your child argues, continues to complain, and basically does not comply, do not repeat your original choice. Give him/her a new choice with narrower parameters, or rather, without the best option.  
**e.g.** "Feel free to go someplace else and complain or go to your room.  
Note: the choice of staying around you is no longer an option.
3. If your child does not comply, take away another choice, again the better of the two options, and provide him/her with a less attractive choice.  
**e.g.** (in a soft voice and with sadness) "O.K. you can go to your room or go to Time Out, which one would you prefer?"
4. If your child is still struggling with you, give them the choice of going to Time Out voluntarily or involuntarily, but you must follow through.  
**e.g.** "Would you like to go to Time Out with your feet touching the ground or not touching the ground?"
5. If your child still refuses, take him/her to Time Out and follow up with a Hold Down if necessary.

Your child will soon learn that if they don't make a decision, you will make their decisions for them. For a child who often engages in power struggles, he/she will fight to retain their decision-making abilities. Thus, after several times of "Pulling in the Reins", you will notice your child will act more quickly to make better choices, to prevent you from making the choices for him/her.

# Cool It

Predict

Prepare

Prevent

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barkley, Russell A. (1987). **Defiant Children**. New York: Guilford Press.

Barkley, Russell A. (1995). **Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete, Authoritative Guide for Parents**. New York: Guilford Press.

Cline, Foster & Fay, Jim (1990). **Parenting with Love and Logic**. Colorado Springs: Pinion Press.

Hallowell, Edward (2002). **The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness**. New York: Ballantine Books.

Kranowitz, Carol Stock (1998). **The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction**. New York: Perigee Publishing.

Kohn, Alfie (1993). **Punished by Rewards**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Levy, Ray with Smith, Kelly (2004). **I've Had It With You! From nagging to cooperation in 4 easy steps**. CD audio.

Levy, Ray with Smith, Kelly (2004). **I've Had It With That Kid! Good classroom behavior in 4 easy steps**. CD audio.

Levy, Ray & O'Hanlon, William, with Goode, T. (2001). **Try and Make Me! Simple Strategies That Turn Off the Tantrums and Create Cooperation**. Penn: Rodale Press.

O'Hanlon, William H. & Beadle, Sandy (1994). **A Field Guide to Possibility Land: Possibility Therapy Methods**. Omaha: Possibility Press.

O'Hanlon, William H. & Levy, Ray (Audio Tape). **ADHD: A New Approach**. Omaha: Possibilities Press.

O'Hanlon, William H. & Weiner-Davis, Michelle (1988). **In Search of Solutions: A New Direction in Psychotherapy**. New York: Norton Press.

Seligman, M. (1995). **The Optimistic Child**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Taffel, R. with Blau, M. (1991). **Parenting by Heart**. Reading: Addison-Wesley Press.

Turecki, S. with Tonner, L. (1989). **The Difficult Child**. New York: Bantam Books

Books and Tapes from the Cline/Fay Institute can be obtained by calling **800-338-4065**.