Ten tips and a fidget or Collaborative Problem Solving: Why aren’t consequences working?

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How many of you...

- Have children/students that explode for “almost no reason”?
- Have tried elaborate behavior modification programs involving rewards and consequences?
- Have said things to your children/students you vowed you never would?
- Sometimes you know you love your children/students but you’re not sure you like them very much?
- Have so much tension in the house/classroom that you ignore it when your kids break the rules just to keep the peace?
Stress and its affect on learning

Ability to learn

High

Medium

Low

Stress

Relaxed

Challenged

“Stressed/hyper”

Anger/Fear

Melt down
A word about the fear response...

- Fear is the most powerful motivator of humans.
- It protects us and energizes us.
- It impacts our thoughts, interpretations, our emotions and our bodies.
- Short term fear can become anger, rage, shut down or panic.
- Chronic fear can become defiance, depression, self hate, withdrawal, anxiety and self doubt.
“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou
How can we respond more effectively to our children’s challenging behaviors?

• Calm before control

• Calming the emotions on both sides has to come before you can address the behaviors
Ten tips to remember when your child is challenging you.

1. Patience: Give yourself and your child space and time.

2. Remember behaviors are usually fear driven.

3. Let them know you like them. Mirror this for them.

4. Look for ways to “fill their basket.” (and yours)

5. Every day is a fresh start.
10 Tips continued.....

6. Develop strategies to ignore the little stuff.

7. We are all imperfect parents/teachers. Make communication a priority.

8. All we have is the present, remember every moment is a teachable moment even the challenging ones.

9. Forgive children (and yourself often). Remember kids do well if they can. Don’t take it personally. It’s not about you.
10. Try using the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach:

(Reframe the behaviors and look at them as problems yet to be solved. Identify lagging skills and triggers)
What is “Collaborative Problem Solving?” Philosophy:

- “Kids do well if they can.”
- The problem is cognitive/emotional lagging skills, not motivation.
- Challenging behaviors are highly predictable and a result of unsolved problems.
The three plans of CPS:

- Plan A: Impose adult will (consequences and rewards)
- Plan C: Remove the expectation (helps to decrease tension)
- Plan B: Collaborative Problem Solving
PLAN B...

- Plan B is the most important because it is where the learning takes place.
- It is where children (and adults) learn to modulate their responses, broaden their range of options for problem solving and take others’ perspectives into account.
- It is about listening more than about talking.
PLAN B: Step One ~ (Empathy)

- Primary goal is to gather information and achieve the clearest possible understanding of the concern from the child’s perspective.

  - State the issue in non-judgmental terms, followed by “What’s up?”

  - Encourage the child to describe the problem from their perspective without interrupting them!

  - Encourage them to express their concerns, not their solutions.
Step Two ~ Define the problem

- Re-state what they said; this lets them know you heard them and
- Gives them an opportunity to correct you in case you got it wrong.
- Then, state your perspective/concerns about the problem.
Step Three ~ Invitation

• Invite the child to come up with solutions:

“How are we going to fix this?”
or

“Can you think of a way to solve this that takes into account both of our concerns?”
Pro-active Plan B ~ Where to start

- The easiest place to start is with what is causing the biggest problem.

- Use the Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems (ALSUP) to identify lagging skills and problems yet to be solved. What are the biggest concerns?

- Focus on one area at a time.

- Remember it isn’t easy and it takes time to teach these skills.
Goals of Plan B

- Improve your relationship with your child/student
- Pursue unmet expectations
- Solve problems
- Teach lagging skills
- Reduce challenging behavior
Why didn’t it work?...

• Learning new ways to respond to behaviors takes time

• The child might not be able to state the problem or come up with solutions

• Maybe you rushed through a step or didn’t give the child enough time to think.

• Maybe you used Plan A instead of Plan B (remember you are not imposing your solutions)

• Maybe you did the steps out of order (skipping to solutions before empathy)

• Nothing works 100% of the time!
Plans A, B and C

- Plan A addresses the adult’s concerns (A=Adult)
- Plan C addresses the child’s concerns (C=child)
- PLAN B addresses BOTH the child’s and the adult’s concerns (B=both)
The Collaborative Problem Solving Model:

- Teaches that challenging behaviors are NOT attention-seeking, manipulative, unmotivated, coercive or limit-testing.

- Helps us understand that challenging behavior is the result of lagging thinking skills and un-solved problems.

- To be used by the people closest to the child.

- The artistry of the model is how it is tailored to individual needs.
Bibliography


Center for Collaborative Problem Solving on the web
http://www.explosivechild.com/
