



## Education for the Future Project

### Effective Parenting for Elementary School aged Children



احمي حقهم في التعليم: انه دورك

## **About**

### *ARDD- Legal Aid*

Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD)-Legal Aid is a Jordanian non-governmental organization established in 2008, operating across Jordan and with regional programs through our partners in Iraq and Lebanon. The organization's mission is to actively contribute as a civil society organization to a just and stable society, free of inequity and conflict. We empower marginalized groups to acquire and enjoy their universal rights and freedoms by representing their needs and mobilizing relevant duty bearers to conform to human rights, good governance and the rule of law.

### *Psychosocial Support Unit*

ARDD-Legal Aid Directors first proposed the idea to create a Psychosocial Support Unit (PSS Unit) in early 2013 as part of ARDD-Legal Aid's response to the developing Syrian refugee crisis. Many beneficiaries, especially refugees, children and women, suffer from distress, loss and grief. Those whose cases involve child custody, divorce, gender-based violence or Sharia law particularly need psychosocial support. Our psychosocial support unit trains ARDD-Legal Aid's lawyers in how best to support those under distress, but also meets in sessions with them directly. In a non-stigmatizing, confidential environment, these sessions can help them to better comprehend their situation and make clear-headed personal and legal decisions.

The Psychosocial Support Unit's mission is to use evidence-based and culturally sensitive Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) approaches to creating a just and stable society that is free of inequity and conflict by empowering marginalized groups to acquire and enjoy their universal rights and freedoms.

'Psychosocial support' refers to the process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families and communities by respecting the independence, dignity and coping mechanisms of individuals and communities. It aims at enhancing the ability of people to bounce back and restore normality after adverse events, and refers to the actions that address both the social and psychological needs of individuals, families and communities.

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## Foreword

*Dr. Lina Darras- PSS Unit Manager- ARDD-Legal Aid*

I am proud to present this toolkit, developed by the Psychosocial Support Unit at ARDD-Legal Aid. Through the implementation of ARDD-Legal Aid's psychosocial support programs it became apparent that many parents, both refugees and Jordanians, expressed a lack in parenting skills and resources to communicate effectively with their children and help them navigate difficult circumstances. Unfortunately violence is still an often used parenting technique which is also still often accepted and legal in many societies. According to this identified need we strove to develop a toolkit that could assist parents to raise their children without using violence. What you will find inside this toolkit is, what we hope, are useful tools and techniques that can be used by anyone, in any context.

## Acknowledgements

The Psychosocial Support Unit at ARDD-Legal Aid dedicated a huge amount of time and work to this parenting support project. Dr. Lina Darras (Clinical Psychologist ARDD-Legal Aid) and Roza van der Heide (MHPSS consultant) were able to use their expertise in conjunction with additional research to create the parenting toolkit. Their dedication to “Education for the Future: Communities of Learning among Syrians and Jordanians in Host Communities” project and support of parents who came to the sessions was essential to the completion of this project. They have both added incredible value to this project.

We are thankful to our colleagues Zainab al Khalil and Maria De Lograno who made valuable comments and suggestions throughout the process of developing this toolkit.

The toolkit was developed within the framework of the “Education for the future project: Communities of Learning among Syrians and Jordanians in Host Communities” funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We express our deep gratitude toward the families we met during our work. It is with sincere hope that this toolkit will be of benefit to these parents and many other parents who may also be confronted with difficult circumstances; and who are uncertain about positive non-violent alternatives for disciplining their children.

## Introduction

Violence against children has long been advocated against because of the profound implications it can have on children. According to a study conducted by UNICEF in 2007, Jordanian parents have shortcomings in their parenting styles. Parents in Jordan frequently use violence - both verbal and physical, as methods of disciplining their children. This includes methods which can sometimes be quite severe, such as beating using belts, shoes or other objects, as well as insults, shouting, and name-calling. This often happens because these are the only disciplinary methods parents know. Such disciplinary measures and lack of knowledge of alternative methods, has also been expressed in the Syrian refugee community in Jordan. An ARDD-Legal Aid report from February 2015, highlighted some of the challenges facing Syrian refugee women and Female Heads of Households (FFHs). One of the main findings was in regards to psychosocial implications, namely, unsettled self-perceptions regarding their role as “mothers.” In particular, the report describes that many of the women who participated in ARDD-Legal Aid’s psychosocial support sessions showed signs of deep stress regarding their sense of “failure” as care givers and mothers, as they lack the parenting skills and resources to communicate effectively with their children and help them navigate in these difficult circumstances.

With high level of unemployment for Jordanians as well as Syrian refugees, the population is highly stressed and this inevitably affects parent’s relationship with their children. From ARDD-Legal Aids work with both communities, this is abundantly clear. The stress parents experience must be addressed because of the serious implications it can have on children. Research shows that the academic and social success of children may be inhibited by these stressors, which in turn can lead to emotional and social challenges, acute and chronic stressors, cognitive lags, as well as health and safety issues.

With few avenues to shift the structural reality to which Jordanians and Syrians exist, it is possible to provide them with simple tools to use whilst parenting during these challenging times to ensure that violence is never viewed as an option to discipline their children. With this aim in mind, ARDD-Legal Aid prepared a toolkit which aims to enhance positive parent-child relationships; and address deficits among refugee and host communities in Jordan, in particular for mothers, by providing them with tools and strategies to help them address deficits in their parenting in the midst of the current challenges they face.

The toolkit was developed based off an initial focus group discussion with parents. Based on their experiences and self-identified gaps in skills, we built this toolkit with the aim to provide parents with:

- (1) Information regarding different behavioral issues facing different children and adolescents in Jordan (refugees and host communities).
- (2) Alternative positive parenting techniques to help manage children’s behaviors in a non-violent, respectful, and loving manner.
- (3) Practical exercises and activities to put in place at home.

The toolkit describes the impact and the consequences of the use of physical and psychological violence and equips anyone who is involved with children – parents, teachers, caregivers, professionals- with precise tools and concrete activities to raise disciplined children without using physical and psychological punishment. All of the concepts reviewed in this toolkit are based on behavioral theory and learning principles. The toolkit contains five techniques and describes six common problems.

The pages that follow below, describe all the tools and techniques in detail, including examples and common mistakes and inadequate uses of each technique. The main objective is to promote an increased understanding of positive parenting in order to help reduce the use of physical and psychological punishment against children.

### How to move forward

The toolkit is one intervention needed among many. Parents who attended the FGDs of the project, mentioned that violence and bullying are among the reasons their children stop going to school. Building a culture of non-violence at schools is thus crucial to make all children feel at ease and to safeguard their access to educational opportunities.

1. The culture of non-violence starts first and foremost at home, with the children's parents.
2. Sensitizing parents to the negative effects of violence and enhancing their skills of alternative and non-violent communication and parenting vis-à-vis their children is therefore a central first step to combat violence in the educational setting as well.
3. Creating violence free homes is also a necessary precondition to tackle the larger problem of violence among youth in the communities, such as drug dealing, sexual harassment and crime.

On the psychological level and as a direct result of the ongoing Syrian conflict many families suffer from collective trauma due to the experiences of displacement and difficult economic circumstances.

1. This affects the behavior of both parents and children and leads to heightened levels of stress and insecurity. We need to ensure parents can continue to be positive role models through these difficult times.
2. Mothers from female headed households are among those who face the greatest difficulties, as they are not only forced to take on the role of single bread winner of the family, but also single care giver.
3. Confronted with the heightened stress levels of their children and in specific their teenage children – who themselves are unable to deal with both external pressures and adolescence – single mothers feel totally overburdened and incapable of parenting their children.

With these present issues, a progressive shift of focus from short-term provision of aid to long-term capacity building programs is worth considering. This will include:

1. Providing beneficiaries with intensive training regarding the positive parenting and how to use the tools.
2. Developing a parenting toolkit for teenagers. This should be based off a critical assessment of the feedback received through the pilot project and adjustment made to the specific challenges and needs of teenagers and their parents.

### How to use the toolkit

The toolkit starts with an explanation about the negative impact of physical and psychological punishment on children. Based off these impacts, alternative techniques for disciplining children are explained. This includes positive reinforcement, modeling, and time-out, among others. Following this, common problems with children are discussed such as handling aggression and dealing with stubborn behavior.

The techniques for the toolkit provide parents with a “how to” for dealing with problems with their children. It serves to offer parents a clear method for punishing their children that does not involve physical harm.

The information outlined in the toolkit will also be summarized and printed on a calendar to be distributed to the parents as a tangible tool.

### Part one: The Impact of physical and psychological punishment

Physical and psychological punishments have long been proven as ineffective means to discipline children. Not only ineffective, such punishments stand in contrast to the rights of the child as it harms the child’s development in numerous ways. Despite this, these punishments are still used widely throughout the world, as it is often culturally accepted and the only disciplining tool parents are aware of.

According to WHO, the definition of violence is: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.”<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of important arguments for ending physical and psychological punishment:

1. Its effects are temporary. That is, it stops the child’s behavior only briefly, so that the same behavior will crop up again once the punishment is lifted or the punisher is not around.
2. Punishment doesn’t teach the child any new behaviors.
3. Punishment leads to escape conditioning, whereby the child looks for any means to avoid the punishment.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO, “Definition and Typology of Violence,” Violence Prevention Alliance, <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/>



4. Children build up a tolerance to pain that can cause punishment to escalate to the point of becoming abusive (name-calling, slapping, hitting).
5. Spanking teaches children that it's accepted to hurt people and this can lead them to believe that violence is a solution to problems.
6. Physical punishment has an impact on cognitive development that children who were spanked were less able to keep up with the cognitive development level expected for their age. It can even lower their IQ.
7. Physical punishment that is considered child abuse can lead to low self-esteem, brain damage, attention disorders and substance abuse, it can lead to poor social skills, anxiety and depression when children reach adulthood.
8. Physical and psychological punishment violates a child's right to respect, physical integrity and human dignity.

***Many children who have been subjected to hitting, paddling or other harsh disciplinary practices have reported subsequent problems with depression, fear and anger. These students frequently withdraw from school activities and disengage academically. The Society for Adolescent Medicine has found that victims of corporal punishment often develop "deteriorating peer relationships, difficulty with concentration, lowered school achievement, antisocial behavior, intense dislike of authority, somatic complaints, a tendency for school avoidance and school drop-out, and other evidence of negative high-risk adolescent behavior."<sup>2</sup>***

In order to help parents to stop using physical punishment and other humiliating forms of disciplining children, this toolkit offers effective alternative ways of disciplining children. While there are many alternative discipline approaches available, the overall strategy used is positive disciplining which is focused on encouraging appropriate children's behavior. To stop using physical punishment does not mean giving up discipline. Children need clear limits and guidance in order to learn what is right and what is wrong. Violence is simply not necessary to achieve this.

Handout 1 includes information about the impact of physical and psychological violence and will be printed on the calendar.

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<sup>2</sup> HRW, (2010), Corporal Punishment in Schools and Its Effect on Academic Success" Joint HRW/ACLU Statement, Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/04/15/corporal-punishment-schools-and-its-effect-academic-success-joint-hrw/aclu-statement>

## Part two: Tools and Techniques

### Overview of tools

The overall objective of this toolkit is to teach parents positive skills and techniques that they can use on a daily basis.

Parents play a big role in shaping the overall attitude of a child and that is through several factors:

The first is the role parents play encouraging their children's behavior. Sometimes parents unintentionally encourage an undesired behavior by suggesting satisfaction the first time it is exhibited by the child. Children usually try a certain behavior at home – whether it is a verbal or physical one- and the way in which the family responds to the child's behavior will then determine if the child will continue to use this behavior. For example, when a child begins speaking at an early age they might say an inappropriate word and adults usually respond by laughing because of the child appears cute when saying the word. Unfortunately, laughing at this type of behavior is understood by the child as approval and they will then believe there is no problem in repeating it. This problem becomes noticeable when the child says these inappropriate words to other people and the parents disapprove of such acts and discipline the child. This delivers a mixed message and makes it difficult for children to determine if this action is right or wrong. Within this there lies a danger in encouraging these negative behaviors. Parents must therefore be careful when showing satisfaction or acceptance of their children's behaviors and make it clear which acts are acceptable in the future and which ones are not.

The second factor that may cause unwanted behavior with children is a lack of understanding of the rules of the household. Many families do not have clear rules about things such as bedtime, when to wake up, studying time, meal time, playing time and TV time. Although some think that these rules restrict the child's freedom, they are very necessary. This is especially true for school-aged children. Inconsistency is one of the biggest issues in disciplining children and it can send mixed messages to them and also plays a large role in the creation of inappropriate behavior amongst children. Inconsistent parenting usually has two sources, one from a parent that allows bad behaviors sometimes but not at other times. This usually happens when this parent is distracted while watching their child. Once the distractions are gone, the parent will change their attitude towards the behavior. This inconsistency allows the inappropriate behavior of the child to develop. The second source of inconsistency is between parents, both mother and father. This occurs when one parent tells the child to do a certain thing and the child will go to the other parent for a different reaction. In an attempt to escape the task, the child will push the other parent to not enforce the decision already made. The foundation of creating positive behaviors in children lies in making a clear agreement between both parents of what is acceptable and what is not

The final factor that may cause unwanted behaviors in children is when asking them to do things that are above their abilities. This can cause them to fail and take inappropriate actions to make up for this failure. Alternatively, if we ask our children to do things that are below their abilities, things that they can do without feeling a sense of challenge or

achievement, can cause them to feel bored and act out inappropriately. Knowing your children is thus key.

The toolkit provides different tools and techniques that can be used when needed in order to understand how to deal with some of these parenting challenges.

The following child issues will be discussed in the toolkit:

1. Dealing with stubborn behavior.
2. Handling aggression and fighting in children.
3. Dealing with risk taking behavior.
4. Dealing with sleeping problems (unwillingness to go to bed).
5. Preventing bullying.
6. Motivating children to go to school.

## Overview of common childhood issues

### Dealing with stubborn behavior

Stubborn or strong-willed behavior is sometimes challenging to deal with. As a parent you often want to use straight forward methods to get them to follow directions and obey you; however, this sometimes doesn't work as hoped and may even work to the contrary. Approaching your children in a different way, instead of a straightforward manner, and using creativity might help you accomplish this. It is often about a power struggle between the parent and the child. Therefore, it is important to sometimes avoid this power struggle and to spin it in that way that the child feels involved in the decision making process.

Disciplining a stubborn child works best by remaining calm, listening to and understanding the child, and setting a good example of acceptable behavior. The following steps are important:

- 1. Disincentive**  
Make sure that you don't reinforce the behavior of your child by giving in to them in order to bring peace or get out of a situation.
- 2. Stay calm.**  
When you respond to stubbornness with anger or yelling, you are reinforcing the child's belief that negative behaviors work.
- 3. Listen to your child.**  
Make sure that you understand the cause of the stubbornness by communicating with your child and exploring his/her feelings.
- 4. Discipline with patience and affection.**  
Children need to feel safe and loved, even when they are misbehaving. Create a peaceful environment at home. If there is a lot of yelling, arguing or threatening, a child will adapt to it and become more stubborn. Behave the way you expect your children to behave. You need to be a role model. If your child sees you being stubborn, she will act the same way because it works for you.
- 5. Provide options out of stubborn behavior.**

If your child refuses to go to bed, instead of fighting it, offer several different options and your child can choose one. Set the scene for cooperation. Instead of announcing it is bedtime, say "It's 8:00. Do you want to read a book first, sing a song or have a cuddle?" This alerts the child to the fact that it is bedtime while offering enjoyable things to do as he gets there.

**6. Avoid a win-lose situation.**

Parents should try to avoid turning strategies that deal with stubborn behavior into a win-lose situation. Involve the child in your decision making process and see it as cooperation. Try to keep calm during your discussions with your child; so you will be his/her positive model. Remember, it is not a battle to see who is going to win.

Handout 2 includes the steps that need to be taken to deal with stubborn behavior. The handout is attached to the appendix.

***Children do not always have the skills yet to go back and ask for help when they do not understand how to do something. Instead, children may just shut down or avoid the work altogether and become very stubborn about it.***

***If you repeatedly receive calls from your child's school about incomplete assignments or have a difficult time enforcing homework time at home, there may be underlying issues that need to be addressed. Sometimes no matter how much you push your child to do their homework they continue to refuse. If this is the case with your child, check if any of the following concerns might be the cause:***

- 1. Does your child know whether or not they have homework assigned?***
- 2. Does your child know how to complete their homework?***
- 3. Does your child have a space and the materials needed at home in order to complete their assignments?***
- 4. Do they have time to do their homework?***
- 5. Are there too many distractions?***

***If problems in school continue, it is also important that you take the time to communicate with your child's teacher.<sup>3</sup>***

## **Handling aggression in children**

As a parent it is sometimes difficult to decide how to deal most effectively with children when they are very frustrated and angry. However it is very important to know what to do, as children can harm themselves and others if they are acting out. An important aspect of parenting is being a good role model. Role modeling as mentioned in one of the techniques above is a very important aspect in dealing with a child's aggressive behavior. If your child sees that you immediately snap at a situation and that as soon as you see a problem, become angry with your child, this could escalate the situation. If you respond aggressively, it teaches your child that aggression is how you solve problems. Looking at your own behavior is an important first step. However, a firm and kind adult intervention is necessary

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<sup>3</sup> Very Well, Guiding your Child to School Success, Available at: <https://www.verywell.com/school-aged-children-school-and-learning-4013684>

for the child's development to know what is appropriate and what inappropriate behavior is. The following tips can help parents when struggling with aggressive behavior:

**1. Encourage Appropriate Communication.**

The most effective way to deal with anger and rebellious behavior is to have children appropriately communicate their feelings of disapproval and resentment.

**2. Be careful how you react and provide appropriate models.**

Children learn a great deal from modeling their parents' behavior. If you react to any problems in the home by shouting or hitting, your children will learn from you that this is acceptable behavior at stressful times.

**3. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior.**

When you are calm discuss your child's actions with them in a peaceful way. Explain to them the likely results of their actions.

**4. Don't get into a power struggle.**

Don't make rules that you know you can't or won't apply, and try to keep calm during your discussions with your child so you will be his/her positive role model. Remember, it is not a battle to see who is going to win.

**5. Give attention and show affection.**

All children need attention and affection. This is especially true for older children with younger siblings. It's easy to pay more attention to what the child is doing wrong—his failures, mistakes, misbehaviors—than to what he is doing right—his successes, achievements, good behaviors.

**6. Monitor TV programs and play.**

There could be a link between your child's aggression and what they watch on television.

**7. Monitor the influence of friends.**

The introduction of a new friend can have an impact on the way your child behaves.

**8. Give warning time.**

Most children get frustrated and show aggression if they are busy playing and you suddenly tell them it is time to go. Although it is not always possible try to give them a warning that it is nearly time to stop playing.

**9. Provide alternative toys and stimulus.**

A child who is trying to do something they find very difficult may run out of patience and lose their temper.

Handout 3 includes the steps that need to be taken to deal with aggressive behavior. The handout is attached to the appendix.

*Children often use aggression as a method to solve their problems. Beyond the trauma and aggression that can result as a response to physically abusive discipline, aggression can also result from a lack of developed social skills. It is important that your child becomes well socialized in order to prosper in their school. It is important to teach your child problem solving skills at home in order to reduce the likelihood that they will be aggressive towards other children in school. By teaching them behavior that can replace aggression in order to solve conflict, your child will be less likely to show aggression towards peers or teachers in school*

*If your child is repeatedly showing signs of aggression while at school, it is important to communicate with his or her teacher and address the problem. Consequences must be put in place if your child displays aggressive and inappropriate behavior. Discuss with their teacher what methods are used in school, and use consistent methods in your home. Make sure you are a positive role model to your children at home. If you display proper and non-aggressive problem solving skills in front of your child they will learn to mimic your behavior. Communication rather than aggression will always be the best way to solve problems.*

### Dealing with Risk taking

It is important to find a balance between protecting your children from risks and helping your child to assess risks through letting them explore. It is important that a child learns how to assess risk taking. Risk-taking, like other skills, needs to be learned and practiced over time and parents can assist in this. Children need to be able to identify a risk, stay aware of potential dangers and benefits, think before acting and evaluate afterwards. Talking with your children about these steps can help children learn how to take risks.

The following tips can be used:

- 1. Help your child learn to assess risk.**

For example, 'If s/he hadn't been careless when he crossed the road, s/he wouldn't have had this accident. Now s/he is going to stay in the hospital for two weeks.

- 2. Work out some agreed ground rules with your child.**

Explain to him/her that your role is to keep him/her safe, and decide together on what the consequences should be if the rules are broken. You'll need to be flexible and adapt the ground rules as your child grows and shows s/he is ready for more responsibility.

- 3. Talk about values.**

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<sup>4</sup> Smith, Anne B., New Zealand Ministry of Social Development, (2006), The State of Research on the Effects of Physical Punishment, Available at: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/journals-and-magazines/social-policy-journal/spj27/the-state-of-research-on-effects-of-physical-punishment-27-pages114-127.html#TheDifferenceBetweenDisciplineandPhysicalPunishment3>

The earlier the better. Knowing what's important to your family will help your child develop a sense of responsibility and personal values.

**4. Keep an eye on your child.**

Knowing whom s/he is with and where s/he is can help you prevent some risk-taking behavior.

**5. Keep the lines of communication open.**

Strong connections with parents reduce the chance of risky children's behavior.

**6. Be a good role model.**

Children are guided by how their parents behave.

**7. Encourage a wide social network.**

Give your child the chance to make friends through sport, religious or family activities. Make your child's friends welcome in your home – you'll know where s/he is at least some of the time.

**8. Give teenagers a way out.**

If your child feels pressured to take risks to fit in, you could help him/her think of ways to opt out without losing credibility. For example, s/he could tell his/her friends that smoking gives him/her asthma. Let him/her know s/he can send you a text message anytime she needs to be picked up, without worrying that you'll be angry.

Handout 4 includes the steps that need to be taken to deal with risk taking behavior. The handout is attached to the appendix.

### Dealing with Sleeping Problems (unwillingness to go to bed)

It is often challenging to bring your children to bed as most children do not want to go to bed at set hours. There could be several reasons for this, such as: being afraid in the dark, they don't want to miss things or they want to have the control over things. It is important to remember to avoid power struggles and to make sure that you understand your child's reasons behind their resistance. Instead try to make bedtime something pleasant that your children will enjoy.

The following tips can work:

**1. Make bedtime a special time.**

Spend some special time with your child. Be firm and go through a certain bedtime routine that your child is used to. At the end of that routine, the lights go off and it is time to fall asleep.

**2. Look for your child's ideal bedtime.**

It is when your child really is starting to slow down and getting physically tired.

**3. Keep to a regular daily routine.**

The same waking time, meal times, nap time and play times will help your child to feel secure and comfortable, and help with a smooth bedtime.

**4. Use a simple, regular bedtime routine.**

It should not last too long, it may include a few simple, quiet activities, such as a light snack, a bath, cuddling, saying goodnight, and a story.

**5. Look at the temperature.**

Make sure the temperature in the bedroom is comfortable and that the bedroom is dark.

**6. Make after-dinner playtime a relaxing time.**

Too much activity close to bedtime can keep children awake.

**7. Make sure the sleep routines you use can be used anywhere.**

This is necessary in order to help your children get to sleep wherever you may be.

**8. Make sure your kids have interesting and varied activities during the day.**

This should include physical activity and fresh air.

**9. Never use sending your child to bed as a threat.**

**10. Watch your child's food.**

Don't give your child foods and drinks with caffeine in them, like hot chocolate, tea, cola, chocolate, etc.

**11. Watch your child's TV habits.**

Don't let your child watch more than one to two hours of TV during the day.

Handout 5 includes the steps that need to be taken to deal with sleeping problems. The handout is attached to the appendix.

*Just as you as a parent get stressed about work, and your own responsibilities, your child may also be worried about something at school. Perhaps their assignments, tests, bullies, teachers, or peers might be causing them anxiety. Especially if there have been any recent changes in their lives, this may build up and prevent them from sleeping or interfere with their schedule. Sleep problems amongst school-aged children can cause them to become grumpy, tired during the day, and also affect your own schedule. The problems caused by sleeplessness will then carry into other areas of their lives, and likely alter their ability to effectively perform in school and on any assigned tasks. It is important to discuss any changes that your child has experienced in order to get to the root of the problem and create a more comfortable environment for them to be able to sleep well.<sup>5</sup>*

## Preventing Bullying

Bullying is a widespread problem. It is intentional tormenting of others which could be done in various ways, such as physical, verbal, or psychological bullying. It can range from hitting, shoving, name-calling, and threats, among others.

Children are often teasing each other, this could be among siblings or friends. However this is normally not harmful and is done in a playful, friendly way, noticeably different from bullying.

It is important to identify the difference between teasing and serious bullying and it is important to take this serious as a parent and caregiver. If you suspect that your child is being bullied, try to learn what is happening and speak with your children. Often children feel embarrassed and ashamed and therefore will not openly disclose these experiences.

What Can Parents Do in Preventing and Responding to Bullying?

**1. As a parent, be aware of bullying, and look for it.**

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<sup>5</sup> Lee, Katherine, Very Well, (2015), What to Do When a Child Won't Go to Bed, Available at: <https://www.verywell.com/what-to-do-when-a-child-wont-go-to-bed-620506>



Many times children won't ask for help, so it is important to keep an eye on your child's behavior and wellbeing.

**1. Talk with your child about bullying.**

Encourage your child to tell someone – yourself, your parent or trustworthy teacher.

**2. Encourage your child's self-esteem skills (believing they are a good person).**

Give them compliments and let them feel good.

**3. Encourage your child's friendship skills.**

**4. Encourage your child's assertiveness skills.**

**5. Encourage your child's conflict management skills.**

**6. Encourage the school to be aware of bullying and to develop anti-bullying policies.**

**7. If your child is being bullied, make sure to reassure them and help them understand that the behavior of the bully is not ok, and also that there is nothing wrong with your child.**

Handout 6 includes the steps that need to be taken to prevent bullying. The handout is attached to the appendix.

*There are several steps that children can take in order to avoid bullies, and create a safer environment.*

- 1. Stay with a friend as children are less likely to get picked on if they are in a group than if they are alone.*
- 2. Remain calm, do not become angry and do not tease them back or become violent.*
- 3. Ignore the bully. If your child does not pay attention to the bully, often they will become bored and stop their behavior.*
- 4. Talk to an adult in the school or at home if the bullying is persistent.*

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## Motivating children to go to school

Some children love to go to school and others do not like it much. There can also be a period in a child's life that he/she is not motivated to go to school. It is important that parents take their child serious and try to learn the reasons behind their child's lack of motivation. Also, parents can support their children by motivating them in a positive way. Below are some general tips on how to motivate your child to start enjoying school more:

**1. Be inspiring.**

Turn everyday events into learning opportunities. Encourage your child to explore the world around him, asking questions and making connections.

**2. Have meaningful conversations.**

Talk with your child and make sure you understand the reasons behind their aversion to school. Give your child the idea that he/she can express her/his feelings.

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<sup>6</sup>Lyness, D'Arcy, Kids Health, (2013), Helping Kids Deal with Bullies, Available at: <http://kidshealth.org/en/pal#>

3. **Celebrate achievements, no matter how small.**

Make sure that you reward small achievements. This will improve your child's self-esteem and increases the likelihood of liking school. You'll offer positive reinforcement that will inspire him/her to keep learning and challenging him/herself.

4. **Focus on strengths, encouraging developing talents.**

Emphasize children's strengths; do not dwell on their weaknesses.

5. **Help children understand that it is not always easy to develop proficiency in a subject; it takes time and effort.**

Be patient and help your child with his/her homework.

6. **Explain the importance of education for their future.**

Communicate with your child and show empathy about the factors that the child does not like in school but also explain why you think education is key for a better future.

Handout 7 includes the steps that need to be taken to motivate children to go to school. The handout is attached to the appendix.

*If your child is struggling with school or they have encountered problems with other children or bullies, there may be a reason that they lack motivation to attend school. Pay attention to if there are any changes in your child's behavior that might indicate why they have had a change in attitude. The following are some warning signs that there is a problem to be addressed:*

- *Your child suddenly refuses to discuss their school day with you*
- *They have a recent change in attitude about school, try to talk to them to find out why.*
- *Your child spends a large amount of time focused on school work, which may indicate that they are finding their assignments hard and are struggling.*
- *If they are misbehaving at school, there may be an underlying issue related to their school work as well as social problems.*
- *If your child's teacher mentions that they are concerned about your child, be sure to take this into account and try to find the cause.*
- *If they are struggling to sleep or eat properly, they may be overly stressed.*
- *Bad grades might also indicate an underlying issue, especially if there has been a change and they were doing well beforehand.<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>7</sup>Linnell-Olsen, Lisa, (2015), Very Well, 7 Warning Signs Your Child Is Struggling In School Available at: <https://www.verywell.com/warning-signs-your-child-is-struggling-in-school-2601436>

## Overview of techniques

### Positive reinforcement

One important theory that is used through the entire toolkit is positive reinforcement. This is a strategy that can be used by parents in daily life and it is a way of raising children in a positive way, so it can be seen as a life style. Positive reinforcement is a technique used by parents and caregivers to modify children's behavior by reinforcing desired behaviors. Positive reinforcement is a parenting style that does not use pain and punishment or other things that can hurt the child's well-being. This technique has proven effective for parents, teachers and anyone responsible for a child..

Reinforcement is used to help increase the probability that a specific behavior will occur in the future by delivering a stimulus immediately after a behavior is displayed. Positive reinforcement is adding something that will motivate the child to engage in that behavior again.

Positive reinforcement is not the same as punishment. Positive reinforcement increases the probability that the behavior it follows recurs. While, punishment decreases this probability.

Reinforcement will make the child more likely to exhibit the behavior because of the pleasant consequence which followed the behavior. The child becomes confident and proud, and wants to be praised again. When your child does something that you like, reward her by smiling or nodding to let her know that you are pleased. When deciding to use positive reinforcement as a parenting style it is important to be consistent and to take the following steps:

- 1- Praise your child immediately after the desired behavior.
- 2- Praise your child for good behavior. Be very specific. Tell him exactly what behavior, actions and words you liked.
- 3- Remember to compare your child's behavior to his own past behavior when you praise. Then he can learn how he is growing. Avoid comparing one child with other children.
- 4- Use praise regularly when monitoring a good behavior that you want to encourage.

#### ➤ Example

*Situation:* Your child Dina, has come home from school with a positive grade on her handwriting assignment. When you see the mark Dina has received, it is important that you not only praise the good grade, but also comment on the effort she put in to achieve her high scores. You can say: "You worked very hard for that, you really deserve this good grade."

#### ➤ Common mistakes/ Inadequate use of technique

It often happens that you make a positive situation negative by saying it in a wrong way such as:

“You were finally able to get a good grade.”

“I hope that I will see this more often”

If you try to reward your child with these types of reactions, the child doesn't feel appreciated and the message is again negative instead of complimentary. Always try to remember to make it positive without mentioning things from the past that you did not like.

Handout 8 includes the steps that need to be taken to use positive reinforcement.

	<b>General effects of Physical and Psychological Punishment</b>	<b>Effects of Positive Discipline</b>
Social consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children's rights violated</li> <li>○ No child-friendly environment</li> <li>○ Risk of learning that violence is accepted</li> <li>○ No autonomy, dependence on fear and sanction of others</li> <li>○ No opportunities for full social development</li> <li>○ Risk of mistrust of adults</li> <li>○ Risk of isolation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children's rights fulfilled and promoted</li> <li>○ Trust towards adults</li> <li>○ Problem solving abilities (non-violent)</li> <li>○ Communication skills improved (to listen, express and forgive)</li> <li>○ Negotiation skills and conflict resolution skills</li> </ul>
Psychological consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Link between love and violence</li> <li>○ Risk of degrading self-image and self-esteem</li> <li>○ Risk of guilty feelings</li> <li>○ Risk of anxiety and insecurity</li> <li>○ Risk of possibility of depression</li> <li>○ Risk of lack of confidence</li> <li>○ Risk of damage to attachment relationships</li> <li>○ Risk of feelings of revenge and anger</li> <li>○ Risk of emotional instability</li> <li>○ Risk of slow learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Link between love and protection</li> <li>○ Self-confidence promotion</li> <li>○ Self-image and esteem promotion</li> <li>○ Good attachment relationships</li> <li>○ Feelings of security</li> <li>○ Emotional stability</li> <li>○ Better learning process</li> </ul>
Physical consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Risk of physical damage</li> <li>○ Risk of damage: injuries, disabilities, even death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Protection and healthy physical development</li> </ul>

Resource: Table adapted from Save TheChildren toolkit, “a toolkit on positive discipline”, 2007

## Time out

A time out for children should be used as a form of positive and consistent discipline. Behavioral psychologists introduced the time out for children concept, which means that before using a time-out, children should receive lots of positive ‘time-in’ with a connected style of parenting. This means that children receive positive attention and affection from parents. Then if the child misbehaves, this positive parental input is briefly withdrawn. As a result, the child gets used to feeling right when acting right, and feeling wrong when acting wrong. By making the connection between good behavior and good feelings the child becomes motivated to keep his act together. Time-out for children only works, when they first receive a large quantity of quality “time-in,” or in other words positive attention.

Time out removes misbehaving children from all sources of positive reinforcement, especially adult attention. The following steps need to be undertaken to make sure the time out is effective.

- 1. Inform and enforce:** Always begin by telling your child what she did that is unacceptable, such as hitting, noncompliance and destructive behaviors. Explain to the child that he or she has to go to time-out if he committed any of the previous behaviors for(....) minutes. Give her a warning where possible, and tell her in a firm, calm voice to go to time out.
- 2. Determine time-out length:** As a rule of thumb, three minutes for three-year-old, four minutes for four-year-old and five minutes for five ....etc.
- 3.Repeat the command:** When time-out is used because the child did not do something he was told to do, the parent should repeat the original command when time-out is over. If the child still refuses to obey, then the entire time-out sequence would have to be repeated.
- 4. Be prepared to handle child leaving time-out:** If the misbehaving child comes out of time-out prematurely, calmly return them with a warning of loss of privileges (e.g. no television for the evening, bike locked up for 24 hours). For a younger child who gets off a time-out chair, there should be a warning too, e.g. "If you get off the chair again, you will go to the time-out room."
- 5.Apology:** Ask your child to say that he is sorry for misbehaving and accept the apology if it is offered in a civil tone of voice. If it's not, give your child a warning and give another time-out if he doesn't give you a gently spoken apology.

Handout 3 includes the steps that need to be taken to use the technique time-out. The handout is attached to the appendix.

### ➤ Example

Situation: Your son, Mohammed, has come home from school and starts playing with his siblings. You have told him that he has an allotted amount of time to play after school before needing to start his homework. You have told him that you will give him a time-out (explain the first time what a time-out means) if he ignores your requests to complete his work. They continue playing and he stubbornly refuses to do any work.

You tell him: “Mohammed, this is the second time that I have asked you to stop playing and start your homework, and now it’s over. You need to go to your room (or another place) and

you will receive a time-out for 7 minutes (or more or less, depending on the age of the child). I want you to stay for 7 minutes in your room and I will tell you when your time-out is over.”

➤ Common mistakes

A common mistake is that children do not receive enough time-in before, so that when you use a time-out, it will not work. A child needs to learn that he receives positive attention when acting correctly, and that there will be no positive attention when acting incorrectly. By making the connection between good behavior and good feelings the child becomes motivated to keep his act together. Look at the two different scenarios.

*Example of positive attention / time-in:*

You are coming home from work. You had a very tiring day and the only thing you can think of is sitting on your couch and doing nothing. However your child has waited for you to come home and is very happy to see you and wants immediate attention.

**Scenario 1 (positive attention):**You hug the child, listen to the stories he/she wants to tell and then explain that you had a very busy day and that you need to relax for a bit.

**Scenario two (no attention):**You react grumpy and tell your child immediately to leave you alone because you are very tired.

➤ Inadequate use of technique

It is very important to be firm with your children and act according to what you are telling them. Make sure that you are not using the time-out strategy only to threaten without actual use. If you give a warning to your child that if he/she acts this way again, you will give a time-out, then you should actually do it when the behavior happens again, otherwise the technique will not work.

Handout 9 includes the steps that need to be taken to effectively use a time-out for your child. The handout is attached to the appendix.

## Modeling

The process of teaching your children by being a good example is called modeling and it affects the behavior of your children. Modeling teaches your child how to deal with many aspects in daily life such as handling conflict, how to react to stress or fear and interacting with others.

Your child watches you in order to get clues on how to behave in the world. You're their role model, so use your own behavior to guide them. Everyone can decide for themselves what behavior you find important for your children to learn. Here are important examples that can be considered:

1. **Catch your child being 'good'**. This simply means that when your child is behaving in a way you like, you can give her some positive feedback.

2. **Get down to your child's level.** Kneeling or squatting down next to children is a very powerful tool for communicating positively with them. Getting close allows you to tune in to what they might be feeling or thinking.
3. **Keep promises.** Stick to agreements. When you follow through on your promises, good or bad, your child learns to trust and respect you.
4. **Choose your battles.** Before you get involved in anything your child is doing—especially to say 'no' or 'stop'—ask yourself if it really matters. By keeping instructions, requests and negative feedback to a minimum, you create less opportunity for conflict and bad feelings
5. **Whining- be strong.** Kids don't want to be annoying. By giving in when they're whining, you train them to do it more— even if you don't mean to.
6. **Keep it simple and positive.** If you can give clear instructions in simple terms, your child will know what is expected of him.
7. **Responsibility and consequences.** As children get older, you can give them more responsibility for their own behavior. You can also give them the chance to experience the natural consequences of that behavior.

Handout 10 includes the steps that need to be taken to use the modeling technique. The handout is attached to the appendix.

➤ Example

It is important to practice what you preach. If you ask your children to come home from school every day and study or do their homework, you can model this behavior by also taking the time to read. When your child sees that you value reading and take the time to expand your knowledge they will see this as an important activity.

➤ Common mistakes/ Inadequate use of technique.

It is important to be consistent with your behavior. Do not only behave in this (good) way one time, when you want to teach your children this behavior and then the next time act differently. Adapt the behavior that you want to see from your children to your own behavior in daily life.

Handout 4 includes the steps that need to be taken in order to be a positive role model for your children. The handout is attached to the appendix.

## Response Cost

Response cost, also called negative punishment, is another way to make behavior less frequent. It is another way to unlearn behavior and it is a form of punishment. It occurs when a stimulus is taken away as a consequence of inappropriate behavior, and the effect is to reduce the frequency of the behavior. The word "negative" in "negative punishment" comes from the fact that a stimulus is removed.

Response cost techniques provide a framework that helps parents or caregivers learn how to set clear penalties (often loss of privileges or current rewards) for inappropriate child

behavior. Expected behaviors and penalties should be fair and clearly stated and augmented by visual aids whenever possible

Response cost is also related to positive reinforcement. When using this technique it is also very important to give your child lots of positive feedback before using a response cost method.

Use the following steps:

1. Identify major problem behaviors that need to be stopped immediately.
2. Determine the consequences that the child will face for his inappropriate behavior.
3. Introduce the response cost system. For example, say to your child, "Because there are certain behaviors that are never tolerated, these behaviors will immediately result in the loss of specific amount from your pocket money. Those behaviors are arguing, fighting, stealing, and lying."
4. Immediately following the occurrence of an inappropriate behavior that is subject to a response cost, implement the punishment in a calm, matter-of fact tone of voice.
5. Beconsistent with both the timing and implementation of a response cost system.

➤ Example

Situation: If your child does not wake up on time in the morning or causes another delay in leaving the house to get to school on time, tell him or her that you will take an allotted number of piastres from their pocket money for every 5 minutes they are tardy.

Common mistakes/ inadequate use of technique

It is very important to be consistent while using response cost as a strategy. If you explain to your child that he will lose five piastres for every five minutes they cause a delay, then you should actually take the money from them. If you are not doing it immediately the child learns that there is no real repercussion.

Handout 11 includes the steps that need to be taken to use the technique response cost. The handout is attached to the appendix.

### Part three: Supportive tools

- Calendar, and each month will discuss either a technique that can be used during parenting or a common problem including tips on how to deal with this. The calendar will include the following:
  - ✓ Positive reinforcement.
  - ✓ Modeling.
  - ✓ Response cost.



✓ Time-out.

- Reward chart: A reward chart is an effective tool that can help to build consistency in establishing good behaviors in children. It helps to encourage positive behavior and teaches children to set goals. To properly use a reward chart, the following steps are taken: firstly the parent decides what behavior needs to be modified of the child, secondly the reward chart (that has an overview of the days of the week and the desired behavior written) needs to be explained to the child; each time the child accomplishes a task the child will receive a reward (e.g. a sticker). In the end of the week (or month), when the child achieves a bigger goal, the child can win a bigger prize (e.g. ball).
- Little gifts for reinforcement: this can be used as a reinforcement tool once a child achieves little goals after a certain period of time (which can be seen on the reward chart). This will reinforce the positive behavior of a child.
- Stickers: these can be used each time a child accomplished a task, this can work as reinforcement for children when they did something good, which is also related to the reward chart.
- One special toy (will be determined later also depending on the costs of the toolkit): This special toy will be used when a child has achieved the final goal (that is to be set from the beginning with the parents/ caregivers).

**This toolkit is a living document. We will try to improve and revise the existing tools from time to time based on your feedback and our experience in using them. We hope you will enjoy applying these tools and will share them with others.**

## Handouts

### Handout (1)

#### The impact of physical punishment on children

- ✓ Its effects are temporary. That is, it stops the child's behavior only briefly, so that the same behavior will crop up again once the punishment is lifted or the punisher is not around.
- ✓ Punishment doesn't teach the child any new behaviors.
- ✓ Punishment leads aggression to escape conditioning, whereby the child looks for any means to avoid the punishment.
- ✓ Children build up a tolerance to pain that can cause punishment to escalate to the point of becoming abusive (name-calling, slapping, hitting).
- ✓ Spanking teaches children that it's okay to hurt people and this can lead them to believe you solve problems by hitting.
- ✓ Physical punishment has an impact on cognitive development that children who were spanked were less able to keep up with the cognitive development level expected for their age. It can even lower their IQ.
- ✓ Physical punishment that is considered child abuse can lead to low self-esteem, brain damage, attention disorders and substance abuse, It can lead to poor social skills, anxiety and depression when children reach adulthood

## Handout (2)

### Dealing with stubborn behavior

Discipline a stubborn child works best by remaining calm, listening to and understanding the child and setting a good example of acceptable behavior. The following steps are important:

1. **Disincentive:** Make sure that you don't reinforce the behavior of your child by giving in to bring peace or get out of a situation.

2. **Stay calm.** When you respond to stubbornness with anger or yelling, you are reinforcing the child's belief that negative behaviors work

3. **Listen to your child.** Make sure that you understand what the cause of the stubbornness is and communicate with your child and explore his/her feelings.

4. **Discipline with patience and affection.** Children need to feel safe and loved, even when they are misbehaving. Create a peaceful environment at home. If there is a lot of yelling, arguing or threatening, a child will adapt to it and become more stubborn. Behave the way you expect your children to behave. You need to be a role model. If your child sees you being stubborn, she will act the same way because it works for you.

5. **Provide options out of stubborn behavior.** If your child refuses to go to bed, instead of fighting it, offer several different options and your child can choose one. Set the scene for cooperation. Instead of announcing it is bedtime, say "It's 8:00. Do you want to read a book first, sing a song or have a cuddle?" This alerts the child to the fact that it is bedtime while offering enjoyable things to do as he gets there.

6. **Avoid a win-lose situation.** Parents should try to avoid turning strategies that deal with stubborn behavior into a win-lose situation. Involve the child in your decision process and see it as cooperation. Try to keep calm during your discussions with your child; so you will be his/her positive model. Remember, it is not a battle to see who is going to win.

## Handout (3)

### Handling aggression in children

#### 1. Encourage Appropriate Communication

The most effective way to deal with anger and rebellious behavior is to have children appropriately communicate their feelings of disapproval and resentment.

#### 2. Be careful how you react and Provide Appropriate Models

Children learn a great deal from modeling their parents' behavior. If you react to any problems in the home by shouting or hitting out, your children will learn from you that this is acceptable behavior at stressful times.

#### 3. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior:

When you are calm discuss your child's actions with them in a peaceful way. Explain to them the likely results of their actions.

#### 4. Don't Get into a Power Struggle

Don't put rules that you know that you can't apply, and try to keep calm during your discussions with your child; so you will be his/her positive model. Remember, it is not a battle to see who is going to win.

#### 5. Give attention and show affection:

All children need attention and affection. This is especially true for older children with younger siblings. It's easy to pay more attention to what the child is doing wrong—his failures, mistakes, misbehaviors—than to what he is doing right—his successes, achievements, good behaviors.

#### 6. Monitor TV programs and play

There could be a link between your child's aggression and what they watch on television.

#### 7. Monitor the influence of friends

The introduction of a new friend can have an impact on the way your child behaves.

#### 8. Give warning time

Most children get frustrated and can show aggression if they are busy playing and you suddenly tell them it is time to go. Although it is not always possible try to give them warning that it is nearly time to stop playing.

#### 9. Provide alternative toys and stimulus

A child who is trying to do something they find very difficult may run out of patience and lose their temper.

## Handout (4)

### Dealing with Risk taking

- 1. Help your child learn to assess risk.** . For example, 'If he hadn't been careless when he crossed the road, he wouldn't have had this accident. Now he's going to stay in the hospital for two weeks.'
- 2. Work out some agreed ground rules with your child.** Explain to him/her that your role is to keep him/her safe, and decide together on what the consequences should be if the rules are broken. You'll need to be flexible and adapt the ground rules as your child grows and shows s/he is ready for more responsibility.
- 3. Talk about values** – the earlier the better. Knowing what's important to your family will help your child develop a sense of responsibility and personal values.
- 4. Keep an eye on your child.** Knowing whom s/he is with and where s/he is can help you prevent some risk-taking behavior.
- 5. Keep the lines of communication open.** Strong connections with parents reduce the chance of risky children's behavior.
- 6. Be a good role model.** Children are guided by how their parents behave.
- 7. Encourage a wide social network.** Give your child the chance to make friends through sport, religious or family activities. Make your child's friends welcome in your home – you'll know where s/he is at least some of the time.

## Handout (5)

### Dealing with Sleeping Problems (unwillingness to go to bed)

- 1- Make bedtime a special time:** spend some special time with your child. Be firm and go through a certain bedtime routine that your child is used to. At the end of that routine the lights go off and it is time to fall asleep.
- 2- Use a fixed bedtime for your child on school days.**
- 3- Keep to a regular daily routine:** the same waking time, meal times, studying time and play times will help your child to feel secure and comfortable, and help with a smooth bedtime.
- 4. Make after-dinner playtime a relaxing time as too much activity close to bedtime can keep children awake.**
- 4- Use a simple, regular bedtime routine:** it should not last too long, it may include a few simple, quiet activities, such as a light snack, bath, cuddling, saying goodnight, and a story.
- 5. Make sure that the bedroom is comfortable and dark.**
- 6- Make sure your kids have interesting and varied activities during the day:** including physical activity and fresh air.
- 7- Never use sending your child to bed as a threat.**
- 8- Don't give your child foods and drinks with caffeine in them, like hot chocolate, tea, cola, chocolate, etc.**
- 9- Don't let your child watch more than one to two hours of TV during the day.**

**Handout (6)**  
**Preventing bullying**

**What Can Parents Do in Preventing and Responding to Bullying?**

- 1.** As a parent, be aware of bullying, and look for it. Many times children won't ask for help, so it is important to keep an eye on your child's behavior and wellbeing
- 2.** Talk with your child about bullying. Encourage your child to tell someone – yourself, your parent or trustworthy teacher
- 3.** Encourage your child's self-esteem skills (believing they are a good person)
- 4.** Encourage your child's friendship skills
- 5.** Encourage your child's assertiveness skills
- 6.** Encourage your child's conflict management skills
- 7.** Encourage the school to be aware of bullying and to develop anti-bullying policies.

## Handout (7)

### Motivating kids to go to school

- 1. Be inspiring.** Turn everyday events into learning opportunities. Encourage your child to explore the world around him, asking questions and making connections.
- 2. Have meaningful conversations.** Talk with your child and make sure you understand the reasons behind the aversion of school. Give your child the idea that he/she can express her/his feelings
- 3. Celebrate achievements; no matter how small.** Make sure that you reward small achievements. This will improve your child's self-esteem and increases the likelihood of liking school. You'll offer positive reinforcement that will inspire him to keep learning and challenging himself.
- 4. Focus on strengths, encouraging developing talents.** Emphasize children's strengths; do not dwell on their weaknesses.
- 5. Help children understand that it is not always easy to develop proficiency in a subject; it takes time and effort.**
- 6. Be patient and help your child with his/her homework.**
- 7. Explain the importance of education for their future.** Communicate with your child and show empathy about the factors that the child does not like in school but also explain why you think education is key for a better future.



## Handout (8)

### Positive reinforcement

Reinforcement will make the behavior become more likely to occur because of the pleasant consequence which follows the behavior. The child becomes confident and proud, and wants to be praised again. The steps are important when using the positive reinforcement strategy:

1. When your child does something that you like, reward her by smiling or nodding to let her know that you are pleased. Hugs are good rewards, too.

2. Praise your child immediately after the desired behavior

3. Praise your child for good behavior. Be very specific. Tell him exactly what behavior, actions and words you liked. Examples:

“Thank you for cleaning up your room.”

“You were very kind to your little brother.”

4. Remember to compare your child’s behavior to his own past behavior when you praise. Then he can learn how he is growing. Avoid comparing one child with another child.

5. Use praise regularly when monitoring a good behavior that you want to encourage.

## **Handout (9)**

### **Time out**

Time out removes misbehaving children from all sources of positive reinforcement, especially adult attention.

1. Inform and enforce: Always begin by telling your child what he did that is unacceptable, such as hitting, noncompliance and destructive behaviors, explain for the child that he or she had to go to the time out place if he committed any of the previous behaviors for(...) minutes. Give him/her a warning where possible and tell them in a firm, calm voice to go to time out.
2. Choose the right time out location: Preferably, this should be a dull, boring but safe room for a child to be alone in. If you have no choice but to use the children room, you should remove the toys and games. For younger children between ages of four and eight, a "time out chair" in an empty corner of a room or hall away from all family activities can be a substitute.
3. Determine time out length: As a rule of thumb, three minutes for three-year-old, four minutes for four-year-old and five minutes for five and older.
4. Repeat the command: When time out is used because the child did not do something he was told to do, the parent should repeat the original command once the time-out is over. If the child still refuses to obey, then the entire time out sequence should be repeated.
5. Be prepared to handle child leaving time-out: If the misbehaving child comes out of time-out prematurely, calmly return him with a warning of loss of privilege (e.g. no television for the evening, bike locked up for 24 hours). For younger child who gets off a time-out chair, there should be a warning too, e.g. "If you get off the chair again, you will go to time-out room."
6. Apology: Ask your child to say that he is sorry for misbehaving and accept the apology if it is offered in a civil tone of voice. If it's not, give your child a warning and give another time out if he doesn't give you a gently spoken apology.

## Handout (10)

### Modeling

Your child watches you to get clues on how to behave in the world. You're their role model, so use your own behavior to guide them.

- 1. Catch her being 'good'.** This simply means that when your child is behaving in a way you like, you can give her some positive feedback.
- 2. Get down to your child's level.** Kneeling or squatting down next to children is a very powerful tool for communicating positively with them. Getting close allows you to tune in to what they might be feeling or thinking.
- 3. Keep promises.** Stick to agreements. When you follow through on your promises, good or bad, your child learns to trust and respect you.
- 4. Choose your battles.** Before you get involved in anything your child is doing – especially to say 'no' or 'stop' – ask yourself if it really matters. By keeping instructions, requests and negative feedback to a minimum, you create less opportunity for conflict and bad feelings
- 5. Whining- be strong.** Kids don't want to be annoying. By giving in when they're whining for something, you train them to do it more – even if you don't mean to.
- 6. Keep it simple and positive.** If you can give clear instructions in simple terms, your child will know what is expected of him.
- 7. Responsibility and consequences.** As children get older, you can give them more responsibility for their own behavior. You can also give them the chance to experience the natural consequences of that behavior.

**Handout (11)**  
**Response Cost**

Response Cost is the term used for removing reinforcement for an undesirable or disruptive behavior.

1. Identify major problem behaviors that need to be suppressed immediately.
2. Determine the consequences that the child will face for his inappropriate behavior.
3. Introduce the response cost system. For example say to your child, "Because there are certain behaviors that are never tolerated, these behaviors will immediately result in the loss of specific amount of your pocket money. They are arguing, fighting, stealing, and lying."
4. Immediately following the occurrence of an inappropriate behavior that is subject to a response cost, implement the punishment in a calm, matter-off act tone of voice.
5. Be consistent with both the timing and implementation of a response cost system.

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