

Parenting for Success Class #7

Preventive Teaching



Introduction

“An ounce of prevention...”

Now that we’ve learned how to set rules and help our children understand our expectations, let’s discuss how we can address specific situations.

Preventive Teaching is teaching your children what they will need to know for a future situation and helping them practice their responses in advance. Some examples might include how to safely cross the street, how to call 911 in case of an emergency, what types of clothing they should wear during different seasons, etc.



Introduction

Preventive Teaching can be an excellent way to outline expectations for your child in more detail. Preventive Teaching also sets your children up for success by giving them advance opportunities to think about how they will react in a given situation.

Besides, as Ben Franklin said, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”



When to Use It

- Preventive Teaching is an excellent technique to use with your child, especially when the child needs to learn something new or when the child has behaved inappropriately in the past.
- As mentioned previously, Preventive Teaching clarifies your expectations by stating them in a positive way.



Reasonable Expectations

It's important to consider whether your expectations for your child are, indeed, reasonable. You don't want to set them up for failure, so ask yourself the following questions to ensure fairness:

- Have you taught the expectation to your children through parent demonstration?
- Can your children show that they understand the expectation by repeating it back to you?
- Can your children demonstrate what you expect through role playing?



How to Use It

First, ask yourself if you have taught the expectation to your children through parent demonstration? If so, your children will most likely be prepared, and receptive, to your teaching.

The steps to Preventive Teaching are quite simple:

- **Describe what you would like**— before your children can do what you want, they must know what it is you expect. Break the skill down into specific steps or concepts. Make it simple and make sure your child understands.
- **Give a reason**— kids are much more likely to comply with what you say when you give reasons for them to do so. If the reasons are age-appropriate and meaningful to the child, they are more likely to accept what you are teaching.



How to Use It

The steps to Preventive Teaching (continued):

- **Practice**— they may feel embarrassed or think that practicing is a waste of time, but practice actually eases embarrassment and raises a child's self-confidence in their abilities when they are faced with the actual situation. Remember that if you're enthusiastic about practicing, your kids will be more willing to participate. Practice should be fun, yet realistic.
- **Offer praise**— remember to praise areas that your child did well in and encourage your child to work harder in areas that still need improvement.
- **Offer preventive prompts**— experience adds skills, and when your child is faced with a similar situation, you can provide a quick reminder. Remember that prompts are different than warnings—warnings are given when a behavior is already occurring; prompts are given beforehand.



Example #1

Here's an example of how Preventive Teaching could be used with your twelve year old son, Jim:

Jim is about to go outside and play, but on prior occasions, he has had difficulty coming home when he is called. To rectify this behavior, you choose to use Preventive Teaching before he goes out with his friends.



Example #1

Remember the steps to Preventive Teaching:

- **First, describe what you would like**— “Jim, remember when I call you for dinner to let me know that you heard me by saying “okay” and then come right in.”
- **Next, give Jim a reason to comply**— “If you come in right away, you will have a better chance of having time to play after dinner.”
- **Then take a moment to practice**— “Let’s pretend I just called you in. What are you going to say and do?” At this point, Jim says “Okay” and that he will come inside.
- **Conclude by offering a word of praise and a gentle reminder**— “Great! Now run along and have fun, but remember to come right home when I call.”



Example #2

Here's an example of how Preventive Teaching could be used to help your son learn a new skill—the steps to following instructions.

See if you can remember the steps to Preventive Teaching on your own.



Example #2

- “Hi, Mark. I wanted to talk to you about something for a few minutes. If you pay attention and practice with me, we can play a card game together.
- “I wanted to talk to you about a skill called following instructions. To follow instructions, you need to look at the person, say “okay,” do the task, and then check back afterward.
- “Following instructions helps you get things done faster and then you have more free time for yourself.
- “I’m going to show you how to follow instructions. Let’s switch roles for a minute. Why don’t you ask me to hand you that paper? Then, I will look at you, say “okay,” hand you the paper, and then check back to see if there is anything else you need.

(example continued on next slide)



Example #2

- “Now let’s switch back and you can practice. Now, I’ll ask you to hand me the paper...” Remember that if you’re teaching a new skill, have your child practice at least three times.
- “Great job! You looked at me, said “okay,” handed me the paper, and asked if I needed anything else. For doing such a great job paying attention and practicing how to follow instructions, you can pick your favorite game, and we’ll play for 30 minutes.
- “Just remember that when you’re given an instruction, you will need to use all four steps correctly. Great job!”



Conclusion

Preventive Teaching is a great way to teach new skills and to practice for situations where your child may struggle. Preventive Teaching can increase your child's self-esteem by showing them that they can learn how to change their behaviors and avoid problems. Believe it or not, this can also be a great way to strengthen the parent-child relationship because it actively demonstrates that you are invested in your child's success and are willing to work to help them achieve it.



Next Class

But not all problems can be solved in advance. Now that we know how to use Preventive Teaching, our class #8 will look at how to use Corrective Teaching when your child does engage in problem behaviors.

Thank you!

We hope this class was useful to you.

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