

# Parenting for Success Class #8

Corrective Teaching



# Introduction

## Testing Limits

Children are constantly testing limits. In many respects, this is healthy. Testing limits is one way they learn and grow and find out about the world around them. However, when children continually test the limits set by their parents, it can cause problems for the whole family.

Corrective Teaching combines descriptions of behavior with consequences and practice to help respond to negative behavior.



# Staying Calm

One of the toughest things for a parent is to stay calm when their children engage in problem behaviors. Children can be sarcastic, rebellious, defiant, loud, etc. Parents have to prepare themselves for these moments and learn to keep their cool to help defuse the situation.

We're not saying that you won't get angry or even that you shouldn't. That's impossible! But "blowing your top" can make many situations worse. Think about what adults tend to do when they're angry—yelling, swearing, and hitting are all common responses. But what do they teach our children?

It can be helpful for parents to develop a Staying Calm Plan as a first step to Corrective Teaching.



# Staying Calm

## Developing your plan

A Staying Calm Plan is exactly what it sounds like—a strategy to help you control your anger or other emotional outbursts. Sometimes this can be as simple as taking a deep breath and counting to five. In other cases, you may need some extra time to get yourself under control. The trick is understanding your limits and knowing how your children can “push your buttons.”

But learning to control your negative reactions will take some time. Don't get discouraged if you lose your temper every now and then. We all do.



# Tips for Staying Calm

**Practice positive thinking**— when you find yourself thinking negative thoughts, say “Stop it!” to yourself. Then refocus on the positive. This helps you keep control and think through whatever problem you are dealing with.

- “Relax. Take it easy. Take it slow. I’m a good parent, and I can do this. It is going to get better—it just takes time.”
- Even if you don’t see immediate change in your children’s behaviors, recognize that you can at least prevent the problem from getting worse.
- Positive thoughts not only help you control your emotions, they help you to better concentrate on the task at hand—teaching your children better ways to behave.



# Tips for Staying Calm

**Don't take what your child says personally**— children can be very mean. Just remember that when your child is calling you names or being sarcastic that it is because they haven't yet learned the skills necessary to deal with anger and frustration. If you are concerned about something your child has said, talk to them about it after everyone is calm again.

**Use the “take five” rule**— cooling off periods can defuse volatile situations.



# Tips for Staying Calm

**Focus on the behavior in question**— deal with the way your child is acting, not the content. Children will try to provoke you as a way to distract you from their behavior or to engage in a power struggle.

- **If you are angry and do say something you regret, go back and say you're sorry**— this models for your child how to behave when you've made a mistake. Apologize, say what you did wrong, and what you will do differently next time. Some parents worry that apologizing will diminish their power, but the opposite is actually true—it shows confidence and treats your children with respect.
- **Remember that staying calm does not mean you're totally passive**— staying calm just means that you don't react to misbehavior in an angry, aggressive manner.



# Corrective Teaching

Now that you have a personal plan for staying calm, you can refocus your energy on Corrective Teaching as the means by which you can deal with your child's misbehavior.



# When to Use It

- Corrective Teaching is an excellent response anytime your child does something they aren't supposed to. This includes behaviors that are morally or legally wrong, or that are dangerous.
- Through Corrective Teaching, kids don't only learn what you don't like, they learn what to do instead. You are teaching them alternative behaviors.



# Corrective Teaching

## The Steps to Corrective Teaching

- **First, get the child's attention and stop the problem behavior.**
- **Next, express praise and/or empathy.**
- **Describe the inappropriate behavior.**
- **Deliver a consequence.**
- **Describe the appropriate alternative behavior.**
- **Give a reason that is understandable and meaningful to your child.**
- **Finally, consider concluding with a Positive Correction.**



# Reminders

Corrective Teaching includes delivering negative consequences. Remember from Class #3 that negative consequences should:

- Be delivered immediately.
- Fit the “crime.” They should be of appropriate size.
- Be used consistently.
- Be used along with positive consequences.



# Things to Remember

- Be calm before you start.
- You may need to do Corrective Teaching many times.
- Lectures don't change behaviors.
- Decide on a consequence before you begin, and make sure you say that your child has “earned” the consequence. (Don't say “I am giving you” the consequence—this will cause added resentment.)
- Use mild negative consequences first, then escalate as needed. Assign a work chore first, then if the behavior continues, remove a privilege.
- Consider using Positive Correction (discussed on the next page).



# Use Consequences!

Some parents feel uncomfortable delivering consequences, but they are critical to teaching. The time spent teaching to the behavior is not enough. Consequences increase the effectiveness of your teaching. The connection between the behavior and the outcome will be much stronger.



# Positive Correction

Positive Correction is a concept that allows your child to have an opportunity to earn back a privilege or earn a reduced consequence for completing a task or practicing (role play) the appropriate, alternative behavior.

But Positive Corrections only “refund” a portion of the consequence. They never remove the consequence completely.



# Positive Correction

## The Steps to Positive Correction:

- Offer a positive motivation statement—use empathy and mention that the consequence may be somewhat reduced.
- Practice the behavior you want—this will help them remember through repetition.
- Offer praise and reduce the consequence—but don't allow your child to earn back more than half of the original consequence.



# Positive Correction

## Example:

- **Behavior**— Mikey swears and argues with dad when upset.
- **Consequence**— Mikey must wash dad's car.
- **Positive Correction**— Mikey completes a problem-solving discussion with dad on how to express anger. Thus, Mikey only has to wash the car's windows, not the entire car.



# Positive Correction

## The Steps to Positive Correction:

- **Get the child's attention and stop the behavior**— this ensures your child is focused on you. Make sure to give clear instructions (“stop fighting and sit in the chair”). Get at eye level so they'll concentrate on you and your teaching. Finally, if the problem behavior has already stopped, take a moment to describe the behavior so they understand.
- **Express praise or empathy**— offer praise for stopping the behavior and empathy to show you understand. This takes the edge off of what could otherwise become an adversarial confrontation.
- **Describe the inappropriate behavior**— be descriptive but brief. Make sure to use terms your child understands.
- **Deliver a consequence**— this helps reinforce the connection between behavior and outcome for your child. Remember to use the smallest consequence that will work.
- **Describe the appropriate alternative behavior**— again, be clear and specific.
- **Give a reason**— a good reason that is personally relevant to your child will help motivate them to engage in the appropriate behavior. Remember to use reasons that are age-appropriate.
- **Consider using Positive Correction**— this can help your child remember the appropriate behavior by encouraging practice. This can also help them feel better about the situation by allowing them to earn back a portion of the consequence.



# Example

Here's an example of how Corrective Teaching could be used with your daughter, Melissa.

**Try to remember the steps to Preventive Teaching.**



# Example

- **First, get the child's attention and stop the problem behavior**— “Melissa, you need to come over here.”
- **Next, express praise and/or empathy**— “I know that your little sister is bothering you.”
- **Describe the inappropriate behavior**— “...but just now I saw you hit her.”
- **Deliver a consequence**— “Because you hit her, you have earned the chore of wiping off all the countertops in the kitchen.”
- **Describe the appropriate alternative behavior**— “When your sister is bothering you, I need you to control your temper and come tell me instead.”
- **Give a reason**— “If you come to me, then I can help you fix the problem and you won't get in trouble.”
- **Finally, consider concluding with a Positive Correction**



# Example

- **Finally, consider concluding with a Positive Correction**

## **Try to remember the steps of Positive Correction**

- **Offer a positive motivation statement**— “I know you don’t like doing chores, so you have the chance to earn a smaller chore.”
- **Practice the appropriate behavior**— “I want you to pretend that your sister is bothering you, and I want you to practice coming to tell me instead of hitting her.”
- **Offer praise and reduce the consequence**— “Great job! Since you practiced coming to me, instead of hitting, you just need to wipe off this counter, instead of all of them.”



# Conclusion

Although Corrective Teaching and delivering effective consequences are important to reducing inappropriate behavior, the real key to changing behavior is through positive reinforcement!

Catch your children being good. Offer praise and positive consequences for appropriate behaviors. **And remember to praise them at least 4 times as often as your correct them.**

Children are much more motivated to move toward a reward than to avoid a punishment.



# Next Class

In class #9, we will look at how we can deal with angry, out of control children who may not be receptive to Corrective Teaching.

# Thank you!

We hope this class was useful to you.

For more free parenting resources, including additional classes in this series, please visit:

[www.youthvillage.org](http://www.youthvillage.org)

