

Why doesn't my kid LISTEN to me? And...how to make it better.



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Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- **Genetics (They were born with it)**
 - The way their brain works: problems paying attention, negative mood, worrier, impulse control
 - Temperament: outgoing, adaptable, shy, active, emotional, laid-back, risk-taker, strong-willed, intense

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- Accidental rewards: your child ends up “getting something” for misbehavior
 - Attention
 - Objects
 - Activities
 - Food
 - Escape from something they DON'T want to do

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- **Escalation traps:**
 - your kid has learned that if they act worse and worse, you will give in
 - Your kid has learned only to listen to you when you get really mad (It only counts when mom starts to look and sound like a monster)

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- Good behavior doesn't get them anywhere
 - The squeaky wheel gets the grease

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- **Monkey see, monkey do**
 - Yelling when you have a problem
 - Spanking/hitting
 - Losing temper
 - Swearing
 - Messiness
 - Misbehavior that works for siblings

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- **Ineffective instructions**
 - Too many throughout the day (instead label, describe, develop routines)
 - Not enough instructions – no one has explained what to do when you go to the grocery store
 - Unrealistic
 - Bad timing, don't have their attention
 - Unclear
 - Mixed messages

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- Emotional messages
 - Name calling
 - Double sided compliments
 - Shaming
 - Guilt
- Child ends up angry, resentful, and uncooperative
- Sensitive issue – chicken and the egg

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- **Ineffective use of punishment**
 - Threats that are not carried out
 - Delivered in anger
 - A crisis response: The straw that broke the camel's back
 - Inconsistent use of punishment

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- **Skill deficits**
 - Difficulty communicating
 - Trouble coping with strong feelings
 - Poor frustration tolerance
 - Difficulty with independence
 - Poor problem-solver

Causes of Child Behavior Problems

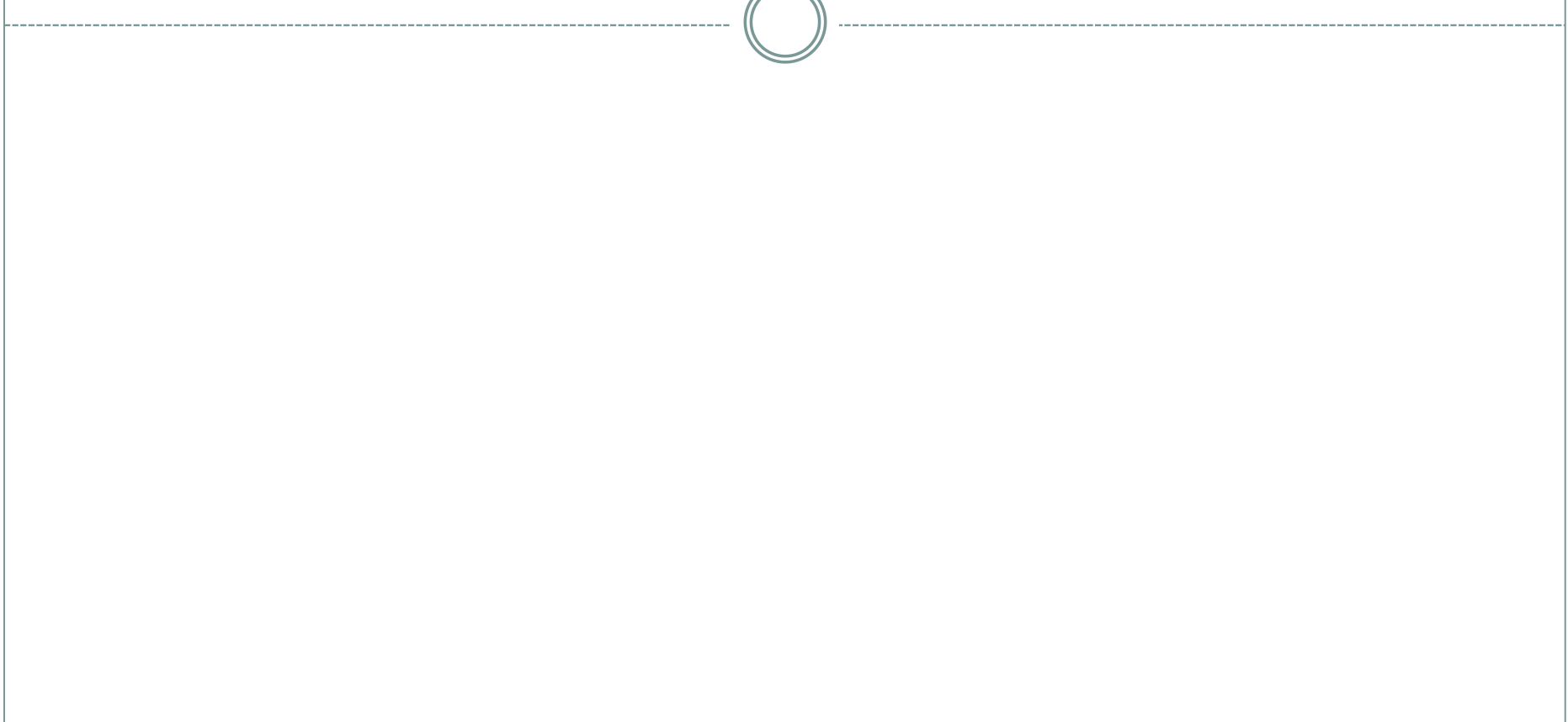


- **Stress in the family**
 - Parents' relationship
 - Parents' emotions
 - Financial problems
 - Parents' stressors from work
 - Siblings' problems
 - Health of family members

Causes of Child Behavior Problems



- **Still More!**
 - Friends
 - School or problems learning
 - Media and technology



Deposits in the Account



- Opportunities for play, exercise, fun activities
- Your time and attention
 - 1 minute at a time
 - Wink, smile, high five
 - Affection
 - Talking
 - Be available
- **DESCRIPTIVE** praise: describe what you like!
- Be a good example

Take Care of Yourself



- Make sure your needs are being met
- Get help and take people up on offers for help
- Rely on resources wherever possible
- Create resources

Teach New Skills



- Find opportunities to teach (when your child asks for information or help)
- Ask, Say, Do
- Meet them where they are and stretch them a step further
- Behavior Charts
- Outline rules and routines
- Reverse roles and play it out

Rules and Instructions



- **Develop clear, reasonable rules**
 - 3-5 rules
 - Fair and followed by everyone
 - Easy to follow, easy to enforce
 - Should tell everyone what TO do
- **Use directed discussion when a rule is broken**
 - Get your child's attention
 - State the problem
 - Explain why it's a problem
 - Tell (or ask your child) the correct behavior
 - Re-do with the correct behavior

Rules and Instructions



- **Give clear, calm instructions**
 - Get close and get your child's attention
 - Be specific and tell your child what to do
 - Allow time (5-10 seconds) and watch
 - Praise cooperation OR...
 - Repeat instruction if it is to get your child to **START**
 - Praise for cooperation OR...
 - Back up with a consequence

Rules and Instructions



- **Consequences**
 - If they don't cooperate with 2 instructions for a START behavior
 - If they don't cooperate with 1 instruction for a STOP behavior
 - ✦ Logical consequences: withdraw the activity or object, no time for a preferred activity
 - ✦ Quiet time
 - ✦ Time out

An important note about instructions...



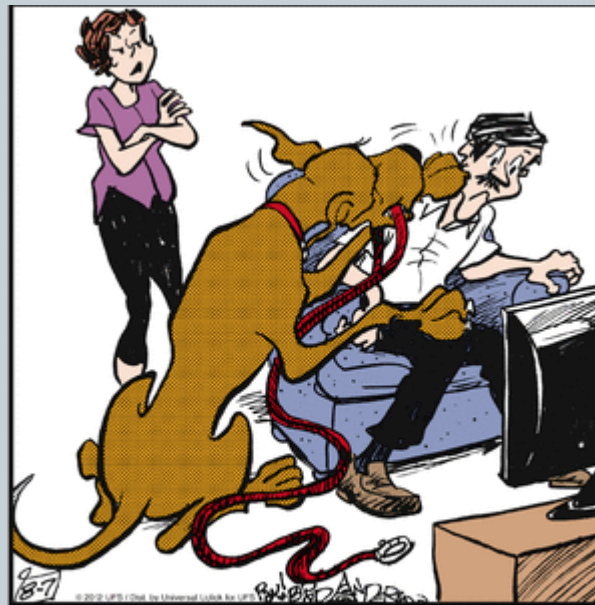
- They must always be backed up. If you give a direction, you have to back it up with praise or a consequence.
- You may not always have the energy, time, or ability to back it up OR you may feel you spend your day giving directions and consequences.
- Sometimes you can replace an instruction with a descriptive statement and kids will actually do what you want! Win-Win!

Ignore Minor Behavior Problems



- Choose the “right” behaviors to ignore
- Pay no attention to those behaviors
- Do not look or talk to your child
- Walk away if necessary
- Stay calm and stay neutral
- AS SOON AS your child stops, return attention and praise

Ignore Minor Behavior Problems



"If you ask me, ignoring Marmaduke is not working."

Ignore Minor Behavior Problems



- With as little attention as possible, remove the child
- Focus on the new behavior and deliver a consequence for the new behavior
- Avoid the escalation trap!