

# Enhancing Your Toolbox:

## *Responding to Challenging Behaviors in the Home Setting*

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# Objectives

- Improve the quality of the parent-child relationship
- Learn tools to help manage challenging behaviors
- Increase compliance
- Practice applying intervention strategies



# Tools for Your Toolbox

## Know Your Child

1. What are their hobbies and interests?
  - a. Ask open ended questions
  - b. Listen and reflect back
2. Take time to enjoy them
  - a. Let them guide the activity
3. Triggers?
  - a. Set them up for success
  - b. Collaborative problem solving
  - c. Validate their experience: it does not matter if they are right or wrong, their feelings are still valid!



# Tools for Your Toolbox

## Know Yourself

1. What do you do for self-care?
  - a. Make time for yourself
  - b. Fuel Up
2. Guide your child's choice
  - a. Learn to drop the rope
3. What are your limits?
  - a. Pick your battles
  - b. Recognize when you need a break
  - c. Tag team if possible



"Taking care of YOU, means the people in your life will receive the best of you, rather than what's left of you" - Carl Bryan

# Tools for Your Toolbox

Be Proactive

Use **Active** Ignoring

Find Replacement Behaviors

Structure and Routine

- Check with Co-Parent
- Be Consistent
- Follow Through



# Communication Tools

## Words-Voice-Body Language

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- Use neutral tone
- Be mindful of your body language
- Use positive language
- Specify expected behavior
- Less is More



# Communication Tools



**1. Model Calmness** - The best way to teach kids how to deal with anger constructively is by showing them through your example! After all, you don't learn how to calm down by reading about it in a book, but by seeing someone do it. So use those frustrating experiences as "on-the-spot lessons" to show your children ways to calm down.

**2. Exit and Calm Down** - One of the toughest parts of working with kids is when children express their anger towards us. If you're not careful, you may find their anger fueling emotions in you that you never realized were in you. Beware: anger is contagious! Take a break and swap out with a team member if you find yourself getting angry.

**3. Let the Student Express Negative Feelings without Judging Them** - Imagine if every time you were upset, some bigger, taller, frowning person looked down at you and said, "Don't feel that way," or "Don't tell me that." Would you feel like shutting up or shouting back?

**4. Ask Yourself, "Am I Really Listening to the Student or Waiting to Tell Student What I Think?"** - Some kids may start to have a tantrum because they don't feel heard. "If you are thinking of what you will say while the child is talking, then you know you are not really listening," advises Michael Thompson, Ph.D



# Communication Tools

**5. Reflect the Student's Feelings** - You might say, "Boy, are you mad!" to a younger child. To older children you might try, "I can see how frustrated you are. Can you tell me what made you feel that way?" ("What" is always more important than "Why" — it asks for specifics and stays away from blame and shame.)

**6. Use this Opportunity to Problem-Solve** - If kids are fighting, you might say, "Let's try to solve this problem another way." Then, ask your child for their idea of what would be fair. You might say, "You don't think it's fair that they got to be the goalie two days in a row. What do you think would be a fair solution?"

**7. Ask Them to Explain it Again** - Even if you disagree, you might say, "Explain to me again why it feels so unfair." This requires the child to settle down and articulate what he feels.

**8. Focus on the Behavior, not his Character** - You might say, "Yelling in the classroom is not OK right now," instead of "How many times do I have to tell you to stop yelling?"

# Group Activity

*It's time to practice using some of the new "tools!"*



1. In small groups, discuss challenging behaviors you have experienced in your relationships.
2. Work within these groups to practice implementing the strategies you've just learned--choose someone to play the part of the child, while someone else plays the adult. The rest will help suggest strategies that may work in this scenario. Then rotate your roles!

**There are many successful ways to manage the situations in the scenarios - stay positive and see what you think would work best!**

