

FIT MODULE 2:

STRUCTURING THE ENVIRONMENT TO PREVENT MISBEHAVIOR



Key Concepts to Remember:

Parents can help children manage their behavior with clear and consistent schedules, routines, rules and directions

- Consistent daily routines and rules help children understand what is expected of them and what they can expect on a day-to-day basis.

Intervening before behavior problems start can prevent misbehavior

- To prevent difficult behaviors before they happen it is important to really think about how your child behaves in different situations and at different times

Strategies that focus on helping children manage feelings can help prevent misbehavior

- Parents can teach children how to express all of their emotions from excitement and gratitude to anger and disappointment in acceptable ways.

FAMILY INTERACTION TRAINING



COURSE FOR PARENTS

FIT PARENTING STRATEGY:

[ESTABLISHING ROUTINES & FAMILY RULES]

Consistent and predictable routines and rules are an important way that parents can structure the environment to help their young children know what to expect and what is expected of them.

- Having a basic order and schedule for most days can help children know generally what will happen during their day.
- Remember to BE CONSISTENT in your daily routine.
- Make routines for specific times of day that are hard, such as bedtime, mealtime, or getting ready for school to help your child manage their behavior during these times.

Remember these basic guidelines to creating effective family rules for young children:

Keep it Simple	Phrase Rules Positively	Clearly Explain the Rules	Have Consistent Follow Through
<p>Limit to a few at any one time.</p> <p>Pick the most important behaviors to focus on.</p> <p>Use simple words that are clear and easy to understand.</p>	<p>Rules should state what to do rather than what not to do.</p> <p>Instead of saying "No hitting, kicking or biting" you may want to say something like "Use gentle hands and feet," or "Keep hands and feet to yourself"</p>	<p>Before using the rules, explain each rule one at a time to your child-</p> <p>1) what each rule means 2) when you will begin using each rule.</p>	<p>Be consistent and follow through every time the rule is broken. !</p> <p>Remember to praise your child when they follow the rules!</p>

[FAMILY RULES] WORKSHEET

Behavior: (to be addressed)	Family Rule: (positively stated)

Remember to limit family rules to a few essential ones focused on the most important behaviors to address in your family. Once you have created a few important family rules, re-write them on the next page in a neat list that you can use as a reference when explaining the new rules to your child, and that you can post in your home as a reminder for everyone!

OUR FAMILY RULES:

1.

2.

3.

4.

FAMILY ROUTINES

Think about your family's daily life and schedule: What are the basic tasks and activities that occur on a "regular" day for your family? List them in the Task/Activity column below. Put a "Y" for yes in the Challenging column for any task or activity that seems stressful or chaotic. For any tasks or activities marked as challenging, mark Y in the routine column if you think a routine would help.

ORDER	TASK/ACTIVITY	Challenging? Y/N	Routine? Y/N
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

OUR _____ ROUTINE

TASKS TO BE DONE	DRAW A PICTURE OF TASK
Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

[ROUTINES & FAMILY RULES] **HOMEWORK**

Use this sheet to track your progress at home this week and review with your trainer during the next session.

1. Did you implement any new rules and routines with your child? If so, what were they?

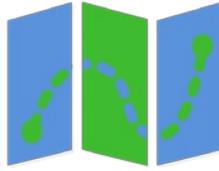
2. Did you explain the rules and routines to your child? How and when?

3. What worked and what did not work?

4. Do you have any questions or ideas about continuing to practice these strategies at home?

FIT PARENTING STRATEGY:

[GIVING CLEAR DIRECTIONS]



Here are some take-home tips for giving clear directions to your child:

BE CLEAR, SPECIFIC AND DIRECT

Just like with praise and rules, directions should be clear and specific so that children understand exactly what you expect them to do.

- Instead of saying "Be nice!" be clear and say *"Please use gentle hands with your brother."* or *"Please take turns with the toys"*
- Instead of suggesting "Let's get ready for bed" be specific and say *"Please put your pajamas on."*
- Instead of asking "How about we clean up these trains?" be direct and say *"Please put the trains away in their basket"*

GIVE DIRECTIONS ONE AT A TIME

Break down complex directions ("Clear your dishes, go get your backpack, and put on our shoes for school") or general directions ("Clean your room") into individual tasks and give simple directions one at a time for these tasks.

- Instead of "Clean your room", try *"Please put the toys away in their bins."* Then when your child is done. *"Please put the clothes in the laundry basket"*, and so on.

BE CALM, NEUTRAL & POLITE models respect for children-they learn from you.

- Calm voice tone, neutral facial expression, and saying *"please"* are all ways to do this
- Example: *"Please use an inside voice"*

GIVE EXPLANATIONS to help children understand why they are being given a direction. Pair directions with simple explanations like this:

- *"Now that you are finished with your breakfast, please clear your dishes"*
- *"It's time to get ready for school now, please go get your backpack."*
- *"I don't want you to get hurt. Please keep your feet on the floor"*

FOLLOW UP WITH PRAISE to encourage your child to keep following directions in the future.

- *"Thank you for doing what I asked right away".*
- *"I like the way you put the toys away so we can have dinner".*

[GIVING CLEAR DIRECTIONS] WORKSHEET

Correct these directions to make them direct, specific, and polite:

Instead of "Don't touch that!" You could say:

Instead of "How about you sit in your chair?" You could say:

Instead of "Let's get ready!" You could say:

Instead of "No more toys...it's bedtime" You could say:

Instead of "Let's put your hat on...it's cold outside" You could say:

Instead of saying "Let's take your muddy shoes off" You could say:

Instead of saying "Let's be gentle with the baby" You could say:

[GIVING CLEAR DIRECTIONS] HOMEWORK

List 5 examples of times you used the clear directions strategy.

Note what direction you gave and any observations you made about how it felt, and how your child responded:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

FIT PARENTING STRATEGY:

[EASING TRANSITIONS, PLANNING AHEAD, USING REDIRECTION, AND PROVIDING CHOICES]



Using these strategies during difficult times can help prevent problem behaviors. And always remember to use praise and other positive attention for appropriate behavior!

EASING TRANSITIONS

- Change and transitions are often difficult for children.
- Give a "heads up" or time warning that a change is coming. "It will be bedtime soon. You have 5 more minutes before it will be time to clean up."

PLANNING AHEAD

- Long waits or other activities where there is little for a child to do are often difficult. It helps to plan ahead for what your child may need.
- Bring a small toy, activity, or snack when you know your child may get bored, hungry, or tired.
- Find some jobs or tasks your child can do while running errands or while you need to make dinner or do another chore. "Help me find the bananas." "Count 3 apples for me." "See if you can find your shirts in the laundry!"

REDIRECTION

- It's easier to redirect and change a child's behavior than to stop it once it has started. Rather than telling kids "no," tell them what you want them to do instead.
 - If you see your child seems to want to throw hard blocks, direct them to a toy that can be thrown like a soft toy or ball or show them how to stack the blocks.
 - If something needs to be taken away or an activity ended, distract them with a different toy or the next activity, or let them know about something that coming next.

PROVIDING CHOICES

- Parents can help support children's development and decision-making ability and reduce conflict by letting their child have choices when possible.
- Limit choices to two for young children. "Do you want your red shoes or your boots?" "Do you want your sandwich cut in half or in triangles?"
- Only provide your child with choices that you can live with – no matter what choice your child may make!

What tasks, activities, situations or times of day are hard for your child? List them in the Situation/ Activity column below. List some strategies you might try to help your child during these times. In the third column, give yourself a brief reminder of how it would help.

Situation or Activity	What can you try?	How would it help?

Use this sheet to track your progress at home this week and review with your trainer during the next session.

1. What situations did you use the strategies in?

2. What happened?

3. What skills did you try?

4. What worked and what did not work?

FIT PARENTING STRATEGY:

[HELPING YOUR CHILD CALM DOWN]



Here are some strategies to support your young child and help prevent and manage difficult behaviors like meltdowns and over-excitement.

ANTICIPATE DIFFICULT TIMES

- Think about places and situations and times that may have triggered problem behaviors and meltdowns.
- Are they are tired, hungry or over-excited?
- Respond in a way that fits your child's need at that time:
- Options include giving a snack or activity, providing extra closeness and comfort, offering breaks from activities or stimulating interactions. You can also give a heads up about transitions or use redirection.

LABEL FEELINGS

- Labeling feelings helps young children learn to identify, understand, and begin to manage their emotions. They can then use their words to express their feelings rather than their behaviors. You can help them develop an emotional vocabulary to of words like happy, sad, mad, worried, frustrated, excited, etc.

COMFORT AND REASSURE

- Providing physical comfort and reassurance can help young children calm down. Sometimes your young child's emotions will just feel overwhelming. Picking them up, giving a hug, humming or singing to them, or even just sitting close can help. Remember to stay calm yourself.

TEACH CALMING DOWN

- Model strategies you use to calm down/feel better. This may be taking deep breaths, going to a calm quiet place for a break, listening to music, or doing a soothing activity. Your child will learn a lot by watching how you stay calm when faced with difficult situations and emotions. You can also cue them to use these strategies – and praise them for doing so!

[HELPING YOUR CHILD CALM DOWN] WORKSHEET

What tasks, activities, situations or times of day are hard for your child? List them in the Situation/Activity column below. List what warning signs suggest your child is finding it harder to cope? In the third column, identify what you think your child is feeling, a way to label that emotion for your child, and strategies you can try. You can also identify acceptable ways are to express that emotion in your family.

Situation or Activity	What are my child's warning signs?	1) What is my child feeling? 2) How would I label that emotion? 3) What calming strategy can I try?
		1) 2) 3)

[HELPING YOUR CHILD CALM DOWN]

HOMEWORK

Use this sheet to track your progress at home this week and review with your trainer during the next session.

1. Did you use the strategies to help your child calm down this week? What were the situations?

2. What strategies did you try?

3. What happened? What worked and what did not work?