



Top Ten Behavior Tips

You can help your child learn, grow, and build a trusting relationship with you! These techniques can also help change behavior, but they take time and consistency.

1 Catch Your Child Being “Good”

Pay more attention to the behaviors you’d like to see and less attention to the behaviors that you don’t want to see. Children love your attention, and will repeat things over and over to get your reaction.

For example, you can say:

“I notice you playing so nicely with your brother. Thank you! That really helps me.”

2 Create Routines and Stick to Them

Having meals, naps, and bedtime routines at the same time each day, will help children feel safe and know what to expect.

For example, try following the same bedtime routine each night. Pick something that helps you both relax for sleep. If you need ideas, try a bath, book, snuggle, and bed.

3 Prepare for Daily Transitions

Moving from one activity to the next, called a transition, can be difficult for a child. Letting your child know what’s coming up next helps prepare them.

For example:

“Remember, two more turns on the slide and we have to leave the playground.”

4 Set Limits and Explain Why

Letting your child know what the rules are helps them understand what they are supposed to do or not do. Your limits and expectations will change as your child grows and is able to do more.

For example:

“I can’t let you run with the scissors. They are sharp and could hurt you.”

5 Give Clear and Simple Instructions

Get on your child’s eye level and explain exactly what you want them to do in a friendly voice. This will help younger children follow instructions.

For example:

“Let’s get ready to go outside. Please bring me your coat so I can help you put it on.”



6 Give Choices When Possible

Offering a child a choice can help them feel in control of their own behavior. Offer no more than two choices and make sure that you are okay with whatever they choose.

For example:

“Would you like to walk or sit in the stroller?”

7 Plan Ahead

While you cannot prevent all tantrums, you may notice patterns in your child’s behavior or things that make them more likely to melt down. Try to anticipate and plan accordingly.

For example, if you know your child is tired when they come home from school, give them time to unwind before asking them to do something.

8 Tie the Consequences to the Action

If your child isn’t using something the safe way, remove it. Try to make the consequences fit the action, and avoid removing something else unrelated.

For example:

“I’m taking your car away because you are banging it against the wall. You can have it back when you are ready to play with it on the floor.”

9 Take a Moment

Help your child find ways to calm themselves down, like taking deep breaths or practicing mindfulness. This can help them have more tools to settle down when they are upset.

For example, try taking 2 deep breaths as part of your bedtime routine to help them calm down their body.

10 Be a Positive Role Model

Children learn by watching their parents. How you react to a difficult situation teaches your child how to react.

For example, try modeling counting to three before you react and talking about your feelings, and your children will be more likely to do these things too.