

CASA Infant and Preschool Services  
Enhanced Intake Group

## Session 3: Improving Behaviour Through Proactive Parenting

Online Version



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## Check in from last session

- If you have any questions, please reach out to CASA IPS



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## Welcome

- This is the first video in our 3-part Enhanced Intake series:
  1. Orientation to CASA and Child Development
  2. Supporting Emotional Regulation in Young Children
  3. **Improving Behaviour through Proactive Parenting**
- This series is attended in person or online following a referral to Infant and Preschool Services
- Please take some time in between each session so that you have time to try some of the strategies and see what works for you
- This series is intended to provide you with some helpful strategies and to help us identify which type of service might be the best fit for you and your family
- Reminder to go slowly, take breaks if needed, and to reach out for support

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## Goals for Today



- Explore use of praise and positive attention to reinforce behaviour
- Discuss the importance of limit setting and how to give effective commands
- Learn about natural and logical consequences
- Review sessions and explore next steps

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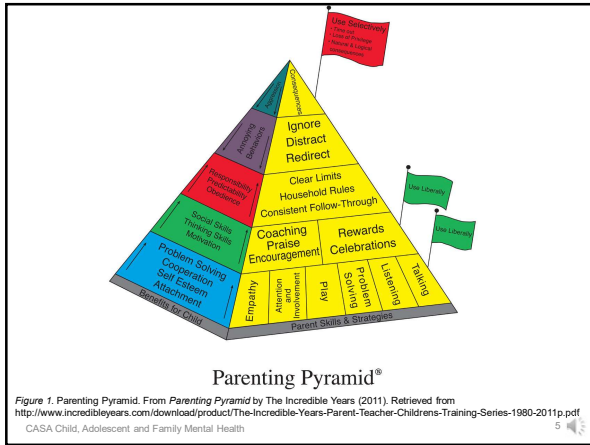
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## Being a Balanced Parent




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## Importance of Consistency and “Picking Battles”

- It can be very difficult to be consistent, therefore it is critical that you **“pick your battles”** with your child. If you are going to ask your child to do something and they do not follow through, you need to follow through with a consequence, **every time**.
- Do not threaten anything you cannot follow through on.
- If you find that there is a situation where you cannot enforce a rule, be clear with your child that this is a **rare** exception. Parents can change the rules, but it is important not to let the behaviour change the rule.

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## Using Praise to Reinforce Behaviour

- It can become easy to focus on what they are doing wrong rather than on what they are doing right.
- Children tend to get much more negative feedback than positive feedback, which can lead to a vicious cycle of social, emotional and behavioural problems.



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## Effective Use of Praise Facilitates Development

- Praising good behaviour makes it more likely that the good behaviour will happen again
- Praising children is likely to help them see themselves positively, which in turn leads to emotional well-being and good behaviour.
- Praise is also thought to be an important part of creating a warm and nurturing parent-child relationship, which is critical in children’s development

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## Important Qualities of Praise

- Be specific and genuine
- **Praise the behaviour**, not the child.
  - E.g. "Nice job cleaning up your toys!" instead of, "Good boy!"
- **Praise the effort**, not the outcome.
  - E.g. "Wow, you are really working hard at that drawing"
- Avoid praise that is mixed with criticism
  - E.g. "You did a great job staying near me in the grocery store. Why can't you do that every time?"



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## How to Give Positive Attention

- **One-on-One Time**
  - Parents should try to find 10 minutes a day to focus on playing with their children
  - Time should be intentional and undivided. It can be helpful to have a planned time of day
  - Parents should find an activity that is mutually enjoyable for both you and your child. Whenever possible, follow your child's lead.
  - Parents do not have to be playing interactively with the child. It could involve parents actively watching, commenting and describing the play
  - If the child is hyperactive during this time, parents should try not to discourage the hyperactivity unless it is dangerous

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## How to Give Positive Attention

- **Describe children's activities**
  - Use narration to describe children's behaviour as they engage in activity
- **Nonverbal Ways of Positively Attending**
  - Eye contact
  - Warm/enthusiastic voice
  - Being physically close
  - Physical affection

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## Importance of Limit Setting

- It is important for parents to set limits on inappropriate behaviours.
- Children will test the limits you set.
- Through testing, children learn whether or not the rule is really a rule and whether or not you will be consistent.

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## Using Effective Commands to Set Limits

- **Command**
  - Given in the form of a statement
  - Should be used when it is important that the child comply with the parental directive
- **Request**
  - In the form of a question
  - Can be used when compliance is optional or not particularly important

*Parents should use both commands, to increase compliance, as well as requests, to model politeness.*

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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness

### **Be Clear and Specific**

- Avoid vague commands
- Avoid saying "let's" when parents want their children to do something by themselves
  - i.e. "Let's pick up your toys," when you actually mean is: "Please pick up your toys"

### **Avoid Questions**

- Unless you are willing to accept no for an answer
  - i.e. "Do you want to get ready to go home now?"

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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness

### Give Positive Directions

- Tell children what **to do** rather than what **not** to do
  - i.e. instead of saying "Do not throw your coat on the floor", say, "Hang up your coat"
- Use "**when/then**" or "**first/then**" to take the "no" out of the situation
  - Increases a child's compliance to direction or a non-motivating task in a positive way
  - Child gets to do what they want after complying
  - Helps to decrease arguments and power struggles

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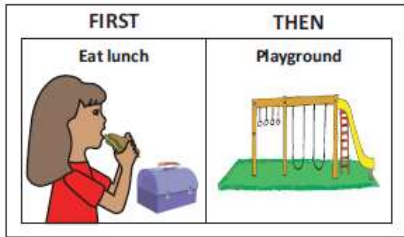
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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness



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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness

### Give One Command at a Time

- Preschoolers will not be able to remember all the parts in a multistep command, and parents will not be able to praise or use consequences when all those tasks are lumped together

### Give Children Time to Comply

- Wait for children to comply rather than repeating yourself.
- If parents repeat their command over and over without any consequence for noncompliance, children learn they do not really have to comply when a command is given.

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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness

### Keep Transition Times in Mind

- Track transitions and remind children when they are coming up
- Visuals help support many children in knowing what is coming and what to expect.
- Visual schedules are recommended for **all** ages and stages.

### Try to Reduce the Number of Commands

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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness

### Visual Schedules

Washing hands	
	Water on
	Hands wet
	Rub hands with soap
	Rub hands Twinkle Star
	Rinse
	Water off
	Dry

Arrival at school		
1		Take off coat
2		Open Backpack
3		Take out work
4		Take out lunch
5		Hang up coat
6		Hang up backpack

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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness

### Get the Child's Attention Before Giving a Command

- **“Connection before Direction”**
  - Increases attunement
  - Allows time for child to switch their brain “off” from one task and “on” to another.
- **Avoid giving commands from another room**
- **Remove distractions**
- **Maintain eye contact** with the child (but don't turn this into a battle, particularly if you know the child is paying attention to you)
- Sometimes it is helpful to have the **child repeat the command** back to ensure they understood

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## How to Phrase Commands to Increase Effectiveness

### State the Command

- Use a **firm voice**
- Use a matter of fact tone **without yelling**
- **Minimize reason** for command. If pairing the command with a brief reason, keep it short or child will start to tune out
  - i.e. "Hold my hand so we can be safe crossing the street"

### Wait 5 Seconds

- Count to **5 seconds** in your head while waiting expectantly
- If the child complies, parents can **praise** the child
- If not, parents can **give a warning** followed by another 5 second wait
- If the child does not comply, follow through with a **consequence**

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## Natural and Logical Consequences

- **Consequence**: The result of something a person does
- Letting children experience the natural or logical consequences of their actions can teach responsibility
- **Natural consequence**: The inevitable result of a child's own actions
  - i.e. Going outside in winter with no coat
- **Logical consequence**: Happens as a result of a child's action, but is imposed by the parent or caregiver
  - i.e. Bike is taken away if you don't follow rules

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## Natural and Logical Consequences

- Natural and logical consequences can be an effective strategy to use because:
  - The consequence is closely tied to the behavior, and gives the child a chance to learn what happens when they don't behave in the way you expect them to behave.
  - It is concerned with present and future behavior and helps children learn to be responsible for their own actions.
  - It lets children make a choice.

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## Natural and Logical Consequences

- While they can be an effective:
  - The parent must be able to think ahead and come up with a proper response.
  - The child must be allowed to experience the consequence.
  - The consequence takes time to put into action and often does not work the first time.
  - **REMEMBER:** If your child is not regulated, they may not be able to make sense of consequences in the moment. Regulate first!

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## Summary of Sessions

- Session 1: Orientation and Development
- Session 2: Emotional Regulation in Preschoolers
- Session 3: Improving Behaviour through Proactive Parenting

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## Next Steps

- The information provided is helpful for all children, yet may not fully meet the specific needs you have for your child.
- You will be asked to sign up to meet with our Clinical Care Coordinator to let us know what areas you continue to need support, and you will receive our recommendation on next steps for receiving services

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Thank You!

Please Complete an Evaluation



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