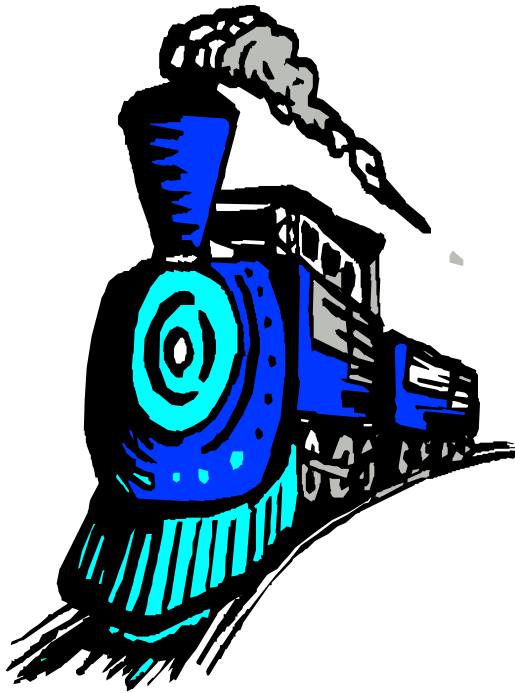


Helping Your Kids to Be All That They Can Be!



Using a Positive, Strength-Based Approach  
for Effective Parenting

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# The Power of a Positive, Strength-Based Approach

**What is it?:** An emerging approach to raising kids that is exceptionally positive and inspiring. It begins with belief that all young people have or can develop strengths and/or utilize past successes to mitigate problem behavior and enhance functioning. It continues with practice methods that identify and marshal these strengths for necessary behavior change

## Strength-Based Practice: It's all about *Attitude & Actions*

Educators, professionals and parents maximize children's potential when they convey an attitude to each and every one that says:

I believe in all of you and I am *thrilled* to be part of your life.  
And then, through their daily actions - show that they mean it.

Research has shown that a student entering high school with a history of violence, is not likely to commit further acts of aggression (at his/her school) *if* the student believes there is at least one educator at the school that thinks "I'm terrific!"

- James Garborino, Ph.D.



When kids feel better about themselves they are more likely to use and cultivate their strengths.

"Positive emotions flood our brains with dopamine and serotonin, chemicals that not only make us feel good, but dial up the learning centers of our brains to higher levels. Positive emotions help humans to organize new information, keep that information in the brain longer, and retrieve it faster later on. And they enable us to make and sustain more neural connections, which allows us to think more quickly and creatively, become more skilled at complex analysis and problem solving, and see and invent new ways of doing things."

- Sean Achor, Happiness Advantage

A smile and a warm greeting is the face's way of giving an emotional hug. (Welcome to Moe's!) Do the "little" things right (e.g. greet warmly, maintain a neat and appealing environment, etc.) and big problems diminish. This is what we call the: *Broken Window Theory* ("How are you?" "Fantastic!" "All the better for seeing you!" "I'm living the dream, and you?")

Genuine believing attacks self-doubt, makes kids feel better about themselves, and provides hope... *Hope is Humanity's Fuel.* "Self-doubt kills ability. -Degas

Twenty years from now, your kids won't remember much of what you said to them, but they'll all recall how you made them feel.

Have you ever watched an actor in a bad mood? If you're in a bad mood, it might be prudent to fake that you're not. Actors entertain for a few hours. Parents shape lives.

A positive attitude sends the message: I want to be here. I care about you. I believe in you. You will make it.

## The Power of Believing & Accepting

### & a Strength-Based Approach



“He’s a little horse, but he doesn’t know he’s a little horse. He thinks he’s BIG!”

And sometimes when a little guy doesn’t know he’s a little guy, he does great BIG things!”

Charles Howard, Owner

**Seabiscuit**

When children sense deep inside that their parents truly believe in them, and accept them for who they are, it is a gift of great hope and promise.

#### Strength-Based Tips:

1. When your kids ask you to do something that’s a little out of their reach, such as a fourteen-year-old who wants to ride his bike a far distance, try and say “yes” a little more than “no.” “Yes” sends the message “I think you can do this,” which instills confidence and builds a greater sense of self. And if they fail, that’s a good life lesson. Let them try again! Practice the desired behavior. This helps your kids develop *grit & character!*
2. Accept & love your kids for who they are and let them follow their own paths. In other words, appreciate each of your children’s different personalities and traits and encourage them to pursue activities and endeavors that *they* enjoy and have an aptitude for. Let them follow *their* dreams not yours. *Love and accept your children for who they are not what you want(ed) them to be!* Be personality correct.
3. Be ready to mourn the loss of what you wanted in your child. In the clinical world it is said: You can’t say “hello” until you say “goodbye.”  
Stages of grief: Shock & Denial > Anger > Sadness > Acceptance

## Decoding Problem Behavior

Response to problem behavior: Understand > Reframe > Squeeze

*Behavior is always a message*

<b>Pejorative Label</b>	<b>Positive, Hope-Based Reframe</b>
Obnoxious	Good at pushing people away
Rude, arrogant	Good at affecting people
Resistant	Cautious
Lazy, un-invested	Good at preventing further hurts, failures
Manipulative	Good at getting needs met
Just looking for attention	Good at caring about and loving yourself
Close-mouthed	Loyal to family or friends
Different, odd	Under-appreciated
Stubborn & defiant	Good at standing up for yourself
Tantrum, fit, outburst	Big message
Learning disability	Roadblocks

*Life isn't what you see, it's what you perceive!*

When you change the way you look at a challenging youth ...the youth changes.

Pejorative labels lead to the creation of *stereotype myths* (entrenched , negative self-perceptions) – Gladwell, *Outliers*

Dweck (Mindset): Encourage *Growth* vs. *Fixed* Mindsets

Growth: Value and encourage effort, trying, failing (trying again)

Fixed: Discourage fixed self-perceptions (e.g. I'm smart, I'm the best, etc.)

## Reframing

Seeing and praising the positive, self-protective value in “negative” behaviors. Careful attention should be given to the age and cognitive level of a child before using a reframe.

1. A child who is always looking for attention:

**R:** I think it's great you look for attention – good or bad. It means you feel you deserve more and that's good. But I'm like a pie and have to make sure everyone gets an equal slice

2. A youth who acts rudely:

**R:** You have an amazing ability to affect people! Or, “I think you're pretty good at giving to others what you've received.”

3. A youth who cheats on an exam:

**R:** I'm glad you wanted to pass, get a top grade. That's great! But you made a real bad choice to cheat. You can pass any test on your own.

4. A child who acts in a stubborn manner:

**R:** You're good at standing up for yourself and what you believe. Some of the greatest people in the world were quite stubborn about their causes: Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa. But the great ones all new when to give in a little.

5. A youth who seems unmotivated:

**R:** You're pretty good at protecting yourself. If you don't try you can't be embarrassed. But you're a bright kid and if you just take it step by step you'll probably have success.

6. A child who's bossy with peers:

**R:** You've got great leadership skills. You're a natural.

# Changing Mindsets

“For twenty years, my research has shown that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects that way you lead your life.”

Carol Dweck (2006) *Mindset*

- Encourage *growth* vs. fixed mindsets.
- Encourage effort and trying...normalize failing and making mistakes.
- Explain that failing opens up an opportunity to learn something new. Discourage fixed self-perceptions: “*I’m smart*, I’m the best, I always do good at this,” etc.



Be the EAGLE: “The harder I try, the higher I fly!”  
“What’s a mistake? A chance to learn something new.” “An opportunity to take!”  
“If I don’t win, just grin!” If I lose, don’t get the blues!”

Note: It’s good to encourage effort – but only IF the kids have the proper skills and strategies to accomplish the task(s) at hand.

Consenting view: What is the message we might be sending kids if we never call them smart?

What does it mean to be smart?

- Smart means that you’re smart enough to know that you’ll make mistakes from time to time and sometimes fail at something. But these will all be chances to learn something new!
  - Smart means that if you don’t know something it’s okay to ask for help.
  - Smart means you’re capable of learning and using new information every day!
  - Smart means you can use your brain to be very successful in life!
  - If I don’t know how to do something, check out how others are doing it.
  - Smart means \_\_\_\_\_
- 
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“If it’s stinkin’, change the thinkin’!”

## Stinkin’ Thinkin’

I’m not good

It’s good enough

I can’t make this any better.

This is hard.

I don’t understand.

## Replacement (Eagle) Thought(s)

I’m on the right track

Is this really my best work

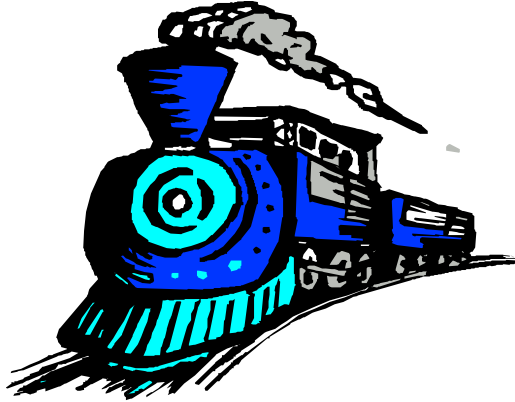
I can always improve. I’ll keep trying

This might take more time and effort.

What am I missing?

# Providing Hope & Possibility Through Metaphors & Positive Predicting

## The Train



“You’re big and powerful...but you’ve gotten off track. All great trains get off track. What can we do to get to get you back on the rails? You *will* get to a good place.”

## The Roadblock



“It’s not a learning disability, bipolar, Asperger’s; it’s a roadblock. All big cities have them, but people get to work on time every day. Why? They find away around it. You can to. Many successful people have roadblocks similar to yours.”

## The Melting Snowball



“See your fears and worries about (pending issue/loss/transition) as a big snowball in the middle of your chest, and understand that as each day goes by, it’s going to melt a little. It may stay forever...but it will become so small that you can build a great life around it.”

## The 2019 Edition



“Cars improve every year. People get better every day. You’re the 2019 Steve. You don’t over-heat as much as the 2018 Steve...have a sleeker design, follow the road signs better. Don’t give me this bull: ‘Same old me.’ You get better every day, man...wiser, more experienced, more mature.”

## Visualizing the Future

James Garbarino postulates that terminal thinking – the inability to articulate one’s future – may be the clue to why some children succeed while other’s fail.

### Positive Predicting

When you talk about the future in positive terms, you make any desired outcome more possible. And when it’s more possible, it becomes more probable!

“How should we celebrate when you...”

“Who should we call to tell them you’re going to the potty by yourself?”

Kids with executive functioning issues are often helped by seeing photographs of an expected task or behavior. They need to visualize what is expected.

Three Universal Truths from Kids at Hope ([KidsatHope.com](http://KidsatHope.com)):

1. Children succeed when they are surrounded by adults who believe they can succeed no exceptions.
2. Children succeed when they have meaningful and sustainable relationships with caring adults.
3. Children succeed when they can articulate their future in four domains rather than one, which is generally Education and Career; Community and Service; Hobbies and Recreation.

Create questions that you can ask your kids:

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## Activities & Self Esteem Building

To help children enhance self esteem, provide tasks and activities that offer a:

### Universal Opportunity for Individual Success

Create and/or modify tasks and activities to maximize success opportunities & *draw out and amplify existing strengths and talents*

#### Self-Esteem Building Options:

- Games: Board, video, bingo, athletic (tag, shipwreck, Simon-says, etc.)
- Special events (food drives, car washes, bottle-collecting, walk-a-thons)
- Karaoke & music (concerts, kazoo bands, shows, music videos, lip-syncing, etc.)
- Volunteering (w/handicapped, elderly, younger kids, animals, etc.)
- Sports (bowling, karate, roller-skating, soccer, etc.)
- Fitness (create fitness charts, aerobics, jogging/walking, meditation, rope and obstacle courses, etc.)
- Hobbies (art, theater, music, crafts, pottery, card and/or coin collecting, carpentry, photography, magic, etc.)
- Animals (pets, therapeutic horse-back riding, fish, etc.)
- Home repair jobs (painting, landscaping, repairing, etc.)
- Religious endeavors



P.57 “Every child has an area of strength in which he or she excels, Whether it is in academics, art, music, or sports. When educators can identify and focus on a child’s strength, they afford the child the opportunity to experience success, with all the emotional implications of doing something well. This is an important starting point in mastering academic content and social relations, which in turn serve as a basis for success at school.”

*Every kid needs his/her own special niche!*

*Trumpet Success*

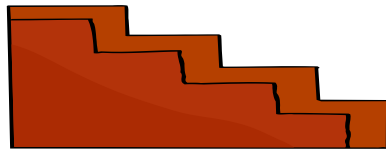
Call friends and grandparents with good news....keep a scrapbook....hang pictures.



## Helping Inflexible/Explosive Children & Youth

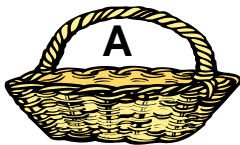
### Characteristics of Such Kids:

- Display deficits in frustration tolerance
- Generally do not respond well to consequences and rewards (i.e. traditional motivational approaches)
- Symptoms are thought to emanate more from neurological as opposed to psychological factors
- Prone to stubborn, inflexible, explosive outbursts
- Often display genuine remorse after an episode

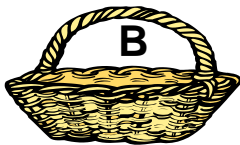


### How to Help:

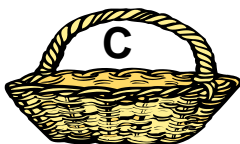
- Create *user-friendly* environments to *clear the smoke* (take the air out of the balloon)
- Determine which behaviors need to be addressed and how best to respond. Categorize behaviors and responses into one of three baskets:  
A = Non-negotiable                      B = Compromise & Negotiation                      C = Ignore
- As kids *meltdown* and approach *vapor lock*, immediately *distract, empathize*, and offer aid. Help them to downshift into a calmer state (i.e. make the *cognitive shift*).



*A = Non-negotiable, often a safety concern. Consequences could be issued.*



*B = Room for compromise & negotiation*



*C = Ignore*

## **Cues to Use (Coping Thoughts/One-Line Raps)**

Encourage kids to create and practice coping thoughts - in the form of cues or one-line raps – to diminish or eradicate problem behaviors (i.e. bad habits). Cues are more successful when they rhyme, are rhythmic, humorous and repeated often. Practice makes perfect!

*The brain is designed to change in response to patterned, repetitive stimulation.*

### **Anger Control**

NBD...easier than 1-2-3! NO BIG DEAL!

Stop and think, don't be a dink!

Let it go, Joe (Just stay cool no need to blow)

Let it go...So (So I can be happy or earn things, etc.)

When you're mad...don't do bad (or don't get sad)...just talk or walk.

Talk, walk, or squawk! Think before I act, that's the fact!

Stay in control, that's the goal. I can, I will, I gotta chill.

### **Social**

Take turns when you talk, if you don't the kids will walk.

Give kids their space, it's their place. Here's some advice, talk real nice.

Don't poke, it's not a joke.

Stop and think, don't be a dink.

Stay arms lengths away...today.

### **Following Through/ Being Independent/ADD**

Don't quit, take it bit by bit

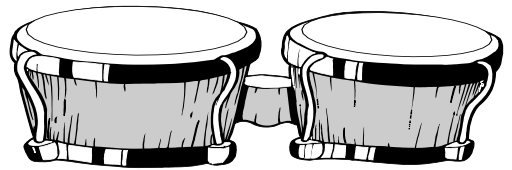
Inch by inch, life's a cinch. Yard by yard, life's not as hard.

Take it little by little and play da fiddle!

Like a king on a throne, I can start on my own.

Step after step, that's the prep. Take it inch by inch...it's a cinch!

Sit and relax, learn to the max! Make a list, it will assist.



**Use Bongos!**

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

I can make it if I choose, time to quit the drugs and booze.

If you lose hope, don't do dope.

### **Anxiety**

Don't be in a hurry to worry. Breath in, breath out, lose doubt.

Stop and listen, cause you don't know what you're missing.

### **Encouragement/Affirmations**

I'm smart. It's in my heart. Learning is your (my) ticket to a good life.

I can make it if I choose...Only I can make me lose. If it is to be, it's up to me!

The harder I try, the higher I fly!

View more cues  
at [www.charliea.com](http://www.charliea.com)

## Humor at Home

### Role of Humor

- Forms a bridge between adult/child world (i.e. counters resistance)
- De-mystifies individual persona/reduces power messages
- Enhances relationship building
- Tension reducer
- Provides effective modeling
- Improves self-esteem
- Enhances identity formation (e.g. niche theory)
- It's FUN!!!
- It's reflective of the environment
- Demonstrates caring

### Rules:

- Try! But give up quick
- Do not view the use of humor as an *extra*; it should be an integral communication technique.
- Make no assumptions about who can or can't be humorous - for everyone is capable!
- Avoid sarcasm

### Forms:

- Self-Deprecating
- Slapstick
- Joke Telling
- Grandiose Praise
- Humorous Games
- Musical Expression
- Poetry



### Transitional Objects & Humor

Sustain "humorous" moments via:

The written word    Photos    Recordings    Videos

# The Observing Ego

“I’m REALLY ticked...I could just - it’s okay. Stay cool...ALL feelings are normal. Learn from this. I’m suffering a bad self-esteem injury, but in a little while it will heal.

**Respond** instead of **React**.

*Use the Force, Betty!*

*...I mean, Luke.”*

Lack of support leads to punitive actions.

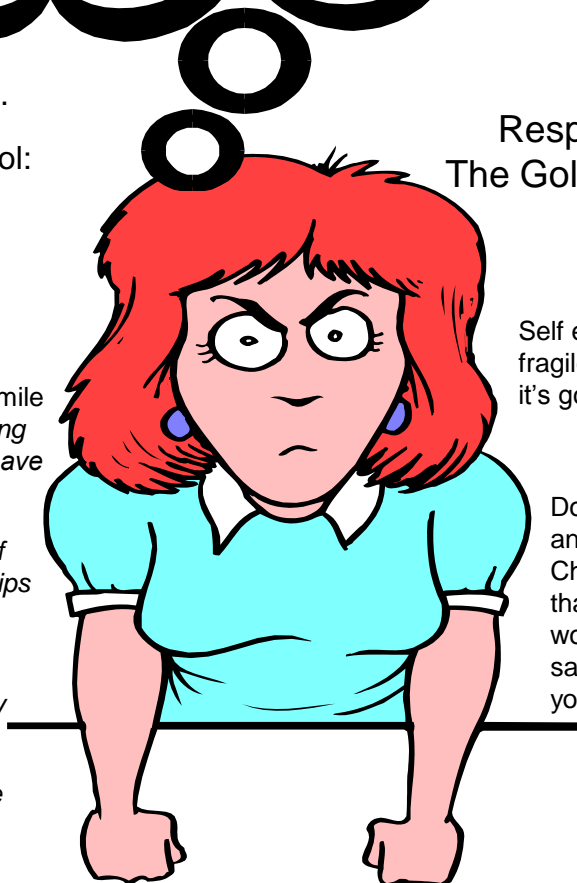
Strategies to use in order to keep your cool:

1. Think about the principle of lack of support being related to punitive actions – and don’t go there. Think: *“I can do anything for 90 more minutes!”*
2. Visualize yourself going to bed with a BIG smile on your face or driving home content, *thinking “I kept my cool all day. I didn’t ‘react’ like I have in the past. I did good!”*
3. Think about tomorrow: *If I respond instead of react to the end of every day, my relationships will grow stronger...and the job will get easier.*
4. Think about a M.A.S.H. Unit: *When I’m at my worst, I need to give it my best!*
5. **Use the Force, Luke!** *Don’t succumb to the Dark Side.*

Respond =  
The Golden Rule

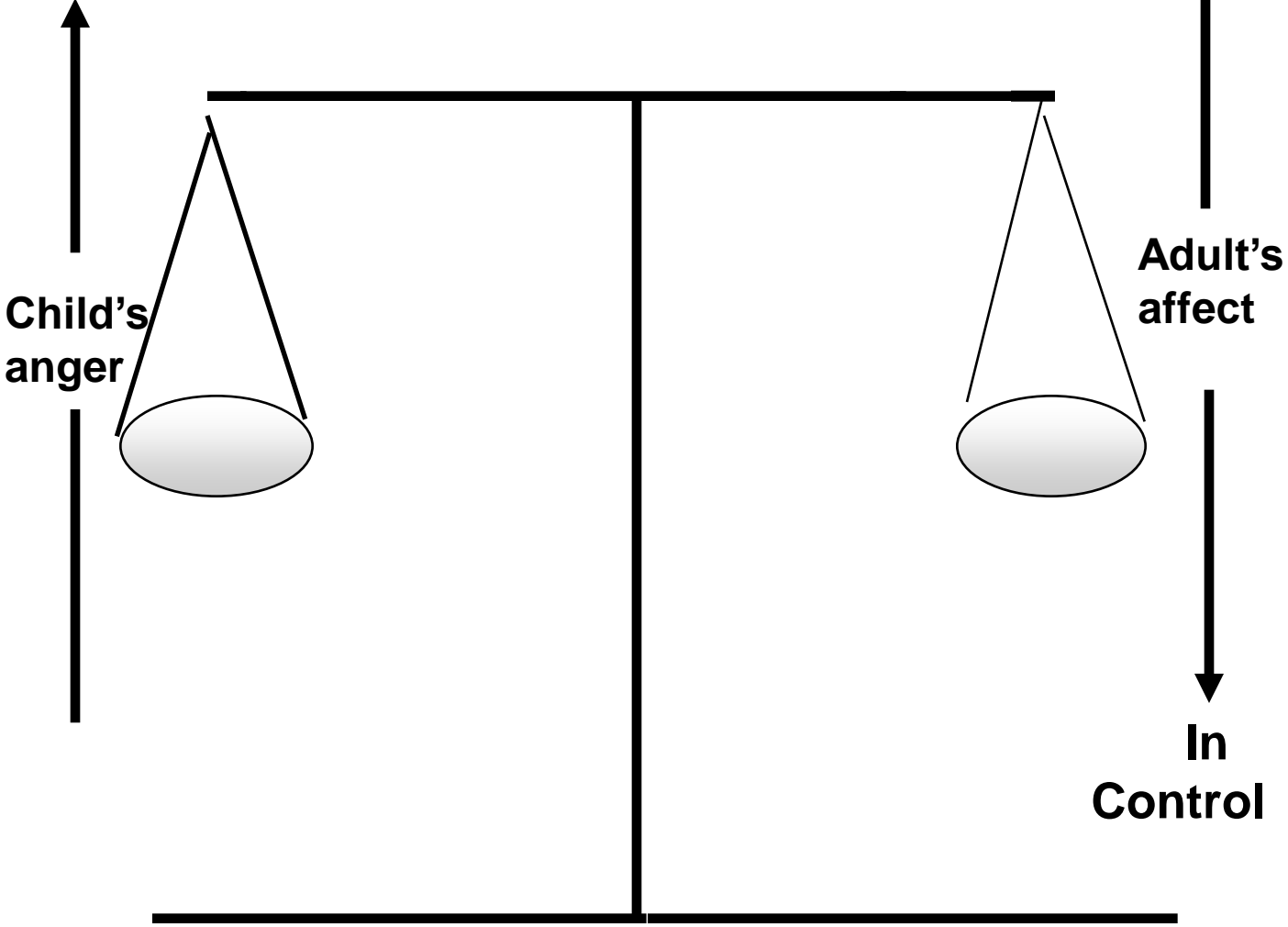
Self esteem is fragile even when it’s good!

Don’t say or do anything to a Child or group that you wouldn’t want said or done to you.



# The Affect Scale

Out of Control

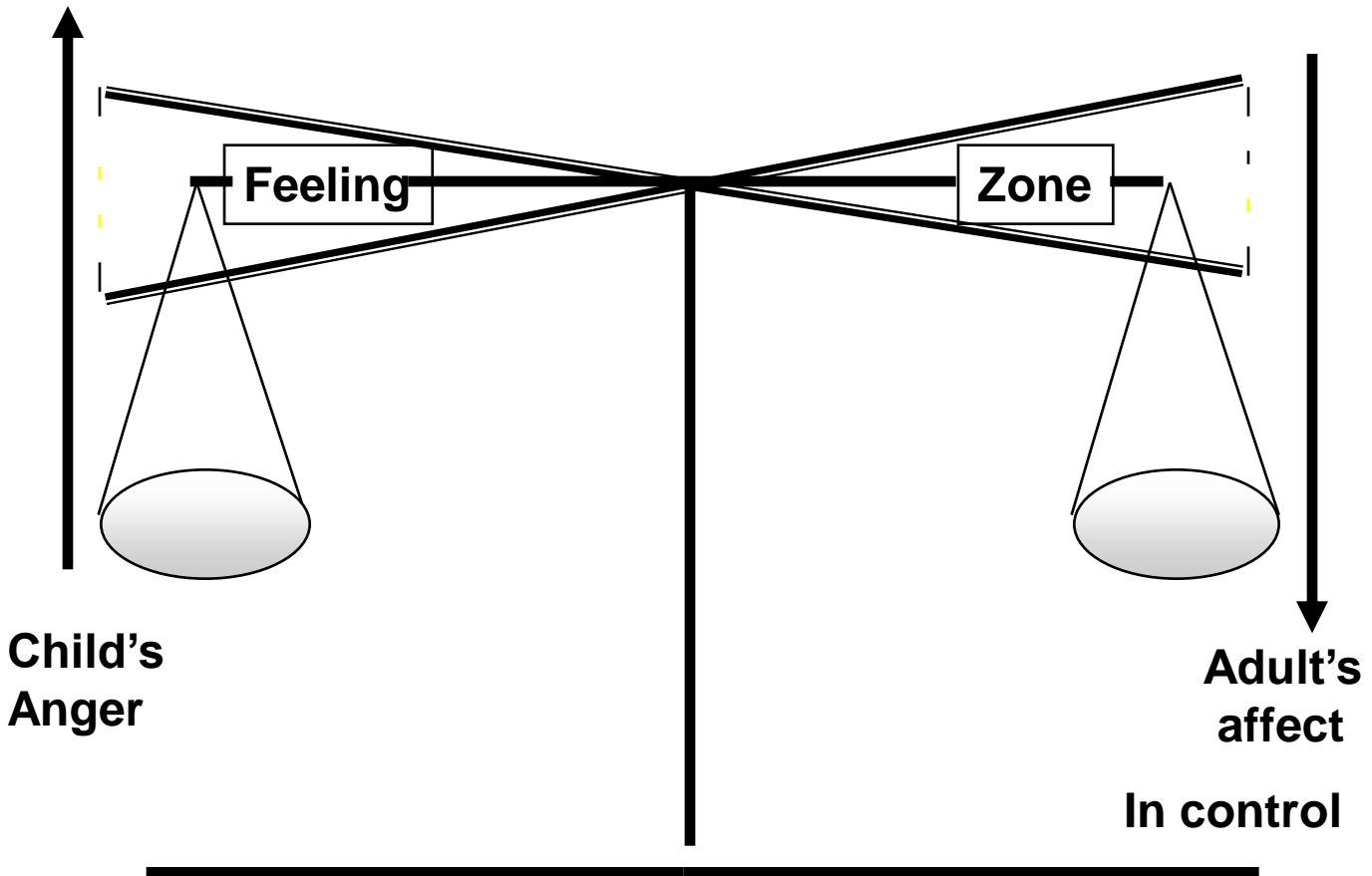


**Key: Establish inverse relationship**

*As they get louder, you become more quiet*

Loss of  
Control

# The Affect Scale



Inside the “feeling zone” there is room to model affect-laden content.

Said in a controlled, but somewhat expressive manner:

“John, I’m really upset about the choice you just made.”

“Mary, I’m angry about that...”

Key: If the child escalates through the zone, the adult’s affect should grow more muted.

## Content vs. Message



“You won’t be around next week?”

*2 weeks later...*

“*You...* won’t be around next week.”



Use “I” or “We” instead of “You” and start requests with “Please” and finish with “Thank you.” Proper language sends supportive messages.

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## Body Messages



“C’mon dude...let’s get it done, and then we can boogey. NBD brother.”

NBD = No Big Deal!

**VS.**

“You need to get it done now!”

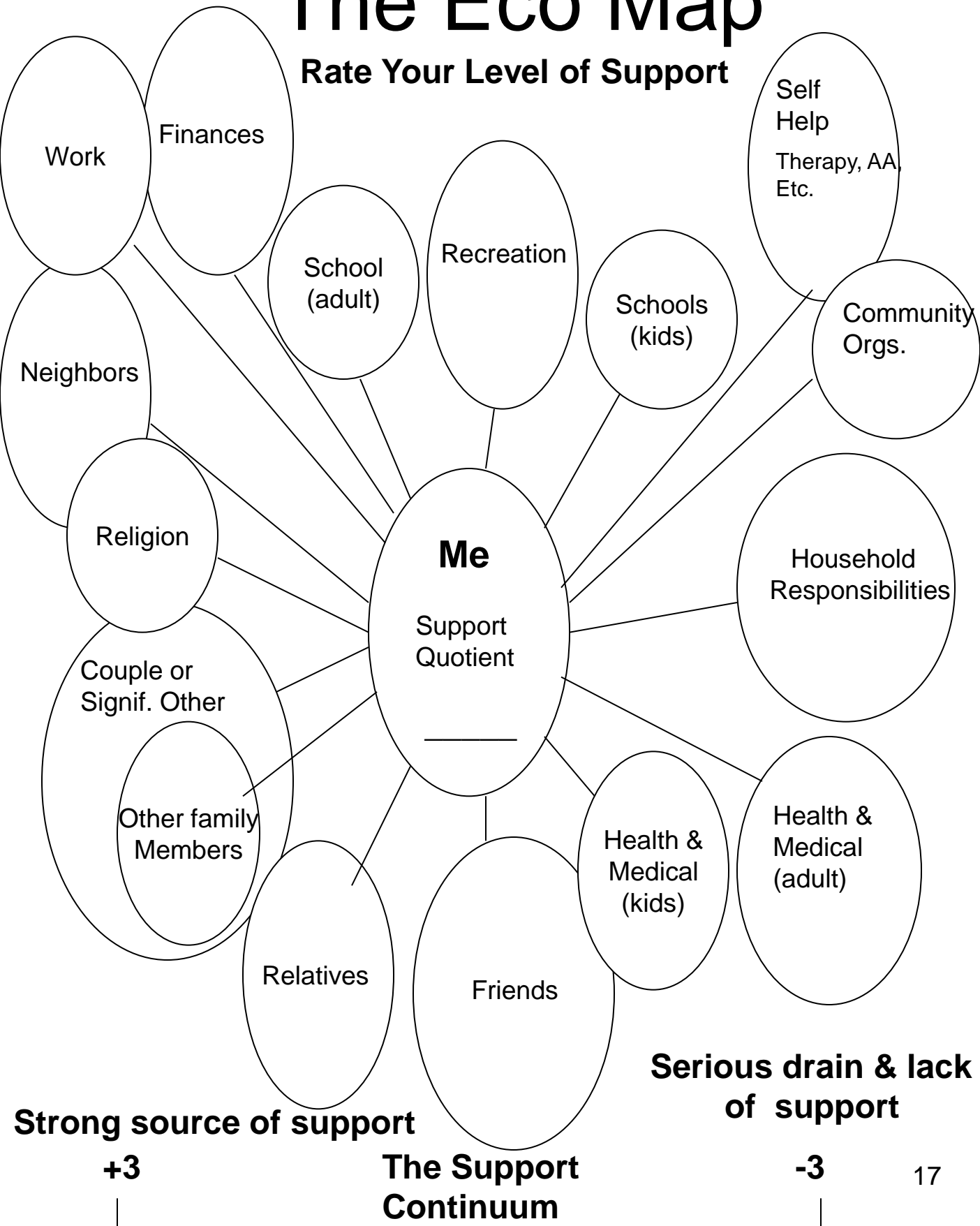
Speak to children and youth at eye level or below. Approach them in a calm manner. Be careful about your pace, posture, facial expression, hand movements and body position.





# The Eco Map

Rate Your Level of Support



Strong source of support

+3

The Support Continuum

-3

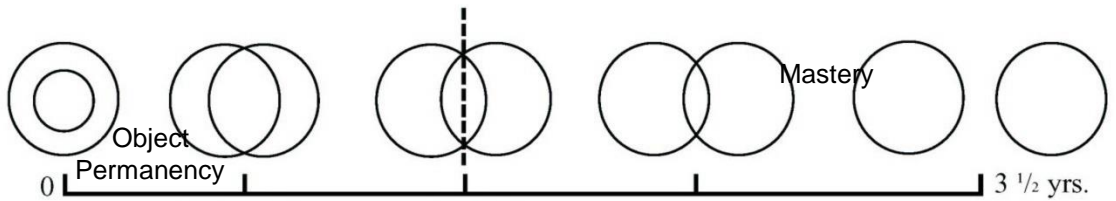
Serious drain & lack of support

17

# THE HOLDING ENVIRONMENT

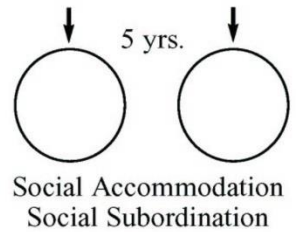
## "A Total Environment Provision"

TASK: "good enough parenting"

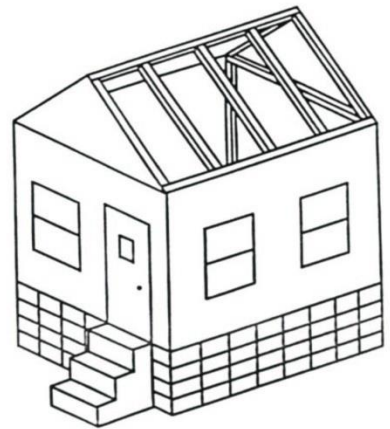
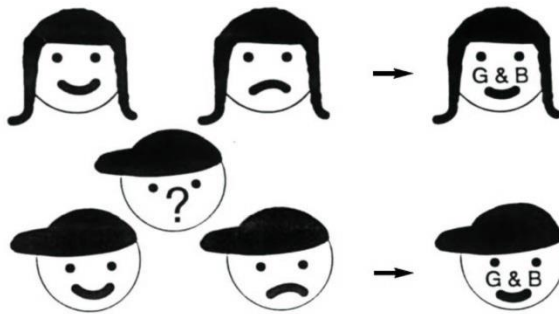


SPLITTING MECHANISM  
Good mother/Bad mother

OBJECT  
CONSTANCY  
cohesive self  
sense of self



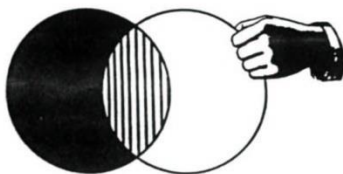
TASK: merge the good and bad introjects



Foundation

GOAL: Filling in the emptiness

Effect of Separation



FILLERS VS. TALKERS  
DEFICITS VS. CONFLICT



# Core Verbal Interventions

## Non-Judgmental Exploration & Supportive Interventions

“What’s up?” “You seem really upset!” “This stinks!” “How can I help?” “I’d feel the same way.”

## Repeating or Paraphrasing w/qualifiers

Child: “I hate doing this chore!”

Parent: “You’re saying that you’re pretty upset about this chore *right now*.” (Use qualifiers: yet, at the moment, right now, etc.)

## Feelings Update

“How do you feel about that?”

## Sandwich Approach

“You made a bad decision to throw the clay. But I’m *really pleased* about how you settled down and walked away nicely with me. We’ll need to talk about apologizing to Sally. You really do have the ability to make better choices when you get upset. I’ve seen you do it, right?”

## Praise and Encouragement

“Way to go!” “That was fantastic!” “I like the vocabulary you selected.” (praising the action versus the child) “You’ve done this before and can do it again. Use the same strategies.”

## Humor

To a five-year-old-year-old: “You’re acting just like a five-year-old!”

## Apologizing

“I’m sorry for raising my voice to you.”

## Reasoning Responses

“What if every parent let her kid....”

## Connecting Statements

“It’s not me against you. I’m on your side. I don’t like having to keep you in.”

## Empowering Interventions

“What could you have done differently?” “What do you think we should do?”

## Explorative (Control)

“How about we focus on what you can control?”

## Explorative Responses (psychological)

“You don’t usually get this upset. Could something else be bothering you?”

## Explorative Responses (historical)

“Have you ever completed such a difficult assignment?”

“Have you ever got this angry and not lost your cool. Kept in control?”

## Explorative (reflective)

“Is that behavior working for you?”

## Plan Making

“Can we make a plan to handle this situation better next time?”

## Behavior Management: Understanding, Prevention, and Principles

View misbehavior as a message: “*Something is wrong. I need help.*” Try to *respond* instead of *react* to difficult behaviors. In other words, don’t say or do anything to a youth or group that you wouldn’t want said or done to yourself. Practice the *Golden Rule*

Use your observing ego (e.g. “It’s an injury and it will heal. Respond instead of React”)

Practice *pattern identification*. Note if a youth or group act out in a predictable manner (i.e. at the same time each day, over the same issues, etc.). Once a pattern is identified, investigate your (or the setting’s) role in contributing to the problem(s). What can you change, modify or practice? What new skills does the youth or group need to practice? How can you make the environment more *user-friendly*? Next, seek out the youth’s input and develop a plan.

Constantly *practice* and *reinforce* the desired behaviors.

Behavior experts suggest that kids should hear four positive comments for every one negative. Catch them doing it right. Positive reinforcement is far more effective than discipline in promoting positive behavioral changes.

Use *consequences* instead of punishment. A consequence is *related* to an inappropriate behavior, a punishment is not. Consequences reinforce the values of your setting/society. Consequences don’t teach – adults do.

Give youth choices regarding the nature of their discipline (e.g. Let a youth decide where he wants to take a break, or a task that will make up for the poor choice he/she made)

In general, the sooner a consequence follows a misbehavior the more effective it will be. Try and avoid delayed consequences except for serious behaviors.

Remember the most important factor, other than safety, when issuing consequences, is the sanctity of the adult-youth/child relationship.

Issue consequences that have a *high probability* of being accepted. Be careful about using traditional motivational approaches with non-motivational youth (A,B,C Baskets).

Establish a limit setting progression. In other words, everyone should know exactly what happens if a youth refuses to accept a limit.

Use *best possible* interventions but advocate for resources to enhance the learning climate as it relates to the emotional well-being of all concerned.

Whenever possible, and for more serious behaviors, try and let the youth decide the appropriate consequence(s). Base decisions on frequency and severity.

Practice progressive discipline. Use *severity* and *frequency* to determine more serious consequences. Empower the youth or group to determine their consequences.

# Limit Setting

Limit setting progresses in five clearly defined stages:

First:	Supportive
Second:	Logical Consequences
Third:	Physical Intervention
Fourth:	Processing
Five:	Reintegration

First Stage: Supportive Interventions include but are not limited to:

Verbal prompts, reminders, warnings

Redirection, distraction, divide & conquering

Appropriate verbal dialogue (e.g. Compromise, negotiate, reframe, support and help, explore historically)

Hydraulically squeeze (i.e. Find a benign place for the youth (or group) to do the same behavior. Example: A youth who swears is allowed to swear one-on-one with an adult in a private location).

Humor

Non-verbal interventions (e.g. Hand signals, lights out, circulating around the room, etc.)

Use the power of a group

Channel (e.g. Have an energetic kid do something physical)

Hold an impromptu meeting

Vicarious reinforcement (Praise another youth for the behavior you want the youth in question to display.)

In general, if two or three supportive interventions don't work in a relatively short time period, a logical consequence should follow.

# Logical Consequences

## Proximity Manipulation

Levels of supervision can be intensified when children and youth behave inappropriately:

“Carla, please don’t bike off the street today.”

“Billy, you will need to stay in the house until you start acting in ways that restore our trust.?”

When a child begins to improve his behavior, he can earn the incentive of gaining more freedom, with respect to his proximity to adults.

## Re-Doing

Youth who have trouble meeting expectations, such as walking quietly to lunch, not running in the hallways, talking inappropriately, etc., can be asked to **re-do** the specific task.

“Could you please try and redo this chore? I don’t think it’s your best effort.”

“Could you please try and say that to me again? Thanks.”

## The Directed Chat

When a child is not responding to supportive interventions, a parent – if conditions permit – can request a private chat, preferably in a different location. By changing location, it is often easier to approach the issue at hand with more calmness and emotional distance.

Going to a neutral location often facilitates conflict resolution.

A parent, for instance, could ask a disruptive child to join her outside the kitchen for a minute. Oftentimes, by giving a kid such one-to-one attention, problematic behavior is ameliorated.

## **Removal of Attention**

At times, the best way to deal with negative behavior is to walk away from it and/or switch-off.

Parent: “You’re choosing to make me upset. I think I’m going to take a break from being with you now. I’m hoping that later we can work this out.”

## **Natural Consequences**

Natural consequences involve discipline that it is a *natural* byproduct of one’s actions.

Examples:

“I think I am going to stop working with you now. I’m uncomfortable with your language. You could make better choices. I’ll check back with you in a little while to see if you can talk with me in a more civil manner.”

If a group is too loud and unruly an adult could just sit quietly and wait for them to calm down. Other consequences could be applied if this intervention isn’t successful.

A youth refuses to do his homework. The natural consequence: He fails the test.

A youth refuses to wear gloves. The natural consequence: Frozen fingers

## Loss of Privileges

Restricting a privilege, such as using a computer, going outside, or missing an activity, is generally a *delayed consequence* and should only be used for more serious behaviors or when minor behaviors become problematically repetitive.

Bettelheim: Taking activities away from a troubled child is like taking cough syrup from a person with a sore throat

## Reparation (Restitution, Community Service, etc.)

If a child out towards a human being or physical object, it invariably causes psychological and physical damage, respectively. It is, at times, helpful to have the youth (or group) that has offended *repair* the damage (within herself, as well). Examples:

A youth is caught bullying others:

**Reparation:** Have the child apologize to the person/people he/she has offended and require her to help others for a certain duration of time.

A child throws food in the kitchen:

**Reparation:** Require the child to help out in the kitchen.

Another way to frame this consequence is to view the act of repentance as “giving back.”

Parent: “Bill, you took away some of the good feelings and safety we feel here by making the bad decision to \_\_\_\_\_. I’d like for you to give something back by doing something nice that makes us all feel better.

You took something away...now give something back

Whenever possible let the youth or group decide the consequence



## **Breaks (Time-Out)**

Children often react negatively to the term *time-out*. As a result, it is best to use different words. It's also quite helpful to give your kids choices about where they go:

“Could you please step outside the room and find a place to *chill out*, thanks?”

“Jim, I'd like you to sit on the bench or couch, calm down, and think about making some better choices, thanks.”

“Sara, would you please take a *break*, thanks. You can choose where to do it.”

There are two forms of Breaks: **Set Amounts** and **Open Ended**

**Set Amounts** = Established time-out lengths and progressions

*Example:* 2 minutes > refusal > loss of fun activities until its completed > refusal > contextual decision > completion of original 5 minutes > processing.

**Open Ended** = No set amounts of time for breaks

*Examples:* “Could you please go sit on the couch or bed for a while and chill out.” > refusal > “The longer it takes you to move, the less likely it becomes to for you to get involved with the activities coming up. If you can't make good choices in the house, how can We feel comfortable having you leave it right now?”

2 warnings (i.e. supportive interventions) > “Could you please take a break. Please return when you think you are ready to calmly join the family.”

2 warnings (i.e. supportive interventions) > “Could you please take some space? I'll come and talk to you when you are sitting quietly.”

### **Where are Breaks Conducted?**

Best place: A non-stimulating area; a natural part of the house. You don't necessarily have to have specific time out areas. Give kids a choice about where to take their break.

### **How are Breaks Conducted?**

Children should always be allowed to sit comfortably to complete breaks. A break should be conducted in a quiet and respectful manner. The child does not have to be facing the corner or wall.

**Processing:** Upon completion of a consequence, kids and parents should generally process what occurred. They should be asked to:

- Give their view of what happened.
- Come up with better choices that could have been made.
- Recollect if they have been in similar situations and acted more appropriately?  
If yes, what skills did they use?

Parents should be open to admitting mistakes and taking some ownership for what transpired. Apologizing is a powerful tool.

**Reintegration:** Review steps for integrating back into the swing of things (i.e. review expectations, logistics, etc).