Managing Misbehaving Toddlers and Preschoolers

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Session Goals

Session One

• Describe the problem

• Typical Problem Behaviors in Toddlers

• Help parents recognize common parenting mistakes

• Teach appropriate parenting skills
Session Two

- Review
- Typical Toddler Development and Needs
- Positive Discipline Techniques

Managing Typical Toddler Misbehaviors
Parent With the End In Mind

• Raise a self-fulfilled adult
• Who do you respect as an adult?
• What characteristics do you admire?
• Identify 10 qualities you want in your child as an adult
The Problem

- An increase in misbehaviors at home and at school
- Increased school demands
- Increased family stressors
- Juvenile crime is increasing
- Environmental risk factors increasing
Typical Behavior Problems in Toddlers

• Many young children are noncompliant, aggressive and highly active

• In general, most toddlers comply with their caregivers 50 – 75% of the time

• Age 2 – 3 years: seeking independence

• Behavior problems usually peak at around age three and start to decline

• As language develops, the nature of the noncompliance changes

• Myth: Children outgrow problem behaviors
Why improve parenting skills now?

- Intervention during the preschool years is critical.
- Kids model their parents.
- Kids want parameters/limits.
- Kids want discipline and teaching.
- Kids want fairness and consistency.
What is over-indulgent parenting?

- Lack of discipline
- Too many things
- Too many activities
- Too much permission too soon
- Spot indulgence (connected to neglect)
- Discipline according to parent’s mood
Common Parenting Mistakes
The Materialistic Parent

• Give things instead of time
• Give their children things they never had as children
• Keeping up with the Jones’
• Common in divorced parents
Problems with Materialistic Parenting

• Children become over-dependent
• Children do not learn to manage their own life
• Children display emotional distance from parents except when they want something
• Children develop manipulative demanding skills
• Children associate “happiness” with materialism
Reminder Parents

- Parents never back up their warnings with discipline
- Offer over-indulgence because they fear their children’s rejection
- These parents want to be buddies with their children
- Lack assertiveness in other relationships
- “If my child doesn’t need discipline then I’m a good parent”
Problems with Reminder Parenting

- Problem behaviors escalate
- Children become the authority figures in the home
- Parents lose their credibility
- Children do not develop responsible behaviors
- Children resist authority figures
- Children lack self-control
“MY Child is Perfect” Parents

- Ignore children’s flaws
- Focus only on positive attributes
- Believe they will harm their children if they discipline them
- Believe their children are gifted leaders
- Quick to see other children’s flaws
Problems with “MY Child is Perfect” Parenting

Strong Narcissistic attitude

- Inflated self-esteem
- Child encounters disillusionment with real world
- Leads to emotional disabilities
Exaggerating Parents

• Similar to the “MY child is perfect” Parents
• Exaggerate child’s positive qualities
• Parents living through their children
Permissive Parents

• Give too much freedom too soon, too young

• Allow children to participate in activities they are not intellectually and emotionally ready to handle (ex: seeing a movie, video game beyond their maturity)

• Allow them to break societal rules

• Try to be buddies with children, not parents
Problems with Permissive Parenting

- Role confusion
- Don’t set limits because they don’t like whining, crying and tantruming
- Problem behaviors escalate
- Lack of self-control
- Children learn to manipulate others with problem behaviors
- Leads to risky behaviors, self-destructive behaviors
Favoritism Parents

- Prefer one child over other children
- Emotionally needy people
- Favor the child that is most like them
- May be due to one child’s handicapping condition

Often generational problem
Problems with Favoritism Parenting

- Fosters sibling rivalry
- Favored child develops a false sense of self-esteem
- Neglected children develop a lower sense of self-esteem
- Neglected children become angry and resentful
• Blame others for their children’s misbehaviors (ex: teacher, friends, family)

• See children as too perfect to be responsible for any problems

• Immediately take child’s side without getting facts from the situation

• Rationalize or make excuses for their children
Problems with Blaming Parenting

- Children grow up not accepting responsibility for their own behaviors
- Family system habitually blames others and becomes skilled at developing excuses
- Children lack independent skills
- Children become demanding and angry because their problems are always someone else’s fault
Overly-Responsible Parents

- Blame themselves for their children’s misbehaviors
- May have been their own family’s scapegoat
- Don’t like change or develop parenting skills
- Think they are protecting or helping their children
Problems with Overly-Responsible Parenting

• Child doesn’t learn to change his/her behaviors

• Behaviors are not corrected

• Children become irresponsible

• Children become demanding and angry
Ultimately-Responsible Parents

- Angry parents due to lack of assertiveness with their children
- Become frustrated and then explode at children
- After a tirade they then take responsibility and appease through over-indulgence
Problems with Ultimately-Responsible Parenting

- Confuses the children as to who is responsible
- Children become tense and uncertain as to what will lead to an angry explosion of the parents
- Develops anxiety and confusion in children
The Mentoring Parent

- Actively engage with their children in all issues
- Parent with the end in mind
- Promote truth and reality
- Promote unique talents and self-reliance
- Displays unconditional love
Mentoring Parenting – Cont’d

• Defining unconditional love
  – Allow children to experience the full range of consequences for their misbehaviors
  – Not permissiveness
  – Not harsh, but firm and consistent
  – Teach responsibility and accountability for behaviors
  – Require children to follow the rules within the home, school and community
Mentoring parents discipline

• Discipline means to train or teach
  – Know age-appropriate behaviors
  – Feed the flowers, pick the weeds
  – Provide structure and set limits
  – Allow children to feel the “sting” of discipline
  – Take advantage of “learning moments”
  – Be consistent and calm
  – Listen
Discipline – Cont’d

• Teach stop signs
• Expect obedience
• Be a positive role-model
• Give your child the tools to succeed in life
• Build good relationships with your children
• Take advantage of preventative techniques
• Help children develop inner controls that last a lifetime
• Raise kids that care
Questions?
SESSION TWO

- Review
- Typical Toddler Development and Needs
- Positive Discipline Techniques
- Managing Typical Toddler Misbehaviors
The results of over-indulgence

- Over-dependency and entitlement
- Loss of interdependency
- Lack of self-reliance
- Lack of self-esteem or inflated self-esteem
- Lack of self-control/conscience/discipline
- Resistant to family and societal rules
- Angry children
- Emotional distance and depression
- Demanding and aggressive children teach parents how to behave
Typical Preschooler Development
3 – 4 Year Olds

- Start to play WITH other children
- More turn-taking and sharing
- More self-reliant; can dress with little help
- May develop fears and have imaginary friends
- Better dexterity
- Loves to run, jump and skip
- Match and sort things that are alike
- Recognize numbers
- Like silly humor
- Follow spoken directions
- Use new words and longer sentences
Typical Preschool Development
3 – 4 Year Olds

• Are aware of rhyming sounds in words
• May attempt to read
• Show pride in their accomplishments
• Recognize print on signs or logos
• “Write” or scribble messages

• Know that each alphabet letter has a name and identify at least 10 alphabet letters, especially those in their own names
What 3 – 4 Year Olds Need

- Play with other children so they can learn to listen, take turns and share
- Develop more physical coordination
- Develop their language skills through books, games, songs, science, and art
- Learn more self-reliance skills
- Count and measure
- Participate actively with adults in reading-aloud activities
- Explore the alphabet and print
- Attempt to write messages
Typical Preschooler Development
4 – 5 Year Olds

• Longer attention spans allows for more group activities
• Like making faces and being silly
• May form cliques with friends and may change friends often
• Have better muscle control for running

• Recognize and write numbers 1 – 10
• Love to make rhymes, tell jokes
• Know some colors, shapes,
  Know street names and address
• Know how books are held and read
Typical Preschooler Development
4 – 5 Year Olds

• Recognize the shapes and names of all letters and some sounds

• Write some letters, particularly in his/her own name
What 4 – 5 Year Olds Need

• Experiment and discover within limits
• Develop growing interests in school subjects
• Develop enjoyment in activities that explore and investigate
• Sort items into similar size, shapes, color

Develop language skills by speaking and listening
• Teach them how reading and writing are both enjoyable and useful
Positive Discipline Techniques

• Specific Praise
• Selective ignoring
• Saying “Yes” with limits
• Use Humor
• Stay Calm
• Lots of Time-In
• Make age-appropriate demands

• Distract and divert
• Guide little hands
• Give special jobs
• Give direct commands
• Supervise
• Provide structure
• Toddler reinforcers
• Good behavior charts
Managing Misbehaving Toddlers

- Toddler Tantrums
  - Manipulative Tantrums: I want MY way
  - Frustration Tantrums: I don’t know the right words, Mommy, to tell you how I feel.
  - They happen at parents’ busiest times
  - Typical 2 – 3 year old behavior
  - May last longer for some language-impaired children
Tantrum Triggers

• Tantrums are signals that it is time to teach your child some new skills

• Keep a diary to identify when the tantrums occur

• Learn to recognize the precursors to the tantrum (ex: whining, rubbing eyes)
Toddler Triggers

• Stay calm and don’t take it personally
  - Toddler tantrums are common as they strive for independence from the parent
  - Normal to feel embarrassed

• Plan ahead
  - Don’t run errands when the child is tired or hungry
  - The morning is usually the best time for toddlers
Biggey Situations

Car seat is non-negotiable

Holding child’s hand in a parking lot

Eating correctly

Going to bed

Anytime a child’s safety is compromised
Smallies

• Clothing mismatch
• Wanting candy at a store
• Wanting a certain toy
• Wanting parent attention
Biting in Toddlers

- Due to a lack of language
- Form of aggression (18 mo to 2.5 Years)
  - Say “NO” Biting hurts! Redirect behavior “Hug Mama”
  - Never bite them back
  - Keep track of triggers
  - Give time out if biting continues
- Model non-aggression
Crying

• Two types: Sincere and Insincere

• Faulty parenting thinking
  – Belief that they can create good self-esteem in their children if they are constantly happy
  – Belief that their children should receive whatever they want
  – Belief that if child is not in a happy state that they are not good parents
  – Belief that things bring happiness
Dressing Hassles

• Plan ahead, buy easy-to-put-on clothing
• Start early and make diapering fun
• Make eye contact and sing songs
• Point to body parts
• Say the name of the clothes and where it goes
• Dress for a part (ex: Peter Pan)
• Play peek-a-boo
• Dress with parent simultaneously
• Accept mismatches
• Give them shopping choices
Toilet Training

• Don’t push the process

• When they are ready they will recognize that they have wet or soiled diapers

• Will show an interest in toilet training

• Praise when they stay dry or use the toilet

• Be patient and don’t punish for accidents
Toilet Training

- By 19 – 20 months most children will know that they are about to have a bowel movement
- Even when trained, most children still wet at night or when they are busy playing
- Illness or significant family changes may bring about regression
- Reinforce with small treats when using the toilet
- Keep diary to note when child tends to soil their diapers
Going to Bed

The Night Visitor

From bed to floor to out the door

• The morning snuggle
• The weekend repose
• Go-to-bed routine
• Sticker chart
Sleep Tips

- Maintain a consistent bedtime and awaking time SEVEN days a week
- Encourage regular daily naps
- Set your child’s biological clock
- Develop a consistent bedtime routine
- Create a cozy sleep environment
- Provide the right nutrition to improve sleep
- Help your child to be healthy and fit
- Teach your child how to relax and fall asleep
Sibling Rivalry

- Make certain children are rested, eat healthy food and have a variety of activities in which to participate
- Reward positive behaviors
- Ignore mild quarrels; stop more severe aggression
- Spend time with each child
- Teach appropriate attention-seeking behaviors
- Celebrate each child’s unique talents
- Avoid comparisons and competition between children
Sibling Rivalry

• Teach the right words to say, “Would you play with me?”

• Teach older children how to teach the younger child to be involved

• Teach children to negotiate or lose privileges

• Avoid taking sides, yelling, or lecturing

• Allow children to cool down before you address problems
Lying

Age of Truth

• Lies are often fantasies
• By age 5 – 7 years children recognize lying

Why Lie?

• Exaggeration: Get attention and wants social acceptance
• Fear Consequences: Avoidance of the situation
Lying

Ways of Lying
• Exaggerate
• Omit or distort part of the truth

Strategies for Lying
• Children are watching
• Teaching the wrong message
• Match lies with honesty, consequences, and amends
Taming the TV

TV Facts

• Two – Five year olds average more than 4 hours of TV a day

• These children are more likely to be obese

• Average American child witnesses 45 acts of violence a day
Who is watching?

- Infants and toddlers are interested in bright, colorful moving objects
- Preschoolers have a longer attention span
- School Age children understand more but still misinterpret what they see

TV should be a choice NOT a habit.
Time-Out Techniques

• Give lots of time-in
• Prepare the child
• Keep time-out brief
• Keep time-out quiet
• You be the timer
• Pick the right place
Time-Out Techniques

• To stay or not to stay in time-out
• Time-out for thought
• Clear the air
• Parents as referees
• Time-out vs. Benching
To Spank or Not to Spank

...Is a personal choice

Preschoolers do respond well to physical action such as touching on the arm, taking them by the hand, picking them up, holding or restraining them. These are all good ways to discipline and to get their attention.

Spanking will also get their attention, but it doesn’t do a very good job of teaching children how to behave.
• Spanking is your big gun. Use it infrequently and as a final resort.

• Never spank when feeling overwhelming frustration

• If one parent doesn’t agree with spanking then respect that opinion

• Forewarn children before spanking

• State the exact misbehavior children need to change

• After spanking, teach children to make amends for their misbehaviors.

• Parents should offer a mild to moderate spanking on the child’s buttocks only.

• Spanking should never be a daily event.
Questions?