

Classroom Management with the Positive discipline approach

We at APPS, are participants in a parent co-op because we want to raise our children to be responsible, respectful and resourceful individuals. The best way to achieve that goal is to model behavior that echoes the philosophy during our interactions with them. The most integral philosophy of APPS, one that is the backbone of our classrooms, is Positive discipline. We will be delving into this subject in much greater detail during other parent ed. Sessions, but I thought I would share with you some salient features today.

When trying to understand/decipher children's behavior, we need to remember the following:

Children are social beings: Their behavior is determined within a social context. Children make decisions about themselves and how to behave based on how they see themselves in relationship with others and how they think others feel about them. Children are constantly making decisions and forming beliefs about themselves, the world around them and about what they need to do in order to survive and thrive. In other words, when faced with a typical behavior: ask them what preceded the actions!

Behavior is goal oriented: Behavior is based on a goal to be achieved within a social context. Children are not consciously aware of the goal they have to achieve. Usually, they have mistaken ideas of how to achieve what they want, and they behave in ways that achieve just the opposite! "Children are good perceivers but poor interpreters."

When you observe a child's behavior, ask yourself" what is the child's positive intent?"

Child's faulty Beliefs	adult's feelings reactions	Child's positive intent	child's response to adults' discipline'
I belong <i>only</i> When I am Noticed	<i>Feeling:</i> Annoyed <i>Reaction:</i> tendency to remind& coax	ATTENTION/ CONNECTION	temporarily stops behavior. Later resumes same Behavior or disturbs In another way.

I belong <i>only</i> When I am in Control or am Boss, or when I am proving no One can boss me!	<i>Feeling:</i> Angry, Provoked, as if authority is being threatened. <i>Reaction:</i> fight or Give in	POWER/ CONTROL	Active or passive aggressive behavior intensifies, or child Submits with <i>defiant compliance</i>
--	--	-------------------	--

I belong <i>only</i> by Hurting others as I feel hurt. I cannot Be loved.	<i>Feeling:</i> deeply hurt. <i>Reaction:</i> to Retaliate or get Even	REVENGE/ PROTECTION	Seeks further revenge by intensifying behavior or choosing another weapon
---	---	------------------------	---

I belong <i>only</i> by Convincing others APPS Handout	<i>Feeling:</i> despair/ hopelessness" I	INADEQUACY/ WITHDRAWAL	Passively responds or fails to respond Positive Discipline
--	--	---------------------------	---

Not to expect	give up.’	To whatever is
Anything from me.	<i>Reaction:</i> to agree	done. Shows no
I am unable; I am	with child that	improvement.
Helpless	nothing can be done.	

Adults alternatives:

- Ignore behavior when possible. Give attention for positive behavior when child is not making a bid for it. Avoid undue service. Realize that reminding, punishing, rewarding, coaxing, and service are undue attention.
- Withdraw from conflict. Help child see how to use power constructively by appealing for child’s help and enlisting cooperation. Realize that fighting or giving in only increases child’s desire for power.
- Avoid feeling hurt. Avoid punishment and retaliation. Build trusting relationship; convince child that she/he is loved.
- Stop all criticism. Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small. Focus on assets. Above all, don’t be hooked into pity, and don’t give up.

Child's Primary goal is to belong and to be significant:

Children need to be active participants in all that they see. They usually jump right into an activity without fore thought or concern for others feelings. Sometimes, it is the only way, they can actively participate! You might notice that a child grabs a hold of a toy at the exact time he/she sees a friend growing interested in it!

To encourage autonomy:

- Let the child make choices (not who to vote for but between preselected foods/clothes/toys etc.)
- Show respect for his/her struggle
- Do not rush to answer questions, encourage them to pursue the matter through
- Encourage them to seek resources around them
- Encourage their efforts (less praise vs. encouragement)

A misbehaving child is a discouraged child:

Put a child's behavior in perspective. What does he want? What preceded his actions? Acknowledge his needs and have him participate in achieving a solution. Make him recognize that he has a significant contribution to make!

The six step approach to problem solving

Approach

- Approach the conflict, signaling your awareness and availability.
- Get close enough to intervene if necessary: stop aggressive behavior or neutralize the object of conflict by holding it yourself.

Make a statement

- Describe the scene (back to the children)
- Reflect what the children have said (‘ I hear Mike saying that..).
- Offer no judgments, values or solutions

Ask questions (gather data, define the problem)

- Don’t direct questions towards pinpointing blame

- Draw out details
- Help children communicate

Generate alternative Solutions

- Give children the power to think it out
- Suggestions may be offered by disputants or observers
- Do not rush this: give them all the time they need

Agree on a solution

- When children agree on a solution, rephrase it (so you both agree..)
- If any solution seems unfair, tell the children why and restart the thinking process.

Follow through

- Monitor to make sure the agreement is going according to plan . If decision is turn taking, you may need to be the clock-watcher.
- Tell the players/ group (looks like you solved the problem)

Reinforce

- The solvability of the problem
- Commend the ability of the players to do so.

Equality:

Equality does not mean similarity here: no two people or children are! By equality, I mean that all individuals have the same claim to respect and dignity. It is very easy to tell a child what to do and to draw attention to his/her challenges in a patronizing way/tone of voice. This does not generate a need for cooperation or a desire for responsibility in the children. All you will achieve is a grudging, forced participation.

In order to engage children's cooperation:

- Describe what you see or describe the problem
- Give pertinent information
- Say it with a word
- Talk about your feelings

And instead of aggressive/ authoritarian discipline:

- Express your feelings clearly, without attacking character
- State your expectations clearly
- Show the child how to make amends
- Give the child a choice (one you can live with)
- Follow through
- Problem solve (listed above)

Mistakes are opportunities to learn:

Children learn through experience, and they, like all of us, make mistakes. Instead of becoming approval junkies, we need to model the courage to accept imperfections. We need to:

Recognize- wow! I made a mistake

Reconcile- I need to make this better/ apologize

Resolve: Problem solve

Make sure the message of love and acceptance comes through:

The only way we can expect our children to accept and resolve their behavior choices is if we model acceptance ourselves. We need to understand and respect our children's feelings, make sure their choices are safe, and above all that they are accepted and loved unconditionally.

Helping children deal with their feelings:

You can listen quietly and attentively

You can acknowledge their feelings with a word

You can give the feelings a name

You can give the child his/her wish in a fantasy (I wish I could make ----- happen, but this is what you can have)

Remember: All feelings can be accepted, certain actions must be limited.