

MARCH E-PRESS PART 2

Redirecting Children and Teens Negative Behavior

By Jade Smith

Introduction

It is essential for parents to learn how to manage their children's behavior when they act out or when conflict arises. Redirection is a technique that parents can use to help children understand what appropriate behavior is and how to manage their behaviors. Redirection is used to promote desirable behavior, prevent injury, reduce punishment, and promote learning and exploration. There are also other age-appropriate techniques that parents can use when talking with children.

Objectives

This E-press serves to provide supervised visitation monitors with information and resources on redirecting behaviors and talking to children. The information provided can be given to parents. The information and videos are listed according to age category.

Verbal Redirection

Verbal redirection involves verbally requesting a behavior. The parent first tells the child that the behavior they are doing is not appropriate, and then tells them what is acceptable. This will help the child understand the correct way to behave.

Example: A child is standing on a chair. Say "please don't stand on the chair. Chairs are meant to be sat on."

Physical Redirection

Physical redirection involves the same technique as verbal redirection, while also adding physically direction. Parents can use a gentle and nurturing touch to redirect the child away from the inappropriate behavior.

Example: A child is standing on a chair. Say "please don't stand on the chair. Chairs are meant to be sat on," while gently placing your hand on the child's back to help them sit down in their chair, making sure they don't fall.

Guiding Children in Conflict

There are ways that parents can help children through conflict. Some suggestions are below:

- **Manage your own emotions first.** Do not address a situation when you are upset or angry.

- **Empathize with the child’s feelings.** Let them work through their emotions that are driving the negative behavior by creating a safe space with your compassion.
- **Set limits, with empathy.** Children will be more likely to accept the limits when they feel understood.
- **Teach kids to restore the harm that was done.** For example, apologizing after doing something they weren’t supposed to.

Toddlers (ages 1-3)

Toddlers do not understand what the word “no” means and why they cannot engage in certain behaviors. Parents must *show* children at this age what appropriate behavior is. For instance, if a child hits, the parent can redirect the child to another topic, location, or activity. Parents can redirect the behavior by getting out crafts or a game the child enjoys. Parents can also ask leading questions to redirect the misbehavior. For example, parents can ask what they want to do later in the day.



Run Time: 4:53 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsapgGJOAwM&t=1s>

This video shows how teachers use redirecting skills to prevent problematic behavior. The teachers in the video demonstrate redirection verbally, physically, with a cue, and by redirecting a child’s attention. Using verbal redirection, the teacher gives the child a simple instruction to guide the misbehavior to more appropriate behavior. Using physical redirection, the teacher gives a simple instruction and a gentle touch to guide the child to appropriate behavior. Using a cue, the teacher pairs a visual cue with the instruction. Using attention to redirect behavior, the teachers draw the child’s attention to a child who is engaged and behaving appropriately.

Questions:

- 1) Name an example from the video when a teacher uses verbal redirection?
A: “I need a helper with these carpet square, can you help me?”
 “Let’s come spray down our window, my friend. Our window’s looking great!
 Nice and clean.”
- 2) Name an example from the video when a teacher uses physical redirection?

A: The teacher asked the child to put the basket in the sink, and then guided the child to the sink.

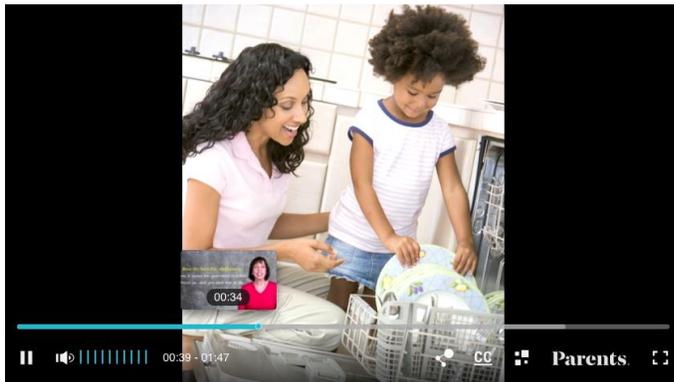
3) What is an example from the video of a cue?

A: The teacher used a picture along with instructions.

4) Name an example from the video when a teacher uses attention to redirect behavior.

A: When the children were in the group, the teacher redirected their attention to the child who was engaged and behaving appropriately.

Elementary Age (ages 5-10)



Run Time: 1:47 <https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/discipline/tips/how-to-put-an-end-to-difficult-behavior/>

This video discusses what parents can do when a child is defiant, and what you can do to make it easier for a child to listen in order to avoid conflict.

Questions:

1) What does the video say the problem is with punishment? What does the video suggest you do instead?

A: Punishment does not teach what they should do. The parent should explain why a certain behavior is inappropriate so that the child avoids this behavior in the future. For example, instead of yelling “No! Don’t do that!,” calmly walk over and explain why they should not engage in that behavior.

2) The video states that the use of the “when/then” statement can be helpful. What is an example of this type of statement?

A: “When the dishes are in the sink, then you watch television.” “When toys are picked up, then you can go outside.”

3) What does the video say about rules?

A: Rules should be consistent. Consistent rules will lead to fewer arguments and conflict because the child will know what to expect.

Tips for talking to 5-10-year-olds:

- Explain the impact that their behavior has on others.
- Explain why the rules are in place.
- Encourage the child to use independent problem-solving skills. Rather than simply saying “no” or correcting the child, teach them prevention strategies. For instance, talk about a situation where the child behaved inappropriately and discuss better solutions.
- For older elementary age children, they may do well with options. For example, children might refuse to complete their homework because they want to play outside and watch television. The parent can let the child chose which activity he/she wants to drop (either watching TV or playing outside) so that they can complete the homework.

Middle School & High School Age



Run Time: 6:52 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTtjB_QJzkU

This video demonstrates effective ways to communicate with teens when conflict arises.

Questions:

- 1) In the second part of the first example, when the father-son demonstrated the correct way to communicate, what did the father do to effectively communicate with his son?
A: The father used “I” statements to explain reasoning and foster two-way communication. The father used negotiation when discussing curfew time, explained that the rules are in place for his son’s safety, rather than controlling him, and acknowledged his mistake in choice of words and then apologized.
- 2) In the second example, how was ineffective communication demonstrated by the mother at first?
A: At first, the mother raised her voice, and simply said the daughter was not allowed to go to the mall with her boyfriend.
 In the second part, the mother explained that she was not allowed to go because she was concerned about her safety. The mother also offered an alternative solution. The mother displayed a calm, nurturing tone.

Before talking to your teen remember this:

- The teenage brain is not fully developed, so they may not see the risks and consequences as you do.
- Be flexible. This may make them more willing to listen and talk about the conflict.
- If you overreact or lose control, simply apologize.
- Discuss conflict when you are not angry or upset.
- Prepare what you will say beforehand

When talking with your teen remember this:

- Choose a location where you will not get interrupted or distracted.
- Remain calm and listen to them.
- Let them express their point of view.
- Express your own feelings. Be honest.
- Compromise when possible.
- If you say “no,” make sure to do it calmly.

Conclusion

Knowing the techniques of redirecting and managing children’s behavior when conflict arises is important for parents and social service workers. Redirecting behavior can be physical and verbal, or a combination of both and parents can use age-appropriate techniques when talking with their children.

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Reframing Parental Instructions

By Jenna Michelson

What is Reframing?

Reframing is turning negative comments or commands into positive ones. Instead of using “Don’t” or “Stop”, we should change our language to focus on what we WANT our kids to do, not what we do NOT want them to do.

Why should we reframe our instructions to our kids?

Negative statements are less effective with children than positive statements. Negative statements put the behaviors we want to discourage into our kids’ minds, which makes them more likely to exhibit these behaviors. Instead we want our children to think about the actions we want them to perform by using positive rephrasing. Below is a table with examples of reframing in everyday settings, based on stages of development.

Stage of Development	Scenarios in Everyday Settings	Original Response	Reframed Response
Toddler (ages 2-4)	Sophia is playing with her food and making a mess.	“Don’t spit out your food!”	“Keep your food in your mouth when you’re eating, Sophia.” Sophia will be thinking about keeping her food in her mouth, not about spitting it out and playing with it.
Early Childhood (ages 5-8)	John is yelling and running around the house.	“Stop doing that!”	“When you are done yelling, I will know you’re ready to see your friend.” This response sounds more positive than “stop” or “don’t”. It also reminds John that he needs to change his actions before he can see his friend.
Late Childhood (ages 9-12)	Riley is losing his grip on the grocery bags he is carrying.	“Don’t drop those bags!”	“Can you carry all those bags? You might want to put one of them down and take another trip.” This offers Riley an alternative to carrying too much and he can consider the possible results of his actions.

Adolescents (ages 13-17)	Savannah is worried about her test tomorrow.	"Don't be nervous about your test!"	"You did a great job studying for this test so you can feel confident in your knowledge!" This response will add to Savannah's confidence because it reminds her that she prepared for her test.
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How can supervised visitation monitors help parents reframe their instructions?

1. Help parents **recognize their feelings**. Their stress and anger may cause them to use negative comments and commands we want to avoid.
2. Work with the parent to **reduce stress** and take a moment to relax. A breathing exercise may be beneficial.
3. Once the stress and anger are reduced, **ask the parent what other ways they can say** what they want their child to do. Encourage them to reframe their own instructions so they are able to learn how to do it themselves. When the parents are working on reframing their instructions themselves, it will be easier for them to recall how to do it when they are no longer in the supervised visitation setting.

See the table below for examples of reframing in supervised visitation settings.

Stage of Development	Scenarios in Supervised Visitation Settings	Original Response	Reframed Response
Toddler (ages 2-4)	Sophia is throwing her toys.	"Don't throw the toys!"	"Sophia, let's play with the toys on the ground." Sophia will think about playing with her toys, which we want her to do, not about throwing them.
Early Childhood (ages 5-8)	John is yelling and running around the room.	"Stop doing that!"	"When you are done yelling, I want to hear about how soccer is going." This response sounds more positive than "stop" or "don't". It reminds John that he needs to change his actions before you can continue with the visit.

Late Childhood (ages 9-12)	Riley is sitting in the corner when his siblings are sitting with you at the table.	“Don’t sit in the corner!”	“Riley, can you sit with us at the table? We’re talking about movies and want to know what your favorite one is.” This invitation gives Riley and opportunity to join in the conversation and chose to sit at the table with you.
Adolescents (ages 13-17)	Savannah is not talking to you and is rolling her eyes.	“Don’t roll your eyes at me!”	“Savannah, I’d really like it if we could talk about how you’re doing in school. How are your classes going?” This response will show Savannah you are interested in what she is saying and how she is doing, without the negative language.

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