



## Secrets for Preventing Problem Behaviors

### Rule Makeover

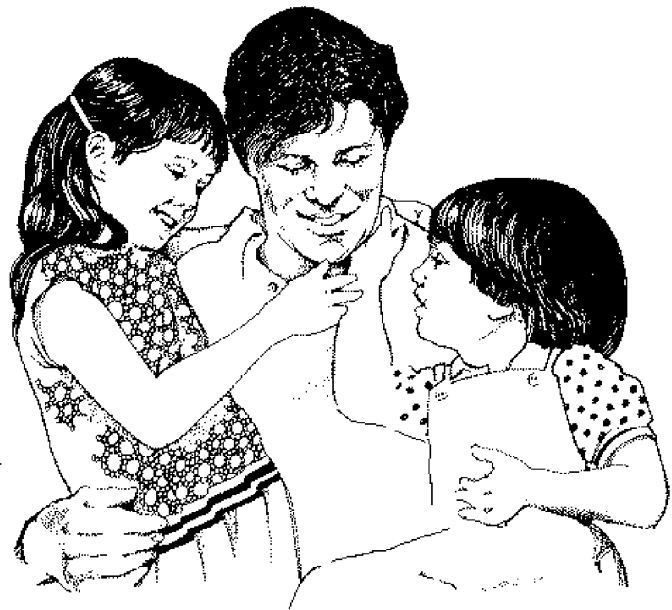
To get the best behavior from your kids, give your family rules a makeover. Here's how: If your old rules sound something like "no hitting, no punching, no pinching, no biting, no breaking things," let your new rule be "Use your words." This new rule is simpler and it fits lots of situations. Because it is positive, it teaches your kids what you want them to do rather than just telling what you don't want them to do. Teach them words like "stop" and "no" when a child has a problem with another child. Insist that they talk to each other. Talking it out will help them learn how to get along. Try a rule makeover today!

### The Secret of a Daily Routine

A daily routine can help your children behave at their best. A daily routine provides children with a feeling of security as it meets their needs for food and rest.

Hungry children often misbehave. By offering meals and snacks regularly, you can help prevent misbehavior. Pick regular meal and snack times for children once they are toddlers. Offer a nutritious snack about two hours after meals.

Children also need a regular routine for sleeping and rest. Tired children often misbehave. While most children give up a daily nap around the age of three or four, pre-school and early school-age children benefit from a time to rest in the middle of the day. Make your routines pleasant by adding cuddles, stories, songs, and kisses to make a warm, loving, and secure day for your child.



### Tiptop Behavior

One simple way to get tiptop behavior from your children is to make time regularly for outside play. Children need time every day to move their bodies.

Sometimes children misbehave when they have extra energy and no good way to use it. Any type of active outdoor activity is good for your entire family.

### Plenty of Choices

One way to improve your children's behavior is to give them choices to make for themselves. All children want to feel powerful and strong. Sometimes children misbehave to feel powerful and in charge. Wanting to feel powerful isn't a bad feeling; it is a natural one. One way to help children express this natural feeling is to give them choices about things that matter to them. A choice about which of two t-shirts to wear, or choosing between cereal and yogurt for breakfast can be very important choices for your children to make for themselves. As long as you don't mind what they choose and it matters to them, it is the perfect choice.

# Bring on the Fun

A little bit of fun can go a long way to preventing behavior problems. Here are some quick and easy fun things to do that often bring out the best behavior in your children. You might notice that all these fun ideas give children a chance to use their senses. When children take time to explore the world with their senses it seems to improve their behavior.

**Water play** — If you don't want to wipe up spills, do water play in the Bathtub, or if you don't mind a few spills, use a tub in the kitchen. Always provide "arm's reach" supervision whenever children are around water. Give your children things to wash.

**Shaving cream** — A can of shaving cream equals fun in a squirt bottle. If it's used in the bathtub, cleanup is a snap. Just turn on the shower and enjoy your squeaky-clean bathtub.

**Play dough** — Homemade play dough is simple to make (see recipe below) and can entertain children for hours. The pleasures of squeezing, pounding, and molding make play dough a relaxing and enjoyable activity for most children.

**Sand play** — Playing in sand can entertain children of different ages for hours. Add simple recyclable containers for filling. Cut plastic milk jugs, keeping the handle to make a large scoop.

## Childproofing — More than Keeping Your Children Safe

Childproofing your home can help your children behave. If your children are having trouble leaving fragile or precious things alone, put them up high or away until your child is a little older. Childproofing can also help children have more real independence. When unsafe cleaning supplies and sharp knives are kept locked away from children, they can play in the kitchen on their own while you are in another room nearby. Childproofing also means making a place to play with a few toys carefully organized. Being able to find their toys easily

cuts down on frustration when children are playing.

## Children Need to Do Things Themselves

Give your children a chance to do things by themselves. Children can use a small pitcher with a lid to pour their own drinks. A stool by the kitchen sink lets small children climb up to wash their own hands. While this takes longer than doing it yourself and is often messier, the end result is worth it. The satisfaction they get from doing things for themselves helps keep their behavior positive.

## 10 Quick Tips for Better Behaving Children

1. Give your children time to play outside every day, weather permitting.
2. Take healthy snacks and drinks with you whenever you go out. Try fresh or dried fruit.
3. Feed your children regular meals and snacks.
4. Choose healthy snacks like cheese and crackers, apples, and peanut butter.
5. Pick a regular bedtime for your children.
6. Give your children a time to rest in the middle of the day. For children too old to nap, read them stories or let them have a quiet playtime alone.
7. Give your children simple choices to make for themselves.
8. Give your children a chance to explore sand, water, and play dough with their senses.
9. Childproof your home. Put your breakables up high or away. Make a place for children to play.
10. Give your children loving acceptance. Show them that you know that they can behave well, rather than expecting them to misbehave.

### He or She? Him or Her?

Please note: In this and all Better Kid Care publications we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." When we use he or she, we include all children.

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