



# BE HAPPY

## CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

The University of Texas at Tyler School of Medicine

**Making small changes to your child's environment and routine can make a big impact on behavior! Try out these ideas to encourage helpful behaviors and increased compliance.**

### PROBLEM-SOLVE AHEAD OF TIME

**Think about situations that commonly lead to challenges—and plan for them in advance.**



#### **Ask yourself:**

- What behaviors keep coming up?
- What might be triggering them?



#### **Try this:**

- Remove or limit access to tempting items
- Change the order of activities
- Set clear expectations ahead of time
- Offer appropriate alternatives



#### **Examples:**

- Put sweets out of reach to prevent sneaking dessert
- Save screen time until after homework is complete
- Keep breakable or tempting items out of sight



Small changes in the environment can make **good choices easier**.

### OFFER CHOICES

**Children are more likely to cooperate when they feel a sense of control.**



#### **How to do it:**

- Offer two acceptable options
- Let your child make the final choice



#### **Examples:**

- “Do you want broccoli or green beans?”
- “Would you like the red shirt or the blue shirt?”
- “Do you want to bathe before or after dinner?”



**Choices allow children to build independence and parents to keep control.**



## USE IF/THEN AND WHEN/THEN STATEMENTS

Clear expectations help children understand exactly what to do—and what they'll gain from doing it.

### ✓ Why it works:

- Makes rules predictable
- Connects behavior to rewards
- Reduces confusion and arguments

### ✓ Examples:

- "If you pick up your toys, then we can go outside."
- "When you use your indoor voice, then I will talk with you."

 Use simple statements to clearly connect behaviors to outcomes.

## PAY ATTENTION TO THE GOOD

Labeling helpful behaviors lets your child know what they did right and encourages future compliance.

### ✓ How to do it:

- Name exactly what your child did well.
- Offer enthusiastic praise right away.
- Express gratitude to your child for doing the helpful thing- making a good choice is hard work!
- Praise all commands your child complies with or helpful choices they make.
- Give credit for effort and praise small steps towards helpful behavior.

### ✓ Examples:

- "I love how you shared your toys with your friend!"
- "Thank you for using your inside voice."
- "You are sitting so still while we wait for the doctor."
- "You did a great job finishing your math homework before dinner! Let's do your reading together after dinner."

 The more praise a behavior gets, the more it will increase.



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