

# 5 Steps to help caregivers use positive interventions

It's important for caregivers to be prepared when responding to problematic or concerning behaviors in their young children. Use the tips and sample language below when providing guidance for using positive interventions.

1

## Acknowledge caregivers' difficult emotions and review the value of positive intervention.

*"When your child misbehaves, you may feel any number of reactions: frustration, irritation, anger, or concern. As upset as you may be, remember—this is a good time to teach or guide your child to better handle similar situations in the future."*

2

## Encourage caregivers to consider what their child is communicating through challenging behavior.

*"Think about what your child is trying to tell you. For example, screaming might communicate, 'I don't want to go to bed!' Crying might communicate, 'I can't do this by myself!' Kicking the table might communicate, 'I want someone to pay attention to me!'"*

3

## Discuss specific strategies the caregiver can use to communicate effectively with their child.

*"Help your child feel supported by staying calm, bending down to your child's eye level, and validating feelings by giving words that seem to fit the situation. For example, If your child is crying while struggling to do something ask, 'Do you need help? Are you feeling frustrated?'"*

4

## Explain how the caregiver can model specific adaptive behaviors and self-regulation strategies for their child.

*"Help your child by modeling ways of calming down (but perhaps looking slightly away so as not to give attention for screaming). I can provide you with strategies to self-soothe and appropriately handle and express emotions when upset."*

5

## Explain how the caregiver can discuss the situation with their child after the fact, in a developmentally appropriate way.

*"Only after your child has calmed down, and when you are calm, talk about what happened. If you would like, I can recommend age-appropriate ways you can do so with your child."*

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