

# PARENTING WITH POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
RESOLVING YOUR CHILD'S  
DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR

by

**Meme Hieneman, Ph.D.**

University of South Florida St. Petersburg  
St. Petersburg, Florida

**Karen Childs, M.A.**

University of South Florida  
Tampa, Florida

and

**Jane Sergay, M.Ed.**

Comprehensive Family Literacy Services  
Tampa, Florida

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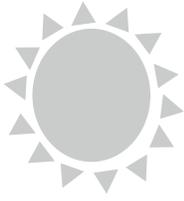
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## APPENDIX C

# **Examples of Problem Solving for Difficult Family Routines**

Mealtimes

Greeting Others

Playing Independently

## Problem-Solving Situations and Routines: Mealtimes

What are the goals for our family (e.g., the changes desired, the behaviors of concern) during this difficult period?

To eat peacefully as a family, with everyone remaining at the table, eating his or her food, and engaging in pleasant conversation.

What patterns might be contributing to our behavior as a family during this routine? The circumstances associated with our best and worst times:

Best: The children are hungry, everyone understands the expectations, and everyone likes the meal.

Worst: The children are full, tired, sick, or dislike the meal; the parents are focused on their own conversation.

The outcomes causing patterns to continue:

The parents allow everyone to eat his or her preferred foods (e.g., snacks, desserts) regardless of whether everyone has finished the meal.

The children get attention from the parents for misbehaving at the table.

Given our understanding about the patterns surrounding problem routines, what strategies might we put in place to

Prevent problems?

Encourage the children to use the bathroom and take care of other business that might interfere with the dinner prior to coming to the table.

Remind the children of the mealtime expectations when they sit down.

Prepare meals that the children will eat; provide different food options if meal is new or unusual.

Give the children reasonable portions of food (e.g., use small plates).

Limit the children's snacking between meals (e.g., no food before breakfast, after 10:30 A.M., or after 4:30 P.M.). Limit the consumption of sweets at other times.

Replace behavior?

Remind the children to remain seated during the entire meal.

Encourage the children to eat meals without complaining about what meal was served or to request something else where appropriate.

Participate in family conversation about daily events.

Manage consequences?

If the children remain at the table and finish everything on their plates by the time the kitchen has been tidied after the meal, they may have a dessert.

Praise the children frequently for using positive behavior, and provide feedback to them for eating and sitting nicely.

Focus the conversation on the children when they are behaving appropriately.

If the children play with their food, fail to use their utensils properly, or become disruptive (e.g., argue), give them one warning and then ask them to leave the table.

If they leave the table, they may not have dessert and must finish their meal after everyone else has left the table.

## Problem-Solving Situations and Routines: Greeting Others

What are the goals for our family (e.g., the changes desired, the behaviors of concern) during this difficult period?

For everyone in the family to greet other people warmly, respond appropriately during conversations, and use proper manners (e.g., say “please” and “thank you”).

What patterns might be contributing to our behavior as a family during this routine? The circumstances associated with our best and worst times:

Best: The children understand the expectations and routines; the people they interact with are familiar.

Worst: The children are addressed by strangers; the parents fail to model appropriate greeting behaviors.

The outcomes causing patterns to continue:

The children avoid having to interact with people and responding to questions.

Given our understanding about the patterns surrounding problem routines, what strategies might we put in place to

Prevent problems?

Model positive greetings with friends and family members every time (e.g., when a neighbor comes over for a chat, when the children wake up in the morning, when out in public places, when extended family members visit).

Prepare for social situations by discussing who will be there and what behavior is expected (role play if necessary).

Minimize distractions when greeting others (e.g., make sure the television, the radio, or a video game is not on).

Clarify that the children may greet strangers only when the parents are present.

Replace behavior?

Respond to greetings by saying hello and, when appropriate, shaking hands.

Say the word “please” when asking for something and the phrase “thank you” when receiving something.

Answer questions clearly; say “I do not know” if the question cannot be answered.

Make eye contact when speaking with another person.

Manage consequences?

Quietly praise the children for greeting, responding, and using good manners with other people.

Do not let the children avoid interacting with other people by answering for them if they seem unwilling or slow to respond—require the children to respond to questions and use manners even if the behavior is delayed.

## Problem-Solving Situations and Routines: Playing Independently

What are the goals for our family (e.g., the changes desired, the behaviors of concern) during this difficult period?

For the children to play alone and with other children for reasonable periods of time (e.g., 45 minutes) without behavior problems (e.g., arguing, breaking house rules).

What patterns might be contributing to our behavior as a family during the routine?  
The circumstances associated with our best and worst times:

Best: The children are with particular friends, they are doing activities they enjoy, and their play has clear limits.

Worst: The children are playing with friends who have behavior problems and play-time is unstructured.

The outcomes causing patterns to continue:

The children obtain attention from adults and/or get access to the item or activity they were arguing about.

Given our understanding about the patterns surrounding problem routines, what strategies might we put in place to

Prevent problems?

Let the children know when their parents will be unavailable and for how long.

Suggest activities the children may do while their parents are otherwise engaged.

Remind the children of the rules about fighting and the problem-solving steps for conflicts.

If the playtime is near snack time, set the snack out or let the children know what snack they are allowed to have.

Explain any limits to play (e.g., no watching television, stay inside the house, the kitchen-area is off limits).

Provide parameters for when the children should get an adult (e.g., if one child has asked another child to stop doing an action and that child continues, if the children cannot resolve a conflict with words, if a child has gotten hurt).

Check on the children periodically (e.g., every 15–20 minutes, more often with new or unfamiliar friends).

Limit total playtime to a reasonable period (e.g., 2 hours).

Replace behavior?

Play independently with toys, games, and each other.

Resolve conflicts calmly and fairly and without aggression.

Follow the household rules and limits set by the parents or other adults.

Get help from an adult when needed—for example, when unsure if a particular play is acceptable, new play ideas are needed, help is needed to resolve a conflict, someone gets hurt, or uncomfortable about the play.

Manage consequences?

Praise and encourage creativity and independence in play when checking on the children; if the children would welcome it, play with them briefly.

Spend concentrated time with the children after independent playtime.

Talk with the children after the play dates so that they can discuss how the time went and work through any concerns.

Separate the children if they fight or break the rules.

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