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Dealing with Children's Opposition by Building Compliance Momentum

John W. Maag, Ph.D.

Dealing with children who engage in oppositional behaviors is an agonizing, irksome endeavor. These children often tantrum, are uncooperative, aggressive and eventually antisocial. Sometimes, getting these children at an early age to consistently comply with out directions can lessen the risk of them developing serious antisocial behavior later in life. There are many effective non-aversive ways to obtain their compliance such as providing them with positive reinforcement, clear, direct, and specific instructions, and having them self monitor and evaluate their behaviors.

An essential - and often ignored - ingredient for effectively managing children's resistance is the ability of us to modify our behavior by responding symmetrically to their personal models of the world. Establishing this type of congruent communication is necessary to create "compliance momentum" which is key in obtaining positive changes in children's behaviors. There are several simple, common-sense ways to build compliance momentum:

1. *Catch children being good:* It is easy to set your phone to vibrate every few minutes (or to purchase a reasonably priced gadget called the MotivAider®) as a reminder to verbally praise a child. The only obstacle is overcoming the cultural ethos that we expect children to be good - and consequently ignore them for being so - and react to them negatively when they are bad. Children quickly learn that the only way they get adult attention is to misbehave. We can change that!

2. *Give children high-probability directions:* It's common sense that if we instruct children to engage in behaviors they enjoy (line up for recess, put your homework away, play a game), there is greater chance that they will comply with other, less desirable, directions. Compliance begets compliance!

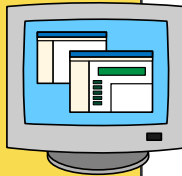
3. *Give directions that require only a small amount of behavior:* It is easier for anyone - child or adult - to comply with a direction that involves performing a small versus large amount of behavior. A child is more likely to follow a direction to write one answer on a worksheet with 20 math problems than write the answers to all 20 problems. Once compliance is obtained for following a small direction, it becomes easier to gradually increase the demands to perform more appropriate behavior. The key is to think small. If a child refuses to complete any problems on a 20-item worksheet, then writing one answer is 100% improvement! Who can argue with that type of improvement?

We don't have to view managing children's resistance as massively aversive. Children always give us clues on how to deal with them effectively. The key is to open our minds so as to pick up cues they give us. We think we are observing everything, but we really are not because we have a routine way of looking. The ultimate bottom line is that if something isn't working, try something else! We usually know what to do, but don't always know that we know. Meeting children on their own terms - without giving in, but nevertheless building compliance by breaking up everyone's rigid patterns of responding. The key is understanding the difference between knowledge and knowing...

TIPS FROM THE CORNER:

As you are getting ready to begin a new school year, it is important to get every student off to a successful beginning. No matter what behavior curriculum your school uses, actively teaching and practicing these behavior expectations are critical to the ongoing success of that program. Having school and classroom rules posted on the walls of your school will do very little to change behavior without a specific time to teach those rules and give examples and non-examples of expected behaviors you hope to see this year. Younger children may need to be physically walked through what standing in line and walking quietly down the hall looks like. These lessons are seldom learned in one teaching and should be revisited SEVERAL times throughout the year. Older children may be

FUTURE TRAININGS



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AUGUST 1, 8:30-3:30PM

How to Reach and Teach Children with Challenging Behavior
Presented by Kaye Otten

AUGUST 23, 8:30-3:30PM

Kansas Kick Off - Topic: Behavior
Presented by Dr. John Maag - Wichita, KS

AUGUST 27-28, 8:00-4:00PM

2 Day Region 5 TEACHH Training
Presented by Mary Woodworth

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www.KansasASD.com
www.TASNBehaviorSupports.com

able to learn with a verbal lesson in what is expected of them in class and school but should still be questioned for understanding of behavior expectations. Some older students will need more than just verbal instruction.

Behavior, much like core academic subjects, should have teaching, evaluation of performance and opportunity for practice components. For many students, it will be enough to post the rules on the wall or write them on the board but for some students that will not be enough to make them competent in the desired behavior. Even students that can learn and comply through a simple posting of rules may feel more confident in their understanding with some practice. Students with high anxiety levels may benefit from the practice and formalization of the behavior expectations.

Behavior curriculum should be deliberately taught with the same high expectations as core academics. These are skills these students will need the rest of their school careers as well as lifelong skills needed for transition into adulthood. Rules should be consistently applied, across settings, across students and not changing from day to day.

