

# *Handouts & Refrigerator Notes*



# *Problem Solving for Adults*

## *Home Activities for the Week*



### *To Do:*

- **WRITE DOWN** a situation you attempt to problem solve, either by yourself or with a partner.
- **KEEP TRACK** of the result on the Problem-Solving Checklist handout.

Note: Start with a relatively easy issue or a manageable problem (e.g., what movie to watch), before going into the more complex issues (e.g., dissatisfaction with life). After problem solving is completed, use the checklist to review your strengths and weaknesses.



### *To Read:*

Handouts and *Chapter Fourteen, "Problem Solving between Adults"* in *The Incredible Years* book

***Caution: Remember to continue special time!***

# Parents Thinking Like Scientists



Identified Problems

Individual's Strengths

Goals

Strategies

Benefits

Obstacles  
[thoughts, feelings be-  
havior in self & others]

Ongoing Plans

# Parents Thinking Like Scientists



Goals

Identified  
Problems



Individual's  
Strengths





## HANDOUT PROBLEM-SOLVING CHECKLIST

|  | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Step 1: Schedule a meeting   | ___        | ___       |
| Step 2: Define the problem   | ___        | ___       |
| 1. Focus on one problem at a time  | ___        | ___       |
| 2. Collaborate and be positive   | ___        | ___       |
| 3. State and be positive   | ___        | ___       |
| 4. Express feelings  | ___        | ___       |
| 5. Be future oriented  | ___        | ___       |
| 6. Make "I" statements   | ___        | ___       |
| Step 3: Summarize the problem and goal in order<br>to be sure everyone understands the problem | ___        | ___       |
| Write down the problem.  |            |           |
| _____  |            |           |
| _____  |            |           |
| Step 4: Brainstorm solutions   | ___        | ___       |
| 1. Remain open   | ___        | ___       |
| 2. Be wild, innovative, humorous   | ___        | ___       |
| 3. Increase quantity   | ___        | ___       |
| 4. Postpone details  | ___        | ___       |
| Step 5: Evaluate solutions and make plans  | ___        | ___       |
| 1. Review the entire list  | ___        | ___       |
| 2. Evaluate each solution  | ___        | ___       |
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Evaluating your responses to the items on this checklist will highlight some of the ways you can improve your problem-solving meetings.

## ***Use the Problem Solving Approach to Help Your Child***

“Relapses” of misbehaviors are *normal*, so be prepared for them! Often a relapse is triggered by some type of crisis or change in family life (illness, death, vacation, new job, financial stress). This generally results in an increase in children’s inappropriate behaviors. The following are some ways to reinstate the program and get yourself on track again.



Problem sharing

1. Set up a time when you are not upset to talk about the problem with your partner, a friend, or to think quietly on your own.
2. Clarify what child behaviors you want and don’t want.
3. List the problems from most to least important. Concentrate on dealing with only the most pressing problem.
4. Brainstorm as many solutions as possible (review handouts):
  - Reinforcements (praise, tangible rewards, play sessions)
  - Discipline (ignore, Time-Out, loss of privileges, work chores, logical consequences, problem solving)
  - Techniques that help parents maintain self-control (self-talk, relaxation)
5. Evaluate 1–2 solutions you can implement, and make a plan.
6. Monitor weekly progress, and revise the program when necessary.
7. Reinforce your efforts.

**Remember:** There is a tendency for parents to use strategies with short-term benefits (for example, obtaining immediate compliance by yelling, hitting or criticizing the child) that have long-term negative consequences (the child learns to yell and hit instead of using nonviolent approaches to solving problems). Parents need to use skills such as praising and ignoring literally hundreds of times in order to change children’s behavior, and this takes a lot of work. Over the long run, however, this approach teaches children how to behave appropriately, builds essential skills for getting along with others, and fosters children’s positive self-image. This is a little like flossing your teeth — you need to keep doing it to realize the long-term benefits!



## ***Incredible Years Problem Solving Worksheet For Managing Family Problems***

### ***Problem Definition:***

1. Problem defined: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Triggers of problem occurring: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How do I respond? (thoughts and feelings) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Goals:***

4. What thoughts will I use? What positive outcome do I want to achieve? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Solutions:***

5. What skills/strategies can I use to stay calm to solve this problem?  
Special time with person to strengthen relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pleasurable time strategy to fuel personal strength \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Coping strategies I will use \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Support I will give or get \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Choose from the list below how you will reduce this problem occurring  
Schedule: Do I have a predictable plan? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Distract/Redirection: How can I redirect or calm down or refuel myself so my response doesn't escalate? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the positive consequence if I complete my plan? \_\_\_\_\_

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***Carrying Out my Plan:***

7. To whom should I communicate this plan? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Who can I call for support and check in with? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How will I take care of myself while this is going on? \_\_\_\_\_

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***Evaluating the Success of Solutions***

10. How will I know I am making progress? What will be different? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. How will I celebrate my success at achieving my goal? \_\_\_\_\_

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# *Problem Solving for Adults*

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**Note:** Start with a relatively easy issue or a manageable problem (e.g., what movie to watch), before going into the more complex issues (e.g., dissatisfaction with life). After problem solving is completed, use the checklist to review your strengths and weaknesses.



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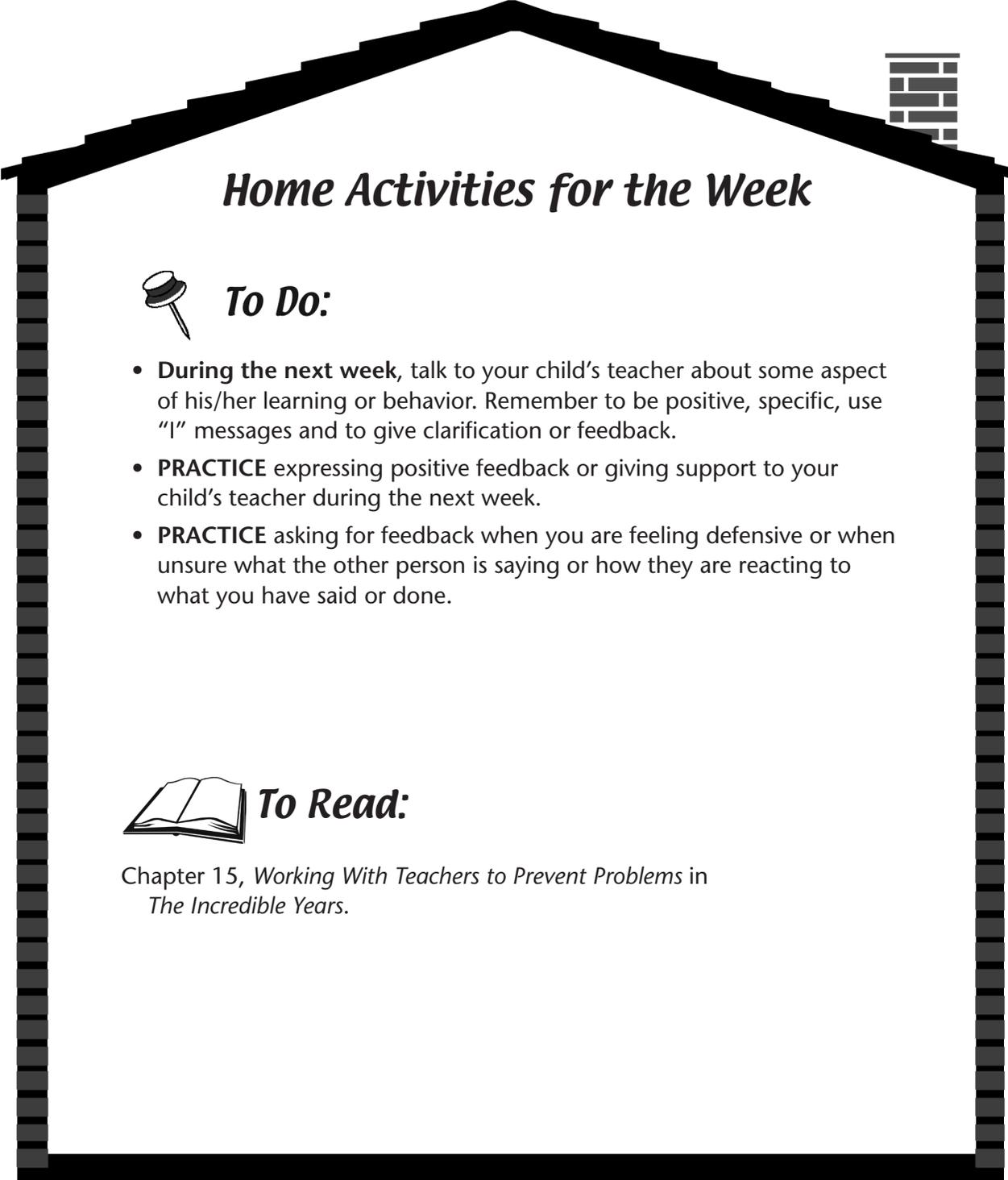
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## *Home Activities for the Week*



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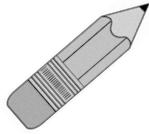
- **During the next week**, talk to your child's teacher about some aspect of his/her learning or behavior. Remember to be positive, specific, use "I" messages and to give clarification or feedback.
- **PRACTICE** expressing positive feedback or giving support to your child's teacher during the next week.
- **PRACTICE** asking for feedback when you are feeling defensive or when unsure what the other person is saying or how they are reacting to what you have said or done.



### ***To Read:***

Chapter 15, *Working With Teachers to Prevent Problems in The Incredible Years.*

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**REFRIGERATOR NOTES**  
**THINGS TO TALK ABOUT WITH TEACHERS**

- Why is this objective important for my child?
- How can I help at home in order to support classroom goals and objectives?
- What can the school do to support my child since life is stressful at home? (Ask for support when experiencing family difficulties, e.g., divorce, death, a move, new sibling.)
- What other staff work with my child? (Involve all staff who work with your child.)
- How can I be sure I know what the homework is? How much time should he spend on homework each day?
- How can I help my child read more? Write? Do math? etc.
- How is my child getting along with other children? What are his areas of difficulty? Strengths? Who are his best friends?
- How can I be more involved supporting his education? Or be supportive to you?
- What books can be read at home that would support classroom goals?

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**REFRIGERATOR NOTES  
POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT  
COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS**

- Don't interrupt, argue, give advice; listen attentively and validate.
- Don't store up grievances; speak up clearly with "I" messages.
- Express feelings (positive and negative).
- Stick to the point and avoid unloading multiple gripes.
- Edit: be polite and positive.
- Focus on fixing the problem and avoid blaming.
- Recognize the teacher's problem.
- Take one step at a time.
- Don't mind-read.
- Get and give feedback.
- Don't attack angrily.
- Make positive recommendations.
- Encourage conversation.
- Give consistent verbal and nonverbal messages.
- Give positive rather than negative commands.

**Note: When was the last time you praised your child's teacher for his/her efforts?**

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**Note: When was the last time you praised your child's teacher for his/her efforts?**

## REFRIGERATOR NOTES ABOUT TALKING WITH TEACHERS WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS A PROBLEM

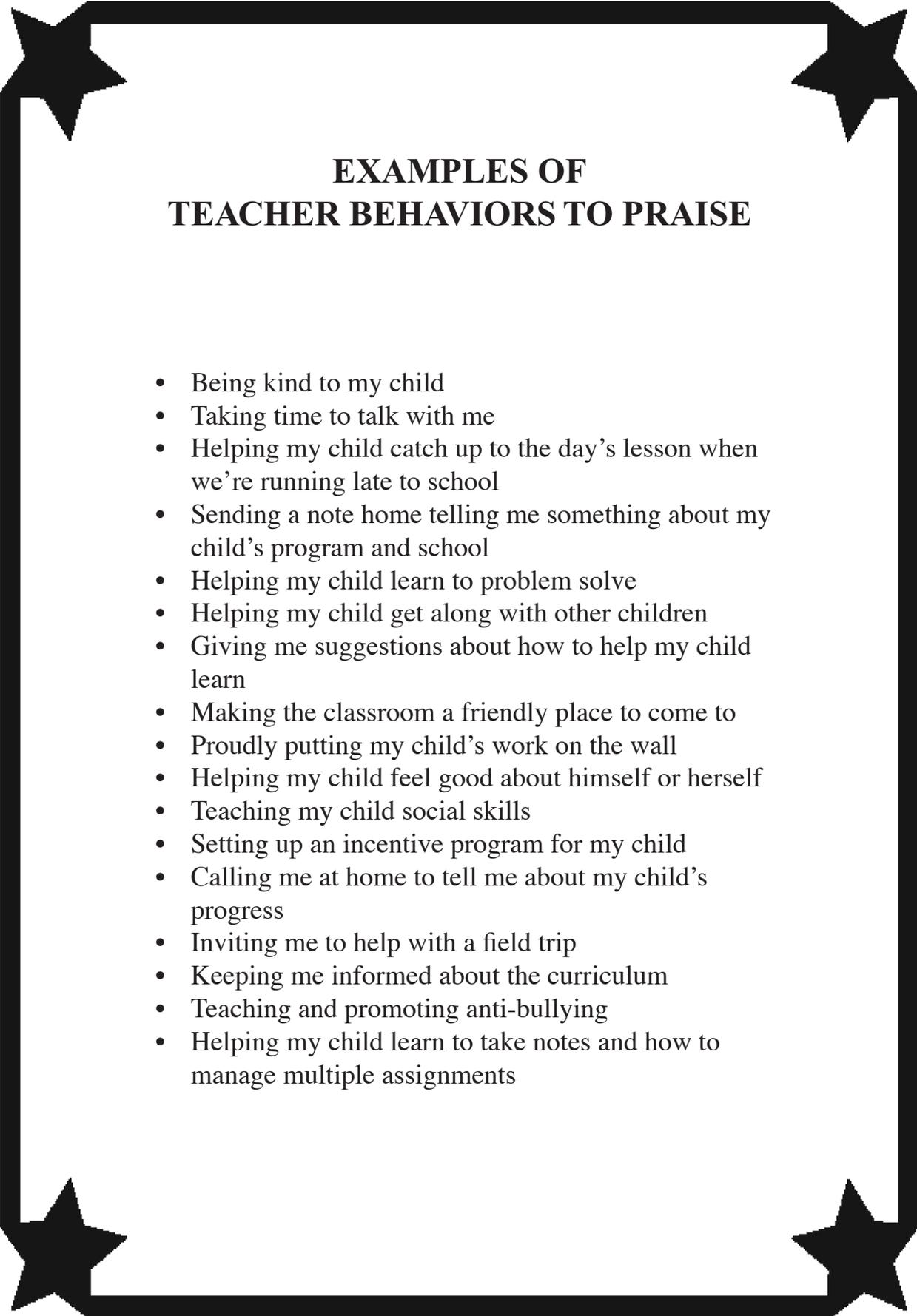


- Clarify the teacher's view of the problem.
- Listen attentively and validate her point of view. (Don't argue or interrupt.)
- Ask how the teacher is planning to address the problem.
- Brainstorm solutions—share strategies that work at home with your child.
- Share incentives and privileges that are motivating for your child.
- Express your support and appreciation for the teacher's efforts.
- Make a home/school plan that is coordinated (e.g., regular positive notes home from the teacher about your child's successes are reinforced by parents on a sticker chart).
- Give positive rather than negative comments and requests to teacher.
- Review with your child's teacher what you will do at home to support her efforts and clarify what she will do at school.
- Arrange a follow-up meeting to assess progress.
- Tell your teacher how and where it is easiest to contact you and ask when it is the optimal time to call your teacher.

### **Remember when talking with your child's teacher:**

- Edit: be polite and positive.
- Stick to the point and avoid unloading multiple gripes.
- Focus on fixing the problem and not blaming.
- Take one step at a time—be realistic.
- Remain calm.
- Make positive recommendations.
- Express your confidence in your teacher's abilities.

**Note: When was the last time you praised your child's teacher for his/her efforts?**



## **EXAMPLES OF TEACHER BEHAVIORS TO PRAISE**

- Being kind to my child
- Taking time to talk with me
- Helping my child catch up to the day's lesson when we're running late to school
- Sending a note home telling me something about my child's program and school
- Helping my child learn to problem solve
- Helping my child get along with other children
- Giving me suggestions about how to help my child learn
- Making the classroom a friendly place to come to
- Proudly putting my child's work on the wall
- Helping my child feel good about himself or herself
- Teaching my child social skills
- Setting up an incentive program for my child
- Calling me at home to tell me about my child's progress
- Inviting me to help with a field trip
- Keeping me informed about the curriculum
- Teaching and promoting anti-bullying
- Helping my child learn to take notes and how to manage multiple assignments