Handouts
Part One

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NOTE: Handouts are divided for session one and session two.
Part 1: Child-Directed Narrated Play
Home Activities for the Week

Child-Directed Narrated Play
Promotes Positive Relationships

To Do:

- **PLAY** for 10 minutes twice each day with your child. Get in your child’s attention spotlight and be child directed; express your joy to your child when playing.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the “Parent Child-Directed Play” record sheet and bring to the next session.
- **USE** visual prompts and choice activity board for children with limited language.

To Read:

Chapter 1, *Toddler-Directed Play* in *Incredible Toddlers* book

OR

Chapter 1, *Child-Directed Play*, in *The Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight while playing together!
## RECORD SHEET

### Parent Child-Directed Narrated Play

**Date:** __________

**Instructions:** Record two times you played with your child, what you did, and any reaction or response you noticed in your child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Play Behaviors I want to do more of:</th>
<th>Parent-Child Activities Sample Script:</th>
<th>Child’s Response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Spend more time doing what my child wants, imitating his sounds, and following his lead.</td>
<td>Example: We played with farm animals. “I will do the same as you. The cow is going ‘moo, moo’!”</td>
<td>Example: Robbie imitated my animal sounds and we went back and forth imitating each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spotlight your child’s successes**
Part 1: Child-Directed Narrated Play

SPOTLIGHTING

Getting in Your Child’s Attention Spotlight During Play

- Position your play carefully so you can have face-to-face contact with your child without too much distance.
- Reduce distractions by turning off the TV, computer, phones and limit other people present.
- Be child-directed and play with your child’s favorite activity.
- Follow your child’s focus of attention or theme during play.
- Observe and respond to your child’s nonverbal initiations; avoid instructions, corrections, and questions—curb your desire to give too much help.
- Describe and narrate what your child is doing with simple words or short phrases and joy (like a sportscaster).
- Model and imitate your child’s actions, words and sounds with enthusiasm and entertainment; offer to help.
- When your child stops interacting with you, seems disinterested, or is engaged in repetitive and obsessive actions, offer another favorite joint activity or change the action slightly with a new idea, song, funny gesture or sound effects and sensory routine.
- Encourage your child to look at you by putting a desired object next to your face and wait for a response. E.g., “What do you want me to do now?”
- Reinforce your child for looking at you with smiles, praise, laughter and by giving him or her the desired object. Be an “enthusiastic audience.”

Remember: Your child is not deliberately trying to exclude you. She/he just doesn’t know how to interact yet.

“Shine a light” on your child during play time!
Spotlighting
Sample Choice Activity Cue Cards

If parents have access to the program BoardMaker™ or a similar symbol generating program, they can use this to create their own activity boards customized to their child’s particular interests.

Example choice activity cards:

- Friend
- Train
- Bristle Blocks
- Ball
- Bubbles
- Book
- Take a Deep Breath
- Sing Songs
- Crafts

The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC. All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission. Boardmaker™ is a trademark of Mayer-Johnson LLC.
# Child Communication Checklist (With Parent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason Child Communicates</th>
<th>Doesn’t understand/ignores/blank stare</th>
<th>Looks at parent</th>
<th>Protests/Refuses/Tantrums</th>
<th>Pulls parent arm/gestures</th>
<th>Points/Reacts/Nods</th>
<th>Uses visual pictures</th>
<th>Shares/Offers things</th>
<th>Makes sounds</th>
<th>Immediate Echoes/copies</th>
<th>Delayed echoes*</th>
<th>Uses 1-3 words/signs</th>
<th>Whole sentence/signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wants something from parents (food, toy, help, play etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to continue playing/reading/singing with parent</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not getting what s/he wants</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to stop activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to parent one-step direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to parent multi-step direction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to parent offering choices</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to parent greeting (hello, bye-bye)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings expression</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**“Delayed Echoes” defined as copies from TV shows, common expressions**
### Child Communication Checklist (With Peer/Sibling)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason Child Communicates</th>
<th>Doesn’t understand/ignores/blank stare</th>
<th>Looks at child</th>
<th>Protests/Refuses/Tantrums</th>
<th>Pulls child’s arm/gestures</th>
<th>Points/Reacts/Nods</th>
<th>Uses visual pictures</th>
<th>Shares/Offers things</th>
<th>Makes sounds</th>
<th>Immediate Echoes/copies</th>
<th>Delayed echoes*</th>
<th>Uses 1-3 words/signs</th>
<th>Whole sentence/signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wants something from peers (food, toy, help, play etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to continue playing/reading/singing with peer</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not getting what s/he wants</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to stop activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to peer request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to peer initiation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to peer greeting</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings expression</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*“Delayed Echoes” defined as copies from TV shows, common expressions

Child's Name: ________________________________

Date: ______________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My support people:</th>
<th>My Language Level (e.g., no spoken language, visual language, 1-2 words, echolalic, good language):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Play Level (e.g., play alone, anxious or withdrawn, want to initiate play with others but don’t know how, initiate but inappropriate):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Sensory Likes (e.g., trucks, swinging, music, water play, bananas):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Sensory Dislikes (e.g., loud noises, certain smells):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Parent’s Goals for Me: (e.g., make a friend, more words, follow directions):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Activities for the Week

Child-Directed Narrated Play
Promotes Language Development

To Do:

- **PLAY** for 10 minutes twice each day with your child. Be attentive, child directed and follow your child’s lead.
- **NARRATE** your child’s play; imitate your child’s words and sustain back and forth interactions during daily routines (e.g., dressing, eating).
- **RECORD** your experiences on the “Parent Child-Directed Play” record sheet and bring to the next session.

To Read:

- Chapter 1, *Toddler-Directed Play* in *Incredible Toddlers* book
- Or
- Chapter 1, *Child-Directed Play*, in *The Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight while playing together!

Part 1: Child-Directed Narrated Play

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### Handout

**RECORD SHEET**

**Parent Child-Directed Narrated Play**

**Date:** __________

Instructions: Record two times you played with your child, what you did, and any reaction or response you noticed in your child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Play Behaviors</th>
<th>Parent-Child Activities</th>
<th>Child’s Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Spend more time describing my child’s actions and engaging in joint attention interactions. 1.</td>
<td>Example: We played with puzzles. “You are finding the place for the airplane puzzle piece. You are looking carefully.” 1.</td>
<td>Example: Robbie seemed to enjoy my describing his actions and occasionally looked up at me to copy what I said. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spotlight your child’s successes**
The key aspects for promoting language expression in children who have little sound or language production is the following:

• Try to get face-to-face contact and gain your child’s attention before talking.
• Use simple, short sentences to describe and narrate what your child is doing, seeing and experiencing; label their actions and objects. Limit instructions and questions. Follow your child’s lead.
• Wait and pause for your child’s turn to respond with a gesture, or look, or word before speaking and narrating again.
• Imitate and repeat your child’s sounds, gestures, behaviors, and words (sound effects such as animal or engine noises help promote sound production).
• Try to sustain back-in-forth verbal interchange as long as your child is interested by reinforcing verbal and nonverbal responses.
• If your child is just speaking with one word, start by adding a second word. Keep it simple, slow down, and build repetition.
• Combine your words with gestures and songs and imitate your child’s words and actions.
• Narrate your child’s activities during play times as well as daily routines such as mealtimes, bedtime, dressing, teeth brushing, diapering and while in the car or bus.

Note: You don’t need to focus on describing numbers, letters and colors for children who are just beginning to talk. These can be described once your child can name some basic objects and actions.

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!
Part 2: Pre-Academic & Persistence Coaching Promotes Language Development & School Readiness

Handouts
Part Two

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Home Activities for the Week

Pre-Academic & Persistence Coaching Promote Children’s Language Development & School Readiness

To Do:

• **PLAY** with your child twice a day, being child-directed and using descriptive commenting, pre-academic and persistence coaching, stay in your child’s attention spotlight using gestures, repetition, visual and physical prompts as needed.

• **READ** with your child using face-to-face interactive reading skills.

• **RECORD** your experiences on the “Pre-Academic & Persistence Coaching” Record Sheet and bring to next session.

To Read:


OR,

Chapter 2, *Academic and Persistence Coaching* and Part 3, Problem 15 (Reading with CARE) in *Incredible Years* book

Shine a light on your child’s language development and school readiness!
### Record Sheet

**Pre-Academic & Persistence Coaching**

**Date:________________**

Instructions: Record two examples of pre-academic or persistence coaching statements you made and your child’s response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Play Language I want to do more of:</th>
<th>Parent-Child Activities Sample Scripts:</th>
<th>Child’s Response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Describing my child’s actions, what he is playing with, and be responsive to his interests so we have joint attention.</td>
<td>1. Example, Parent: “You are working hard and are really focused on the long red duplos. Here is a square red one I found.”</td>
<td>Example: Robbie imitated color names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coaching Children’s Reading Readiness

- Read at a quiet time when you are relaxed and comfortable—with TV and music turned off (this prevents over stimulation).
- Read for a few minutes each day when your child seems calm and alert.
- Place your child in front of you during reading so you have face-to-face contact when possible.
- Adapt reading to your child’s stage of communication.
- Use physical hand signals, pointing gestures, sign language, and animal sounds when looking at pictures.
- Respond immediately to your child’s verbalization or gestures.
- Prompt and imitate your child’s word use.
- Re-read books your child likes many times. Read slowly. Be animated.
- Praise and give positive feedback (that’s right!).
- Slide your finger under the words or letters on the page and show left to right movement. Draw attention by guiding child’s finger under words you read.
- Encourage your child to turn the pages and choose a book he/she is interested in. Let child fill in blanks.
- Choose interactive books with flaps, buttons to push and textures - simple plots and daily routines.
- Create books for your child with photos and magazine pictures.
- End reading with repetitive “all done” signal.

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!
Pre-Academic Coaching Promotes Children’s Language Skills

- Notice what your child is giving attention to and talk about it.
- Describe the objects, shapes, numbers, letters and colors of things your child plays with; avoid questions.
- Listen to your child and imitate or mirror, your child’s sounds and/or words.
- Talk about positions of objects (e.g., inside, under, beside, next to, behind).
- Describe your child’s actions, body parts, and clothing.
- Prompt your child to communicate by modeling words for him/her to copy.
- Use new and more complex words to expand your child’s vocabulary even if you know (s)he won’t understand at first.
- Chant, sing rhymes and teach your child body movements that go with the words.
- Describe your own actions to your child (e.g, “I’m folding three shirts and two pairs of red socks now).”
- Describe your child’s actions during everyday activities such as dressing, eating, or getting ready for bed.
- Match real objects with words and pictures.

"The blue block is next to the yellow square, and the purple triangle is on top of the long red rectangle.”

“You are putting on your blue sweater on top of your white t-shirt. It will keep your body warm.”

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!
SPOTLIGHTING

Persistence Coaching Promotes Children’s School Readiness Skills

- Coach with comments when your child is working hard, concentrating, being calm, or staying patient when doing an activity.
- Describe your child’s persistence with a frustrating activity by trying again, sticking with it, thinking of a new way to do it, staying focused.
- Listen carefully and try to understand what your child is telling you about his/her thoughts, ideas and discoveries.
- Comment and praise your child for listening to you or a peer or sibling.
- Encourage your child to discover, explore, experiment and provide support when mistakes are made.
- Try not to give too much help; encourage your child’s verbal and/or non-verbal responses to other children or adults.

“You are working so hard on that puzzle and thinking about where each piece will go. You are concentrating!”

“You are so patient and just keep trying to use your spoon.”

“You have figured our how to put on your shoes all by yourself.”

“You are staying calm and trying to ask him for the truck again.”

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!
Spotlighting
Facilitating Children’s Language & Pre-School Readiness Skills: Parents as “Academic and Persistence Coaches”

Using academic and persistence coaching to narrate children’s behavior and activities is a powerful way to strengthen children’s language and school readiness skills. The following is a list of actions, behaviors and objects that can be commented upon when playing with your child. Use this checklist to practice these coaching methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects, Actions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____ colors</td>
<td>“You have the red car and the yellow truck.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ number counting</td>
<td>“There are one, two, three dinosaurs in a row.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ shapes</td>
<td>“Now the square Lego is stuck to the round Lego.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ names of objects</td>
<td>“That train is longer than the track.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ sizes (long, short, tall, smaller than, bigger than, etc.,,)</td>
<td>“You are putting the tiny bolt in the right circle.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ positions (up, down, beside, next to, on top, behind, etc.,,)</td>
<td>“The blue block is next to the yellow square, and the purple triangle is on top of the long red rectangle.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persistence</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____ working hard</td>
<td>“You are working so hard on that puzzle with your friend and thinking about where that piece will go.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ concentrating, focusing</td>
<td>“You are so patient and just keep trying all different ways to make that piece fit together.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ stay calm, patience</td>
<td>“You are staying calm and trying again.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ trying again</td>
<td>“You are thinking hard about how to solve the problem and coming up with a great solution to make a ship.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ problem solving</td>
<td>“You are thinking about how to solve the problem and coming up with a great solution to make a ship.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ thinking skills</td>
<td>“You are thinking about how to solve the problem and coming up with a great solution to make a ship.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ reading</td>
<td>“You are thinking about how to solve the problem and coming up with a great solution to make a ship.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____ following parent’s directions</td>
<td>“You followed directions exactly like I asked you. You really listened.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ listening</td>
<td>“You have put your shoes on all by yourself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ independence</td>
<td>“You asked for a turn and now you are waiting for a turn on the computer. You show you are ready for school.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ exploring</td>
<td>“You asked for a turn and now you are waiting for a turn on the computer. You show you are ready for school.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ waiting</td>
<td>“You asked for a turn and now you are waiting for a turn on the computer. You show you are ready for school.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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NOTE: Handouts are divided for session four and session five.
Home Activities for the Week

Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

**To Do:**

- **PLAY** with your child using social coaching and persistence coaching.
- **USE** social coaching in other settings such as the grocery store, at a playground, at mealtimes, or bath time.
- **USE** song choice cards, games, puppets, pretend play, and books to encourage social interactions.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the “Social Coaching” Record Sheet and bring it to the next session.

**To Read:**


OR

Chapter 3, *Social Coaching* in *Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight while playing together!
### RECORD SHEET
#### Social Coaching

**Date:**

---

**Child social behaviors I want to describe:**

- Example: Looking at adult or peer when child communicates or shares something.

1. 

2. 

---

**Parent-child activity and social script:**

- Example: “You are looking at me and that is so friendly.”

1. 

2. 

---

**Child’s response:**

- Example: Robbie smiled.

1. 

2. 

---

**Spotlight your child’s successes**
### ABC Chart

Write two examples of setting up an ABC learning opportunity for your child to practice a target behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting/Activity</th>
<th>Antecedent (A)</th>
<th>Behavior (B)</th>
<th>Consequence (C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
<td>Father: Shows son the balloon and holds next to his face for eye contact.</td>
<td>Child: “Please balloon.” (teaching verbal asking behavior)</td>
<td>Father: That’s friendly to say “please can I have the balloon” and gives boy the balloon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play time before dinner</td>
<td>Prompts: You can say, “Please balloon.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Child’s Name:** ____________________

**Date:** __________________________
**SPOTLIGHTING**

**One-on-One Parent-Child Social Coaching**

- During play, model social skills for your child such as offering to share, waiting, taking turns, asking for help, pointing or gesturing, smiling, eye contact, and praising.
- Prompt your child to ask for help, take a turn, share something, or respond to a friend’s request and then praise him/her if it occurs. Let it go if your child does not respond to your prompt.
- Enthusiastically praise your child any time s/he offers (verbally or nonverbally) to share, help, responds to a request, or gives eye contact.
- Participate in pretend and make-believe play with your child by using a doll, action figure, or puppet to model skills such as asking to play, offering to help, taking a turn, giving a compliment, calming down with a deep breath and waiting.
- Model and prompt by suggesting to your child the appropriate words to say. For example, “You can say, ‘I want the truck, please.’”

**Parent Prompt Examples:**

“I will be your friend and share this with you.”

“Can you help me find a blue one?”

“You are a good friend for helping me.”

**Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!**
Face-to-face sensory physical routines can motivate your children to interact and laugh and have fun interacting with you for longer periods of time. This means you will have optimized your child’s energy level and increased learning opportunities for more durable social learning. Here are some tips for increasing your fun factor with your child.

**When your child seems withdrawn, uninterested, unresponsive or bored increase his energy and motivation as follows:**

- Exaggerate your fun responses and gestures with big smiles, laughter, silly faces, tickles, funny noises and bigger voices with more emotion: draw attention to your face.
- Play games such as peek-a-boo and name the hidden object, or pattycake, finger play, or build a fort in your living room.
- Determine your child’s favorite rhythmic song or physical game such as Ring around the Rosy, When You’re Happy and You Know It, the Chase Me Game or rough housing. Use song choice cards to help child make choice of song.
- Surprise your child occasionally with a variation of routine such as new sound effects, new verse, or new steps.
- Pause or freeze sensory routine often to prompt your child to signal you for what he or she wants next.
- Once you get the signal (verbal or nonverbal), continue the game and then pause again, waiting for another signal.
- Make sure there is back and forth communication throughout movements and you are not simply entertaining your child without requiring your child to stay connected with you by responding.

**Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!**
Avoid getting your child overaroused as follows:

- Pay attention to your child’s arousal level.
- Make the play softer, gentler, quieter as soon as you notice your child getting overly aroused.
- Sing calmer songs that calm your child down.
- Freeze the play for taking deep breaths or positive imagery.
- Redirect the play before your child shuts down or dysregulates.
- Once your child has calmed down, don’t be afraid to increase your enthusiasm and optimize your child’s energy level again.

Using Fun Sensory Physical Routines to Motivate Social Interactions

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!

Part 3: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

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Many children on the Autism Spectrum are more responsive to music, even if they don’t react to the sound of your regular voice. Songs can be the first place your child begins to pay attention to you, use words, and join in activities with you. Here are some tips to using music and songs to teach your child about communication.

- Sing songs slowly and repeat often.
- Pair your song words with gestures, large motor movements, and other sensory stimulation such as rocking, jumping, or clapping.
- Choose short songs with a small number of familiar words repeated over and over. For example, sing “row, row, row your boat” and mimic a rowing action.
- Sing face-to-face.
- Adjust song’s number of words and actions to child’s communication level.
- Pause songs and offer your child turns with words and actions.
- Make up songs using your child’s name and other family member’s names in your songs.
- Use song picture cards so your child can choose the song to sing.
- Use instruments and props such as a toy drum, tambourine, or harmonica when singing.
- Introduce pretend play into songs. (Example: Use puppets to sing.)
- Remember to say “all done” when the singing is over.
- Remember these old stand by songs: The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round, If You’re Happy and You Know It, Ring Around the Rosy, Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, and Humpty Dumpty.
Spotlighting
Sample Song Choice Cards

If parents have access to the program BoardMaker™ or a similar symbol generating program, they can use this to create their own song choice cards customized to their child’s favorite songs.

Example front and back of song cards:

Twinkle Twinkle
Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky

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Part 3: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

We're Going On a Bear Hunt

We're going on a bear hunt!
We're going to catch a big one!
I'm not afraid!
Are you? Are you?
Not me!

Row Your Boat

(Sitting face to face on floor hold your child's hands and rock back and forth.)
Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.
Facilitating Children’s Social Learning: Parents as “Social Skills Coaches”

Describing and prompting children’s friendly behaviors is a powerful way to strengthen children’s social skills. Social skills are the first steps to making close friendships. The following is a list of social skills that you can comment on when playing with your child or when your child is playing with a friend. Use this checklist to practice your social skills coaching.

### Social/Friendship Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/Friendship Skills</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______  helping</td>
<td>“That’s so friendly. You are sharing your blocks with your friend and waiting your turn.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  sharing</td>
<td>“You are both working together and helping each other like a team.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  teamwork</td>
<td>“That is friendly to look at your friend.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  using a friendly voice (quiet, polite)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  eye contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  listening to what a friend says</td>
<td>“You listened to your friend’s request and followed his suggestion. That is very friendly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  taking turns</td>
<td>“You waited and asked first if you could use that. Your friend listened to you and shared.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  asking</td>
<td>“You are taking turns. That’s what good friends do for each other.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  trading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  waiting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  responding to a friend’s suggestion</td>
<td>“You made a friendly suggestion and your friend is doing what you wanted. That is so friendly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  gesturing (e.g., pointing)</td>
<td>“You pointed to where the red block is to help your friend.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  smiling at peer</td>
<td>“You are helping your friend build his tower.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  using soft, gentle touch</td>
<td>“You are being cooperative by sharing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  asking or gesturing to use something a friend has</td>
<td>“You worked together to figure out how to put those blocks together. You are good friends.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  cooperating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______  including another in play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prompting

- “Your friend is looking for yellow blocks. Do you think you can find her a yellow block?”
  (praise child if s/he tries to help and/or point to yellow block)
- “You did that by accident. You can say ‘I am sorry’ to your friend.”

### Modeling Friendly Behavior

- Parents can model waiting, taking turns, helping, and complimenting, which also teach children these social skills. For example, “I’m going to be your friend and share my block with you.”
### Social/Friendship Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Models:</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v Sharing</td>
<td>“I’m going to be your friend and share my car with you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v Offering to Help</td>
<td>“If you want, I can help you with that by holding the bottom while you put another on top.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v Waiting</td>
<td>“I can use my waiting muscles and wait until you’re finished using that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v Suggesting</td>
<td>“Could we build something together?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v Complimenting</td>
<td>“You are so smart in figuring out how to put that together.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| v Behavior-to-Feelings | “You shared with me. That is so friendly and makes me feel happy.”  
“Could we build something together?” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Prompts:</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| v Self-Talk    | “Hmm, I really wish I could find another piece to fit here.”  
“Hmm, I’m not sure I know how to put this together.” |
| v Asking for help | “Can you help me find another round piece?”  
“Can you share one of your cars with me?” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Response:</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v Praise child when s/he shares or helps you</td>
<td>“That was so helpful and friendly to share with me.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| v Ignore or model acceptance when child does NOT share or help | Continue to use descriptive commenting.  
“I can keep trying to find that round piece.” (model persistence)  
“I can wait until you’re finished playing with the cars.” (model waiting)  
“I know it is hard to give up that car, so I will wait to have a turn later.” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puppet or Action-Figure Models:</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| v Entering Play | “Can I play with you?”  
“That looks like fun. Can I do that with you?” |
| v Being Socially Friendly | “I’m being friendly. I’d like to play with you.” |
| v Ignoring Aggression | “I want to play with a friendly person. I think I will find somebody else to play with.” |
**Parents Promoting Emotional and Social Competence in Young Children**

**Parent-Child Social Coaching:**

Child Developmental Level 2

Children in Parallel Play: Young children start out playing with other children by sitting next to them and engaging in parallel play. In the beginning, they do not initiate interactions with other children or seem to notice they are even there. They may not talk to them or offer an idea or interact with them in any way. Parents can help promote peer play by prompting their children to use social skills or to notice their friends’ activities or moods. Providing children with the actual words for interactions, or modeling social behaviors will be important since children may not yet have these skills in their repertoire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/Friendship Skills</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Coaches:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Asking for What They Want</td>
<td>“You can ask your friend for what you want by saying, ‘Please can I have the crayon?’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Asking for Help</td>
<td>“You can ask your friend for help by saying ‘Can you help me?’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Asking a Friend to Wait</td>
<td>“You can tell your friend you are not ready to share yet.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If your child responds to your prompt by using his or her words to repeat what you said, praise this polite asking or friendly helping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Prompting:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Noticing Other Child</td>
<td>“Wow, look what a big tower your friend is building.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You are both using green markers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Initiate Interaction With Other Child</td>
<td>“Your friend is looking for small green pieces. Can you find some for him?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Your friend has not cars and you have 8 cars. He looks unhappy. Can you share one of your cars with your friend?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ To Give Child a Compliment</td>
<td>“Wow! You can tell your friend his tower is cool.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you child does repeat this, you can praise him or her for a friendly compliment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If your child does not respond, continue descriptive commenting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Praising:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Behavior-to-Feelings</td>
<td>“You shared with your friend, that is so friendly and makes her feel happy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You helped your friend figure out how to do that, she looks very pleased with your help.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Playing Together</td>
<td>“Your friend is enjoying playing with these Legos with you. You look like you are having fun with your friend. You are both very friendly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Puppet or Action-Figure Models:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Sharing or Helping</td>
<td>“Wow! Do you see the tower that Nancy is building?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Can either of you help me find a red block to make this truck?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Could I help you build that house?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think we could ask Freddy if he’ll share his train?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents Promoting Emotional and Social Competence in Young Children

Child-Peer Social Coaching: Child Developmental Level 3

Children Who Initiate Play: Young children move from parallel play to play where they are initiating interactions with each other. They are motivated to make friends and interested in other children. Depending on their temperament, impulsivity, attention span and knowledge of social skills their interactions may be cooperative or at times conflictual. Parents can help promote social skills during peer play by prompting and coaching them to use skills or by praising and giving attention to social skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent-Coached Skills</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social/Friendship Skills:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Asking in a Friendly Voice (polite, quiet)</td>
<td>“You asked your friend so politely for what you wanted and s/he gave it to you, you are good friends.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Giving Help to Friend</td>
<td>“You helped your friend find what s/he was looking for. You are both working together and helping each other like a team.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Sharing or Trading</td>
<td>“That’s so friendly. You shared your blocks with your friend. Then she traded with you and gave you her car.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Asking to Enter Play</td>
<td>“You asked kindly to play and they seemed happy to have you join in?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Giving a Compliment</td>
<td>“You gave a compliment to her, that is very friendly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Agreeing with or giving a Suggestion</td>
<td>“You accepted your friend’s suggestion. That is so cooperative.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Regulatory Skills:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Listening to What a Peer Says</td>
<td>“Wow you really listened to your friend’s request and followed his suggestion. That is really friendly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Waiting Patiently</td>
<td>“You waited and asked first if you could use that. That shows you have really strong waiting muscles.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Taking Turns</td>
<td>“You are taking turns. That’s what good friends do for each other”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Staying Calm</td>
<td>“You were disappointed when s/he would let you play with them but you stayed calm and asked someone else to play. That is really brave.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Problem Solving</td>
<td>“You both weren’t sure how to make that fit together, but you worked together and figured that out—you are both good problem solvers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Behavior-to-Feelings</td>
<td>“You shared with your friend, that is so friendly and makes her feel happy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You saw that she was frustrated and helped her put that together. That is very thoughtful to think of your friend’s feelings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You were both frustrated with that but you stayed calm and kept trying and finally figured it out. That is real teamwork.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You were afraid to ask her to play with you, but you were brave and asked her and she seemed really pleased that you did.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Apology/Forgiveness</td>
<td>“That was an accident. Do you think you can say you’re sorry?” Or, “Your friend seems really sorry he did that. Can you forgive him?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Activities for the Week

Attentive Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

To Do:

- **PLAY** with your child and another child using peer social coaching (set up a play date).
- **USE** social coaching in other settings such as at a playground or in the classroom.
- **CONTINUE** using pretend play, songs, games, and books to encourage social interactions.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the “Peer Social Coaching” Record Sheet and bring it to the next session.

To Read:


- OR

- Chapter 13, *Teaching Children Friendship Skills* in *Incredible Years* book

Get your child’s attention spotlight on other children!

Part 3: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills
**RECORD SHEET**

**Peer Social Coaching**

Instructions: Record two times you played with your child and another child, what social coaching you did, and your child’s response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child behaviors I want to describe:</th>
<th>Parent-child activity and social script:</th>
<th>Child’s response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Noticing another child or playing with or sitting next to them.</td>
<td>Example: “You noticed your friend wanted to play with you. He looks happy you let him sit next to you.”</td>
<td>Example: Robbie spent less time playing alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spotlight your child’s successes**
Part 3: Social Coaching Promotes Friendship Skills

SPOTLIGHTING

Peer Social Coaching

- Prompt your child to notice what another child is doing or to help a peer or sibling.
- Help your child understand that when she/he shared or helped, the other child felt happy so she/he can see the connection between his/her behavior and another’s feelings.
- Encourage play dates with a friend.
- Praise your child when she/he initiates interactions or notices what a peer is doing.
- Use social coaching instead of asking questions.
- Prompt, coach, and praise your child’s friendly behaviors whenever you see them (e.g., sharing, helping, taking turns, being polite, apologizing, compliments).

"Your friend is looking for a red block, can you help him?" (prompt)
"That’s so friendly. You are sharing your cars and waiting your turn. Your friend looks happy." (connect behavior to feeling)
"You are both helping each other like a team."
"You waited and asked first if you could use that. Your friend listened to you and shared." (connect behaviors to positive outcome)
"You both worked together to put those blocks together. That was great cooperation." (enthusiastic response)
"You could give your friend a compliment and say, ‘I like your picture’. “ (prompt and model words)

Getting your child’s attention spotlight on other children!

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Home Activities for the Week

Emotion Coaching Strengthens Children’s Emotional Literacy & Empathy

To Do:

- **CONTINUE** playing with your child one-on-one combining emotion coaching with social coaching.
- **PLAY** with your child and a sibling or friend using peer social coaching.
- **USE** visual prompts of feeling faces along with feeling words to teach feelings communication.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the “Emotion Coaching” Record Sheet and bring to next session.

To Read:


  OR

- Chapter 4, *Emotional Coaching Strengthens Emotional Literacy* in *The Incredible Years* book

Get your child’s attention spotlight on his/her feelings and others’ feelings
### Handout

**RECORD SHEET**

Emotion Coaching

Instructions: Record two times you played with your child and another child, what emotion coaching you did, and your child’s response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child emotions I want to describe:</th>
<th>Parent-child activity and emotion script:</th>
<th>Child’s response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Happy smiles, being proud, and noticing another child’s feelings</td>
<td>Example: “See your friend is happy that you shared with him. You look happy and proud because you are smiling.”</td>
<td>Example: Robbie told me one day he felt happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 4: Emotion Coaching Promotes Emotional Literacy

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Autism Spectrum & Language Delays Program Handouts

SPOTLIGHTING

**Emotion Coaching**

- Try to think about what your child might be feeling and wanting.
- Describe your child’s feelings (don’t ask her what she is feeling because she is unlikely to have the words to tell you).
- Label your child’s positive feelings more often than his negative feelings.
- When naming uncomfortable feelings such as frustration or anger, point out and praise the coping strategy your child is using: “You look frustrated, but you are staying calm and trying again.”
- Cuddle and soothe your child when she is hurt or frightened. Stay calm yourself to provide extra reassurance.
- For children who are non verbal, use visual pictures of feeling faces to teach feelings and for child to show you how he feels.

**Spotlighting your child’s feelings!**

“You look proud of that drawing.”

“You seem confident when reading that story.”

“You are so patient. Even though it fell down twice, you just keep trying to see how you can make it taller. You must feel pleased with yourself for being so calm and trying hard.”

“You are forgiving of your friend because you know it was a mistake.”

“I am having fun with you and am excited about your discoveries.”
**Spotlighting**

**Emotion Learning: Parents as “Emotion Coaches”**

Describing children’s feelings is a powerful way to strengthen their emotional literacy. Once children have emotion language, they will be able to better regulate their own emotions because they can tell you how they feel. The following is a list of emotions that can be commented upon when playing with a child. Use this checklist to practice describing your child’s emotions. You can also use the feeling cards to ask children to show you the picture of their feelings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings/Emotional Literacy</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>--- happy</td>
<td>“That is frustrating, and you are staying calm and trying to do that again.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- frustrated</td>
<td>“You look proud of putting that together.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- calm</td>
<td>“You seem excited about playing in the bath.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- proud</td>
<td>“You are so patient. You keep trying to figure out where the puzzle piece goes. You got it! You look happy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- excited</td>
<td>“You look like you are having fun playing with your friend, and he looks like he enjoys doing this with you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- pleased</td>
<td>“You are so curious. You are trying out every way you think that can go together.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- sad</td>
<td>“You are embarrassed you spilled paint on your shirt, but you look pleased with your painting.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- helpful</td>
<td>“Your friend is happy you shared with her.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- worried</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- confident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- patient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- having fun</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--- jealous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- forgiving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- caring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- curious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- mad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- interested</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--- embarrassed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Remember to Model Feeling Talk and Sharing Feelings**

- “I am proud of you for sharing with your friend.”
- “I am really happy playing with you.”
- “I was nervous it would fall down, but you were careful and patient, and your plan worked.”
**Handouts**

**Part Five**

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**NOTE:** There is a color version of the handout “Tips for Using Puppets with Children” available on our website, here:

www.incredibleyears.com/parents-teachers/articles-for-parents/
Home Activities for the Week

Pretend Play Promotes Empathy and Social Skills

To Do:

- **CONTINUE** to play with your child using coaching methods.
- **MODEL** being empathic and showing social skills in play interactions.
- **SET UP** pretend play practices using puppets, dolls, or action figures with your child to model feelings and social skills and promote empathy (i.e., feelings of characters).
- **RECORD** your experiences on the Record Sheet and bring to next session.

To Read:

Chapter 4, *Positive Attention, Encouragement, and Praise in Incredible Toddlers* book

OR

Chapter 12, *Helping Children to Regulate their Emotions in Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight using pretend play!
### Using Puppets and Pretend Play

**Use the scenarios listed, or make up your own, to promote social skills/empathy with your child:**

1. Puppet: “Hi, I’m Oscar Ostrich. Would you play with me? Do you like airplanes?”

2. Puppet: “Hi! I’m Tiny Turtle. Would you help me put this together? I’m frustrated it is not working.”

3. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:_____________</th>
<th>Record how your scenario went and your child’s response:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Spotlight your child’s successes**
SPOTLIGHTING

Tips for Using Puppets with Children

Preschool children are working to accomplish the important developmental milestones of learning friendship skills including beginning to share, help others, initiate social conversations, listen, and cooperate with others.

One of the ways to promote your child’s language, social and emotional skills is through the use of puppet play. Puppet play is effective because it encourages Imaginary pretend play and helps children experience the feelings of other characters (early empathy development) as well as practice important conversation skills.

With puppets, dolls, or action figures you can act out stories, make up fantasies, and explore solutions to pretend problems. You may be nervous at first using puppets, but try it out and before long you will experience the joy of entering into your child’s thoughts and imagination, one of the most intimate places you can be with your child at this age.

Here are a few things to have your puppet do when playing with your child:

**Puppet Scenarios**

- **Puppet models greeting your child.** For example, “Hi I am Tiny Turtle. What is your name?” When your child tells your puppet his name, puppet thanks him for being so friendly. (Modeling friendly social greetings.)

- **Puppet models interest in your child.** For example, “What do you like to do?” When your child tells your puppet his interests, puppet shares his interests (learning how to get to know someone). You can also prompt your child to ask the puppet what s/he likes to do? (Learning how to show interest in someone else.)

- **Puppet asks for help.** For example, “I can’t get this block to go together, can you help me?” When your child helps your puppet, your puppet compliments his helping behavior. (Learning to ask for help as well as how to help a friend.)

- **Puppet shares his emotion.** For example, “I am embarrassed because I can’t ride my bike. Do you know how to ride a bike?” Ask your child what the puppet is feeling. Encourage your child to say something to make the puppet feel better. (Learning to express emotions and think about another person’s emotions.)

- **Puppet shares something with your child.** For example, “I see you looking for green blocks, would you like my green block.” (Modeling sharing.) If child takes your puppet’s block, say “I’m happy to help you.” (Connecting sharing action with emotion.)

- **Puppet waits for his turn.** For example, “I am going to wait until you finish that game, then can I have a turn?” If child gives your puppet a turn, puppet thanks him and tells him it makes him feel happy to have such a friend.

continues on back
SPOTLIGHTING

Tips for Using Puppets with Children, Cont’d

Note: If your child does not have the language skills to respond verbally to the puppet, it is still good for the puppet to model the words involved in the social interaction. You can also structure interactions that involve nonverbal responses from your child. “Would you share that with me?” “Would you like to shake the puppet’s hand?” “Can you help me build this tower?” This way, the focus is on your child’s friendly behavioral response to the puppet. You and the puppet can provide the verbal structure. This will support your child’s eventual language development in these social situations.

Parent Praise: Parents can use a silly/different voice for the puppet character and then go out of role as parent to praise the child for his or her social skills. Look for opportunities to comment and praise your child when she waits, takes turns, helps, offers a friendly suggestion or gesture, asks for help, shows interest or empathy, gives you eye contact, responds to your puppet, or listens well to your puppet.

Parent Prompts: In these puppet plays parents can prompt their children’s appropriate social responses by whispering in their ear some ideas for what to say to the puppet. For example, “You can tell the turtle puppet you like to play with trucks.” Or, “You can say please can I have that book?” Don’t worry if your child doesn’t use your suggestion, just move on to something else as this is not a command. Sometimes your child will copy your suggestion or words and then you can praise him or her for such nice asking or sharing.

Remember: Keep it simple, have fun, and do not have your puppet model negative behaviors.
NOTE: The handouts in this section may be kept as master copies and photocopied for reuse with your parent groups. All copyright information must be maintained and you may not alter any of the content on these materials. These handouts are also available on our website, www.incredibleyears.com (in Group Leader Resources section).

NOTE: There is a color version of the handout “Scenarios for Teaching Children Emotional Self-Regulation Skills” available on our website, here: www.incredibleyears.com/parents-teachers/articles-for-parents/
Home Activities for the Week

Promoting Children’s Self-Regulation

To Do:

• **CONTINUE** to play with your child using coaching methods.
• **MODEL** positive self-regulation and calm down strategies.
• **SET UP** calm down practices for your child using Calm Down Thermometer and/or tiny turtle.
• **USE** visual prompts to cue child to take deep breaths or take a break before the child is too dysregulated.
• **RECORD** your experiences on the “Emotional Self Regulation” Record Sheet and bring to the next session.

To Read:

Chapter 4, *Positive Attention, Encouragement, and Praise in Incredible Toddlers* book

OR

Chapter 12, *Helping Children to Regulate their Emotions*, and Chapter 14, *Controlling Upsetting Thoughts in Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight to promote their self-regulation!
**Teaching Emotional Self-Regulation**

**Record Sheet**

Use the scenarios in handout or make up your own to teach your child calm down skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: _____________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Turtle puppet: “I am sometimes afraid, so I think of my happy place, which is watching my fish. What is your happy place?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Record your teaching scenario and how your child responded:

**Spotlight your child’s successes**
Calm Down Thermometer

I can do it. I can calm down.

Think “Stop”

Take 3 deep breaths

Stay cool
Spotlighting

Sample Self-Regulation Cue Cards

If parents have access to the program BoardMaker™ or a similar symbol generating program, they can use this to create their own self-regulation cards.

Example self-regulation cards:

**SMELL THE FLOWER**
**BLOW OUT THE CANDLE**

**COUNT DOWN FROM 10**

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

**IGNORE**

I WON'T LET THEM GET ME ANGRY.

**RELAX**
Emotion coaching helps build children’s emotional literacy so they can begin to articulate their feelings to others. This is a foundational step to being able to eventually regulate their own emotions. Once children are starting to recognize and express their feelings, parents can begin to teach them some self-calming strategies. Because children are visual thinkers and love imaginary play, it is effective to use stories, puppets, pictures and practice role plays to help them practice calming thoughts, positive visual images, deep breathing, coping self-talk and using words or gestures to express their feelings and needs.

Here are a few things you can do with your child using the Calm Down Thermometer handout and Tiny Turtle puppet. Each of these scenarios would be done in one 5-minute setting and at different times when your child seems relaxed and interested in some puppet play. Try to keep these scenarios simple, fun and imaginative and follow your child’s lead.

**Puppet Scenarios**

**Tiny Turtle Explains the Calm Down Thermometer**

- Tiny Turtle puppet introduces the Calm Down Thermometer and explains how it works. For example, “Hi I am Tiny Turtle. I want to tell you about this amazing feeling thermometer which can measure your feelings.” Your turtle puppet can tell your child he is feeling sad, mad, worried or frustrated. Or on the other hand, happy, calm, relaxed, or proud. While Tiny is telling his feelings, point to the place on the thermometer that shows Tiny’s feeling. (Red or hot for angry versus green for cool or calm.) You can also ask your child to point to the color on the thermometer or move the arrow to the place that represents Tiny’s particular feeling. When your child points to the place on the thermometer you can add to the fun by asking him or her to show you that feeling face.

**Tiny Turtle explains How the Thermometer Works**

- Tiny Turtle tells your child a story about a time he was stepped on or made fun of and felt hurt or mad. He explains how he took three deep breaths to get back into green. For example, “One time someone made fun of me because I am so slow and I was up here in red feeling mad. I took three deep breaths and practiced smelling a flower and blowing out a candle. Then I came down into blue.”

- Ask your child to practice taking deep breaths with Tiny Turtle and let him or her move the thermometer arrow down from red to green.

- Tiny Turtle asks your child to tell a time he or she felt angry or sad or excited or safe. (Use a variety of comfortable and uncomfortable feeling words.) For example, Tiny asks, “Have you ever had someone make fun of you? How did that feel?” When your child shares a situation, help him/her move the arrow to how he/she was feeling and then move the arrow down as deep breathing is practiced.
Using the Calm Down Thermometer, Tiny Turtle asks your child what feelings the faces on the thermometer represent. For example, “See these feeling faces on this thermometer, what feelings do you think they are?” When your child names a feeling praise their understanding and ask them to show you that feeling face.

“I took three deep breaths and practiced smelling a flower and blowing out a candle. Then I came down into blue.”

Ask your child to practice taking deep breaths with Tiny Turtle and let him or her move the thermometer arrow down from red to green.

Tiny Turtle asks your child to tell a time he or she felt angry or sad or excited or safe. (Use a variety of comfortable and uncomfortable feeling words.) For example, Tiny asks, “Have you ever had someone make fun of you? How did that feel?” When your child shares a situation, help him/her move the arrow to how he/she was feeling and then move the arrow down as deep breathing is practiced.

Using the Calm Down Thermometer, Tiny Turtle asks your child what feelings the faces on the thermometer represent. For example, “See these feeling faces on this thermometer, what feelings do you think they are?” When your child names a feeling praise their understanding and ask then to show you that feeling face.

Tiny Turtle Explains How to Calm Down

Tiny Turtle explains how he recognizes an uncomfortable feeling and says “stop” and goes into his turtle shell to take deep breaths. For example, “One time someone stepped on my foot, and I was mad, but I said “stop” and went in my turtle shell and took deep breaths like this. Then I felt better.” Ask your child to practice this with Tiny Turtle and either imagine he has a magic turtle shell or put her head under her shirt.

Tiny Turtle explains how he uses his happy place visualizations when he is in his shell to help him calm down. For example, “When I am nervous I think about a time I learned to ride my bike and felt really proud. Or, when I am afraid or sad I think of my teddy bear and that helps me feel safe.” After Tiny has explained his happy or safe places then he can ask your child where his/her happy place is and how your child can use this when in his/her turtle shell. This exercise can help your child develop some positive imagery of things to think about when in his/her shell.
SPOTLIGHTING

*Scenarios for Teaching Children Emotional Self-Regulation Skills (continued)*

- Tiny Turtle explains what he says to himself when he is in his shell. For example, “When I am in my shell I say to myself, I can do it, I can calm down and try again.” Ask your child to repeat these words with Tiny and do it together.

- Tiny Turtle asks your child when she/he could use their Turtle Power. Then Tiny asks your child to show you how he/she uses Turtle Power. For example, “What makes you angry? So you are up here in red on the thermometer, how can you get yourself down here in green?” Praise your child for showing you or Tiny how to take deep breaths, think of their happy place, or use positive self-talk.

**NOTE:** Remember when using Tiny Turtle to follow your child’s lead and ideas and praise his or her willingness to practice taking deep breaths, using happy place memories and positive self-talk. Make these play scenarios fun, imaginative and interactive.
Part 6: Promoting Children’s Self-Regulation Skills

**SPOTLIGHTING**

**Building Children’s Self-Regulation Skills**

- Coach and praise your child’s self-regulation skills such as staying calm, being patient, trying again when frustrated, waiting a turn, and using words or gestures when frustrated.
- Support your child when (s)he is frustrated, but recognize when (s)he is too upset to listen and just needs space and time to calm down.
- Encourage your child’s practice of calm down steps with puppets, books, and games.
- Model and prompt your child to use words, feeling pictures, or puppets to express his/her needs and feelings (e.g., “Show me the card with the face of how you are feeling.”).
- Help your child learn ways to self-regulate such as using a special stuffed animal or blanket, taking deep breaths, telling himself/herself (s)he can calm down, waiting, solving a problem.
- Use picture prompts to cue child to wait, take deep breaths or take a break.
- Model self-regulation skills yourself, such as taking deep breaths, positive self-talk, or taking a break.

“**You can think of your happy place.**”

“**Can you pretend to use Tiny’s secret shell to take deep breaths & calm down?**”

“**You did a good job using your words to talk about your problem. That’s what friends do.**”

“**That is so strong to use your waiting muscles.**”

“**Let’s check the Calm Down Thermometer and get into the blue zone.**”

**Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!**
## BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

### Sensory Likes

Write down your child’s sensory likes in each of the sensory categories listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Blank Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auditory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste/oral (chewing/sucking)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proprioception (body space/balance/need for movement/stillness)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sensory Dislikes

Write down your child’s sensory dislikes in each of the sensory categories listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auditory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste/oral (chewing/sucking)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proprioception (body space/balance/need for movement/stillness)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Home Activities for the Week

Using Praise and Rewards to Motivate Children

To Do:

- **CONTINUE** to play with your child using coaching methods and pretend play.
- **PRACTICE** praising your child’s target behaviors often.
- **PRAISE AND REWARD** yourself for your parenting efforts and others for their support (partner, child’s teacher, grandparent, friend, etc.).
- **TRY** giving your child a small tangible reward and/or sensory activity for difficult behaviors you would like to encourage.
- **RECORD** your praises on the “Behavior Plan” Record Sheet and bring to next session.

To Read:

Chapter 4, *Positive Attention, Encouragement, and Praise* in *Incredible Toddlers* book

OR

Chapter 5: *Positive Attention, Encouragement, and Praise* and Chapter 6: *Incentives and Celebrations* in *Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight using praise and rewards!
### Handout

**RECORD SHEET**  
**Specific Praise**

Instructions: Record times you praised your child, what you said, and any reaction or response you noticed in your child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Child Behaviors Praised:</th>
<th>Praise Statements:</th>
<th>Child’s response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Eye contact, responding verbally or nonverbally</td>
<td>Example: “You looked at me, that made me smile.”</td>
<td>Example: Robbie seems to look at me more often, especially if I prompt him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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SPOTLIGHTING

Praising Your Child & Tangible Rewards

Praising Your Child

• Prompt your child’s attempts to interact with others and praise him/her for gesturing, talking, sharing, making eye contact, and working together.
• Give labeled and specific praise for target behaviors immediately & consistently.
• Praise with smiles, eye contact, enthusiasm, and gestures.
• Give pats, hugs, and kisses along with praise.
• Praise your child in front of other people.
• Combine praise with social and emotion coaching methods.
• Be sure to get in your child’s “attention spotlight” by facing them directly and then praise with lots of smiles.
• Combine praise with a tangible reward for targeted behavior (e.g., hand stamp, sticker, physical activity, crackers).

Tangible Rewards

• Keep reward program simple.
• Break down behavior into small steps—be realistic.
• Use spontaneous, inexpensive spontaneous rewards (stickers, crackers, hand stamp, extra story before bed).
• Get appropriate behavior first, then give reward immediately.
• Gradually replace tangible rewards with social approval.

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!

Part 7: Using Praise and Rewards to Motivate Children ©The Incredible Years®
**HANDOUT**

**“Positive Opposites”**

**Behavior Record**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors I want to see less of: e.g., playing alone</th>
<th>For each negative behavior, write down its Positive Opposite Behavior e.g., initiating interactions with siblings/peers (gesturing, asking to play, taking a turn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

Reward Yourself!

Think about rewarding yourself. Have you ever used an incentive system to reward yourself for accomplishing difficult tasks or goals, like completing a difficult project, or working hard as a parent? Think about ways you could reward yourself for your hard work as a parent, and list below.

Good Incentives for Me:
Examples:
A walk in the park
Tea or coffee with a friend
Warm bubble bath
Do yoga

Goal:
I will commit to doing something positive for myself this week. This will include:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Spotlighting Parent Support Network

Who can lend a helping hand?

Think about people in your support network. Each hand represents a different group of people. Write in each hand specific people from that network who can help provide support to you and your child! You can draw or paste a picture of your family in the “My Support Network” circle!
**BRAINSTORM/BUZZ**  
**Labeled Praise**

Brainstorm words you will use to praise your child to increase target behaviors you want to see more of. Write them below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors I want to see more of:</th>
<th>Praise words to use:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I like it when you...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good for you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wow! What a wonderful job you have done!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:**

I will commit to increasing the number of praises I give my child to __________ per hour. The behaviors I will praise include: (e.g., sharing) ________________
BRAINSTORM/BUZZ
Positive Self-Praise

Brainstorm possible self-praise you can use to encourage yourself as a parent. Write these statements on your notepad.

I can do it
I am working hard as a parent
I can stay calm

Goal:
I will commit to thinking about what I am doing well as a parent each day and using two of the above examples.
Handouts
Part Eight

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Home Activities for the Week

Limit Setting & Redirecting

To Do:

• **CONTINUE** to play with your child using coaching methods, praise, and pretend play scenarios.
• **PRACTICE** using warnings, reminders, and redirections when possible, and keep instructions simple and clear.
• **USE** visual command cards for children who are nonverbal.
• **IGNORE** one negative behavior you would like to decrease.
• **PRAISE** the “positive opposite” behavior to replace the negative behavior you wish to decrease.
• **RECORD** your experiences on the Record Sheet and bring to next session.

To Read:

Chapter 6, *Positive Discipline and Effective Limit Setting in Incredible Toddlers* book

OR

Chapter 7, *Limit Setting in Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight!
**Teaching Children to Understand and Follow Instructions**

The key strategies for promoting children’s understanding of words when giving them instructions:

- Before speaking, get your child’s attention with eye contact.
- When possible give a transition warning about an upcoming behavior change.
- Give simple instruction (e.g., all done with the timer, give me the phone please) and wait briefly for expected response.
- If no response, quickly follow through and help scaffold the child’s response with a gesture (point to phone) or prompt child’s compliance by whispering a response (say, okay, while taking the phone away).
- When your child complies to instruction, give a powerful reward and redirect to another activity (“Thank you, let’s go find your favorite book to read”).
- Continue child-directed narrated commenting.

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**Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!**

*Part 8: Limit Setting and Handling Misbehavior* ©The Incredible Years®
### BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

**Benefits & Barriers to Limit Setting**

1. What are the possible benefits for your children having clear limits in your home?
2. What gets in the way of setting limits?

Write down the benefits of having clear limits and your difficulties in doing it. See if you can find any solutions to your barriers to setting clear limits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of Setting Limits</th>
<th>Difficulties in Doing This</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:**

I will commit to reducing the number of commands or requests to those that are most important. Instead, I will focus on giving choices when possible, using distractions and when-then commands.
### Handout
#### RECORD SHEET
#### Limit Setting

**Date:** __________

Instructions: Record commands or limits set and any reaction/response you noticed in your child, as well as your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Command given or limits set:</th>
<th># of commands</th>
<th>Child’s Response:</th>
<th>Parent’s response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: “Put the toys away.”</td>
<td>IIII</td>
<td>Child puts toys away.</td>
<td>Example: “Wow - you are a big helper, thank you for putting the toys away.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. |
2. |

*Spotlight your child’s successes*
• Keep limit setting simple and avoid unnecessary commands or complex instructions.
• Set one limit at a time.
• Be realistic in your expectations and be developmentally appropriate.
• Use “do” commands or positive and polite instructions.
• Limit use of “stop” or “no” commands.
• Use visual command cards for children who are nonverbal (e.g., wait, stop sign, sit, toilet, brush teeth, etc.).
• Give children ample time to respond.
• Give warnings and transition time when possible.
• Give children choices whenever possible.
• Strive for simple, predictable routines and use visual prompts as needed.
• Praise and reward compliance to instructions.
• Use distractions and redirection when possible.
• Strike a balance between parent and child control.
• Ignore child’s oppositional behavior.

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight!
Household Rules

Some Examples:
1. Bedtime is at 7:30 p.m.
2. No hitting allowed.
3. Must sit in back of car in car seat.

Your List of Household Rules:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Every home needs a limited number of “house rules.”
If the list gets too long, no one will remember the rules.
Rewrite the following ineffective commands into positive, simple, respectful words using gestures and visual prompts for nonverbal children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective Commands</th>
<th>Rewrite &amp; Indicate gestures/command card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g., Shut up.</td>
<td>e.g., quiet mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit shouting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop running.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why don’t we go to bed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s clean up the living room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut it out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your coat doing there?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are your shoes in the living room?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t shove salad in your mouth like a pig.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is your bike still in the driveway?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rewrite the following ineffective commands into positive, simple, respectful words using gestures and visual prompts for nonverbal children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective Commands</th>
<th>Rewrite &amp; Indicate gestures/command card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You look like a mess.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop bugging your sister.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are never ready.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your clothes are filthy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This room is a mess.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t whine.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are impossible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop dawdling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurry up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be quiet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are you riding on the road when you have been told not to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll hit you if you do that again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If parents have access to the program BoardMaker™ or a similar symbol generating program, they can use this to create their own command cards.

**Example command cards:**

- **Wait**
  ![Wait Image]

- **Quiet**
  ![Quiet Image]

- **Sit**
  ![Sit Image]

- **Clean hands**
  ![Clean hands Image]
Home Activities for the Week

Managing Misbehavior & Staying Calm

To Do:

- **CONTINUE** to play with your child using modeling, coaching methods, praise, pretend play scenarios and sensory preferences.
- **PRACTICE** using warnings, visual prompts, gestures, and physical redirects when possible, and keeping instructions simple and clear.
- **IGNORE** targeted negative behavior and praise positive opposite behavior.
- **PRACTICE** a calm down strategy and reward yourself for successful parenting.
- **RECORD** your experiences on the Record Sheet and bring to the next session.

To Read:

- Chapter 6, *Positive Discipline and Effective Limit Setting in Incredible Toddlers* book

  OR

- Chapter 8, *Ignore in Incredible Years* book

Get in your child’s attention spotlight!
# Handout

## RECORD SHEET

### Ignore, Redirect, Praise & Coach

Instructions: Record behaviors you have ignored or redirected & how you coached, praised, & rewarded your child, as well as your child’s response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors ignored and/or redirected:</th>
<th>Behaviors coached, praised and rewarded:</th>
<th>Child’s response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: yelling</td>
<td>Example: Talking nicely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Spotlight your child’s successes

Date:_____________
Part 8: Limit Setting and Handling Misbehavior

SPOTLIGHTING

Promoting Your Child’s Optimal Social, Emotional & Language Development

• Play frequently and provide social and emotional coaching.
• Label and reflect your child’s feelings.
• Structure your child’s day with a predictable routine for mornings, naps, meals and bedtime.
• Set clear limits when needed to keep your child safe.
• Help your child prepare for transitions or changes in routine.
• Have a predictable routine for leaving your child and reuniting.
• Give your child choices when possible.
• Share your love and praise frequently.
• Spotlight your child’s positive behavior with enthusiastic praise.
• Redirect your child’s negative behavior when possible.
• Ignore tantrums and give back attention as soon as tantrum stops.
• Take care of yourself by getting support from others and doing things for yourself.

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight with positive discipline to help them feel loved, safe and secure!
SPOTLIGHTING

Positive Discipline Helps My Child Feel Loved and Secure (Summary)

- Schedule times daily to engage in interactive child-directed play using prompts and modeling to get your child’s attention and spotlight the social behaviors and language you want to encourage; remember you can maximize your child’s learning by using these strategies during meals, bedtime routines and your other caregiving routines.

- Use descriptive commenting narrations, pre-academic, persistence, social and emotion coaching strategies during child-directed play times.

- Use physical sensory routines, praise and salient rewards to motivate your child’s interest in using targeted social skills.

- Teach your child self-regulation skills using puppets, books, and imaginary play.

- Teach your child how to follow instructions and use reminders, redirections, distractions and choices to pre-empt misbehavior.

- Withdraw your attention and ignore misbehaviors that are not hurtful to others or to themselves; return your attention just as soon as a positive behavior is used.

- Pace yourself one step at a time.

Remember every time a negative behavior is not reinforced but instead the positive opposite behavior is rewarded with your attention and coaching, a productive learning opportunity has occurred. In fact, every interaction with your child is a potential learning opportunity.

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight with positive discipline to help them feel loved, safe and secure!
IGNORING

Avoid eye contact and discussion while ignoring.
Physically move away from your child but stay in the room.
Be prepared for testing.
Be consistent.
Return your attention as soon as misbehavior stops.
Combine distractions and redirections with ignoring.
Choose specific child behaviors to ignore and make sure they are ones you can ignore.
Limit the number of behaviors to systematically ignore.
Give more attention to the positive opposite behaviors you want to encourage.

Getting in your child’s attention spotlight with positive discipline to help them feel loved, safe and secure!
BRAINSTORM/BUZZ

**Stay Calm While Ignoring**

When you first start ignoring misbehavior, the behavior will get worse before it gets better. It is important to be prepared to wait out this screaming period. If you give in to the tantrum, this behavior will be reinforced and your child will learn that by crying and screaming loudly, he or she can get his/her own way.

It is important to stay calm while ignoring. Try to think ahead and brainstorm ways to remain calm when ignoring misbehavior.

**Ways to stay calm while ignoring:**
- Take deep breaths
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Think positive thoughts
- Walk away
- Turn on some music

**Goal:** I will commit to tell myself the following __________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Remember, it is normal for young children to cry, bite and hit to get what they want. This is not personal but a reflection of their lack of verbal skills and inability to use social skills to get what they want.

**Goal:** I will commit to tell myself the following __________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

when my child misbehaves.
**Using Differential Attention:** Sometimes, children will show positive and negative behaviors during the same activity. For example, a child might follow directions (positive behavior) while whining or fussing (negative behavior). **Differential attention** is the technique where a parent praises the positive behavior while ignoring the negative behavior. For example, a parent might praise the child for following directions, and pay no attention to the whining or fussing behavior. This way, the child learns that she will receive positive attention for some behaviors, but will not receive attention for other behavior (e.g., whining).

**When Would Differential Attention be Effective?**

Think about some situations where this kind of differential attention could be effective.

For example: When my child is following directions but not looking at me, I will praise his/her cooperation and ignore the lack of verbal response.

**Goal:** I will commit to praising ____________________________

behavior while ignoring ____________________________

behavior.

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*Autism Spectrum & Language Delays Program Handouts*
Behaviors to Ignore

Behaviors such as throwing tantrums, whining, pouting, ignoring you, and screaming are good candidates for ignoring. These behaviors are annoying, but they never really seem to hurt anyone, and the behaviors will disappear if they are systematically ignored. The ignoring technique should not be used, however, with behaviors that could lead to physical injury or property damage, or intolerable disruption of an ongoing activity.

Parents often have trouble controlling their anger when dealing with misbehavior or a child who ignores their requests. This emotional reaction can make it difficult to ignore misbehavior or to praise compliance when it finally does occur. However, ignoring is one of the most effective strategies you can use, as long as it is used in combination with your attention and praise for the child’s positive opposite behaviors.

Child Behaviors I will Ignore

Example: whining

Goal: I will commit to ignoring _______________________________

behavior whenever it occurs. I will praise _______________________________

behavior, the positive opposite of the behavior I am ignoring.
Many family members find that in stressful situations they cannot maintain their self-control. Others report they suffer from chronic anger, anxiety, or depression, and they are easily set off by the slightest event. However, when parents allow themselves to become so overwhelmed that they overreact, the consequences can be unfortunate. Parents may say or do something they will regret. After they calm down, they may feel guilty and avoid dealing with the child for fear of repeating another episode. It is frightening and anxiety-provoking for a child to see a parent lose control. Also, the child learns to imitate these aggressive behaviors in other situations. These cycles of parental overreaction and avoidance make it difficult to deal with the child in a consistent manner. The best approach is to achieve a middle ground—for parents to not be so overwhelmed that they can’t respond or so upset that they overreact.

**Upsetting Thoughts**

“My child is tuning me out. This is getting ridiculous. He’ll never listen.”

“I can’t handle it when she tantrums.”

**Calming Thoughts**

“My child is more engaged with the object than with my words. My job is to stay calm and get in his attention spotlight. I can provide a learning opportunity.”

“I need to help organize his toys and only bring out 1 or 2 toys at a time. I can help him learn to pick up.”

“I can handle this. I am in control. She has just learned some powerful ways to get control. I will teach her more appropriate ways to behave.”

**Thought Control**

Researchers have demonstrated that there is a relationship between how we think and how we behave. For example, if you view the child in hostile terms (“She is misbehaving because she hates me.” or “He likes to get me upset.”), you are more likely to become very angry. On the other hand, if your thoughts emphasize your ability to cope (“I’m going to have to help her learn to control herself.”), this will help to bring about rational and effective responses. One of the first steps for improving the way you think about your child is to replace upsetting thoughts and negative self-statements with calming thoughts.
Getting in Your Child’s Attention Spotlight to Promote Social, Emotional, & Language Development

- Pre-Academic & Persistence Coaching
- Pretend & Puppet Play
- Joint Activity & Focused Attention
- Nonverbal Gestures
- Engage in Sensory & Physical Activities
- Social & Emotion Coaching
- Praise & Celebrations
- Limit Setting Ignore, Redirect, & Distract
- Prompting & Imitating Social Interactions
- Verbal Communication & Sign Language

Getting in Your Child’s Attention Spotlight to Promote Social, Emotional, & Language Development