

The Strategies of Positive Behavior Support

Some Things You Can Try

1. Give positive reinforcement for positive behavior

Remember to notice the positive behavior. Offer praise or reward for the good behavior. Be enthusiastic without being false or insincere. Look for opportunities to provide praise and reward.

2. Ignore problem behaviors when possible

If at all possible, withhold your attention from the problem behavior. Look the other way — try to continue what you are doing as long as the behavior does not present a threat to your child or others.

3. Redirect the child's attention

When you notice a signal that a challenging behavior is about to occur, try to redirect your child's attention to something else, something he or she may be interested in.

4. Change the environment

Sometimes, changing things around in the home can make a difference. Make the space work better for everyone. Or, sometimes, you may have to consider avoiding certain places (at least temporarily) that may trigger behaviors.

5. Increase predictability and scheduling

Provide routines that the person can count on. When things are about to change, let them know.

6. Offer choices

Help the person move toward maturity and independence by allowing her to make choices. In the beginning, you will need to offer two or more things for him to choose from and provide some guidance in decision-making.

7. Teach new skills

Often, the person has gotten into the habit of engaging in a challenging behavior because it is an effective way of getting his or her needs met. Teach the person new ways to communicate with you and others.

Adapted from Ruef, M., Poston, D., & Humphrey, K. Putting the "positive" into behavioral support: An introductory training packet, and OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.