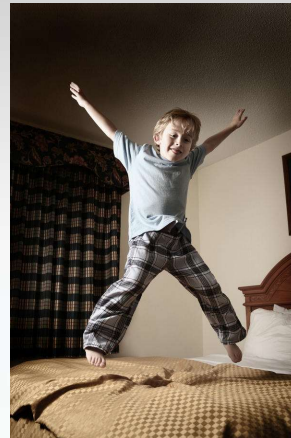


Promoting Better Behavior and Self-Control: The 14 Best Principles

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What is Normal for Self-Control?

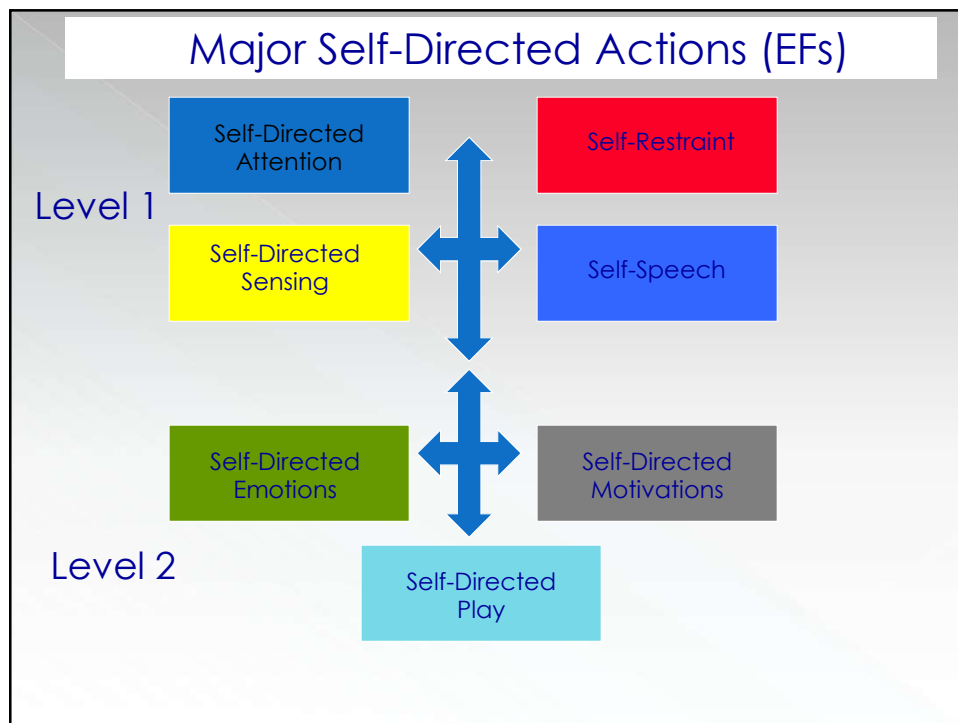


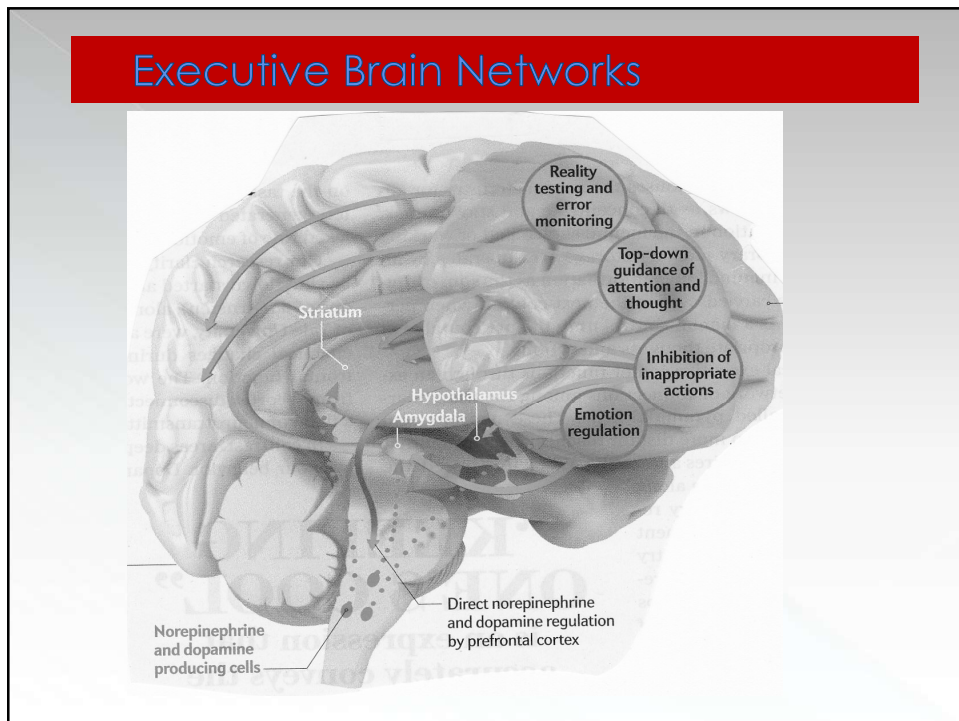
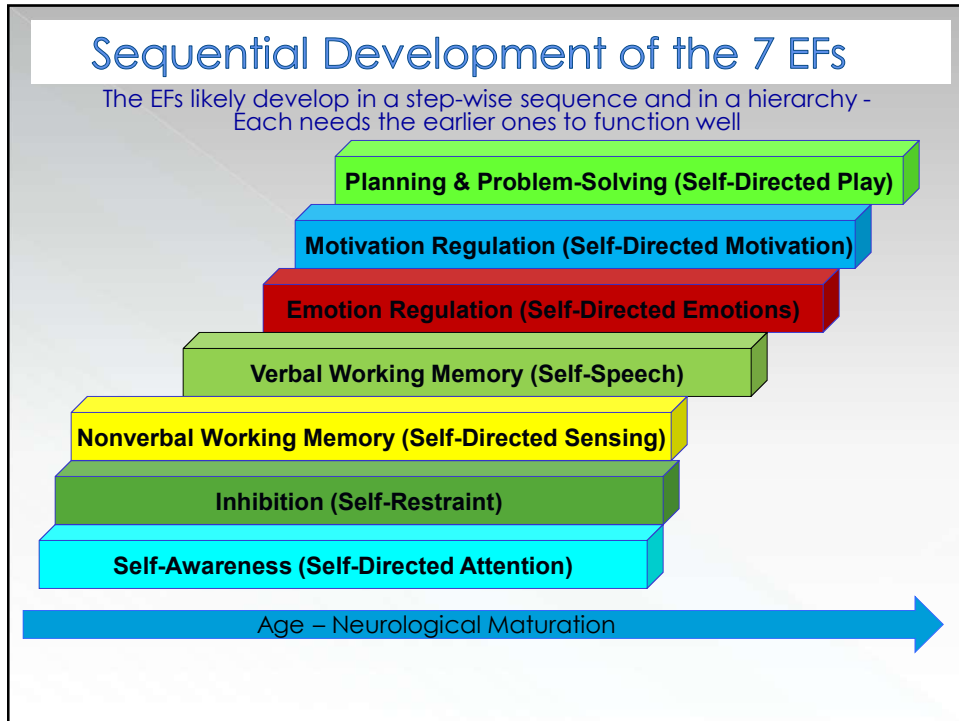


#1: Self-Control Requires Executive Functioning

- What is Self-Control?
 - > Any action we direct at ourselves
 - > That helps to change our behavior
 - > That changes the likelihood of a future event

- Self-Control is based on 7 mental abilities that are actions directed at our selves
 - > Self-awareness (attention to the self; the mind's mirror)
 - > Inhibition (self-restraint; the mind's brakes)
 - > Visual imagery (self-directed sensing; the mind's eye)
 - > Internal speech (self-directed speech; the mind's voice)
 - > Emotional control (Self-created emotion the mind's heart)
 - > Self-motivation (the mind's fuel tank)
 - > Planning and problem-solving (self-directed play; the mind's playground)





Human Variation in the Executive Functions and Self-Regulation: The Sound Mixer Metaphor

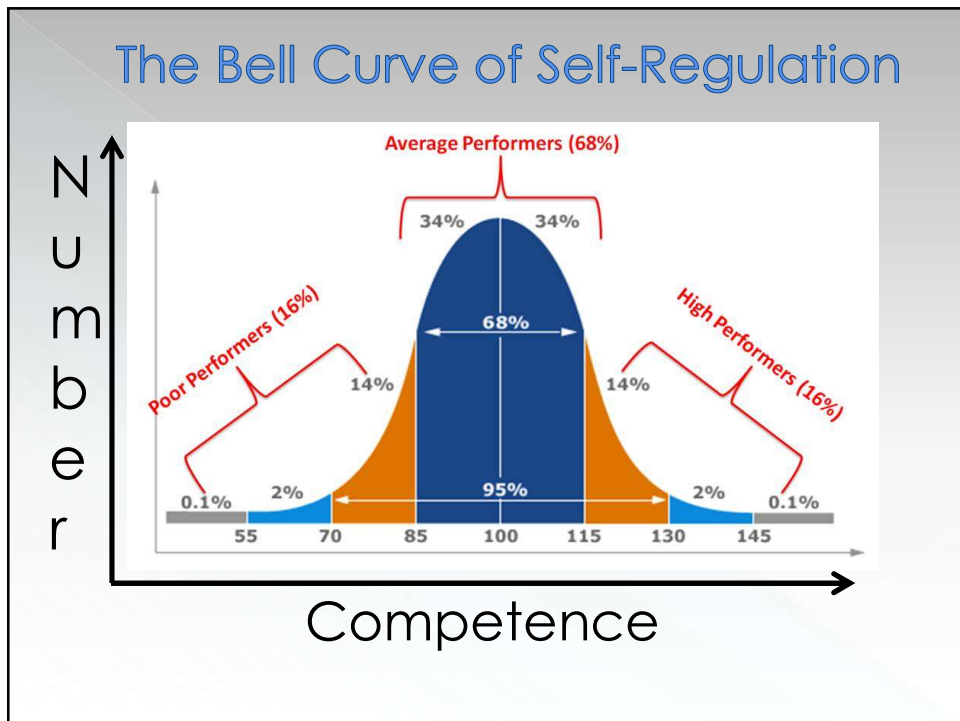
Personality traits and experience can fine tune the input

Think of each of the first 7 channels here as one of your executive functions

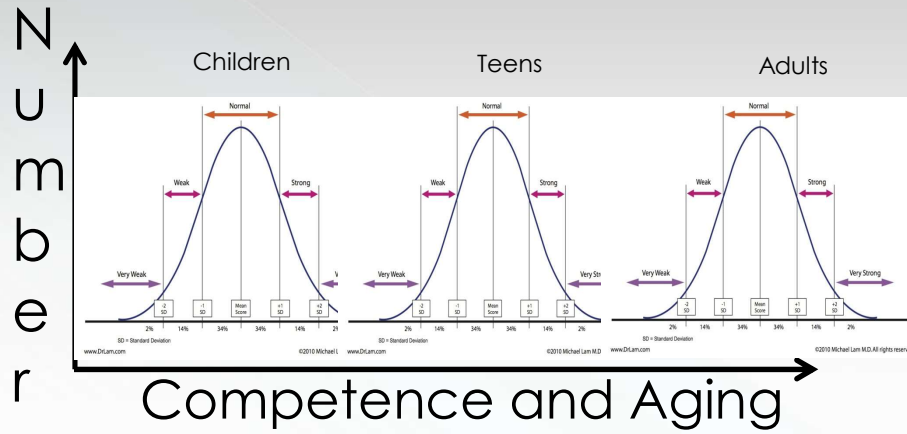
Their combined output is your degree of self-regulation

And the others as your different types of intelligence

The Bell Curve of Self-Regulation



The Bell Curve Improves with Age



#2: Parents are Shepherds – Not Engineers



Parents Are Shepherds, Not Engineers

- ◉ Your children are a unique combination of your extended families' genetic traits
- ◉ They also vary in their executive functions and self-regulation based on those genetic traits
- ◉ These interact with your family environment to make your child even more unique
- ◉ And all that interacts with unique events that occur to your child as they develop to form a highly unique individual
- ◉ You don't get to completely design who your children are or are going to be; they come with hundreds of traits, abilities, talents, and deficits that are largely not of your doing
- ◉ Your role as a parent is closer to that of a shepherd to a lamb than one of an engineer or sculptor to raw materials or a block of clay

Parents are Shepherds

- ◉ Provide protection, shelter, and good nourishment
 - > Accident proof the pasture
 - > Monitor your child in the pastures more often
 - > Be alert to bullying, victimization, and abuse
 - > Focus on healthy nutrition – reduce risk for obesity
- ◉ Find great pastures - provide for high quality, safe, nurturing, supportive and stimulating environments where you can (including the community in which you choose to live)
- ◉ Focus on shepherding - Provide a supportive, caring, stimulating, enriching environments –
 - > Encourage (reward) pro-social behavior and peers when possible
 - > Discourage anti-social behavior when and where ever possible
 - > Break up deviant peer relationships whenever detected

More on Shepherding

- Improve the pastures - Make environmental accommodations for your child's deficits where you are able to do so
 - > Make your rules and home life as consistent and predictable as possible
 - > Manage behavior from principles and not from emotions
- And then enjoy the show. The rest is largely out of your control

#3: Use the Keys for Success



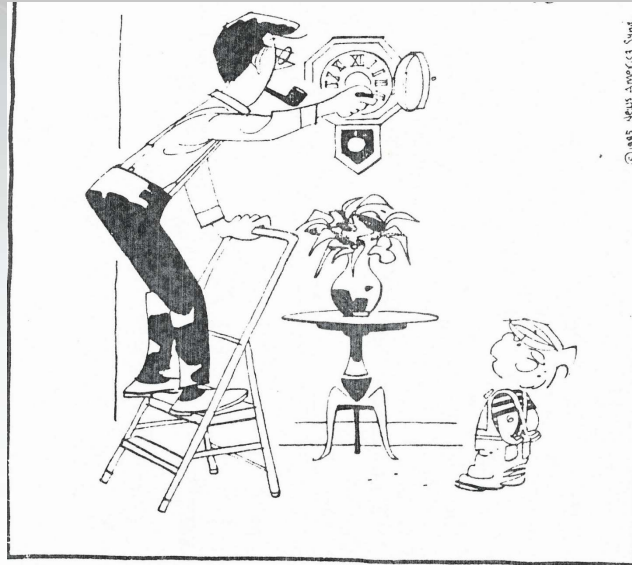
A Formula for Adult Success in Children and Teens

- ⦿ The support of loved ones is crucial to long-term success
- ⦿ Accept your child's neuro-genetic uniqueness and their profile of self-regulation
- ⦿ Find ways to compensate for any deficiencies in executive functioning and so reduce impairments arising from those deficits
- ⦿ Take advantage of extra help at school and after school to promote academic competence
- ⦿ For children with very low EF and self-control, as in ADHD, consider using ADHD medications when necessary and sustain their use through adolescence

More Contributors to Success

- ⦿ **Identify the child's strengths**, unusual abilities, nontraditional aptitudes – music, performing arts, sports, visual arts, photography, technology, culinary science, outdoor recreation, entrepreneur, the trades, etc. Get an evaluation
- ⦿ Find ways to **promote the further development** of and competence in those aptitudes
- ⦿ **Identify area resources** that can further promote these often nontraditional aptitudes and enroll your child in them
- ⦿ **Be a safety net**, advocate, and unconditional support system for the child – don't abandon them – tough love doesn't work!
- ⦿ **The formula for success: Evaluation + Talents and Aptitudes + Resources + Supportive loved ones**

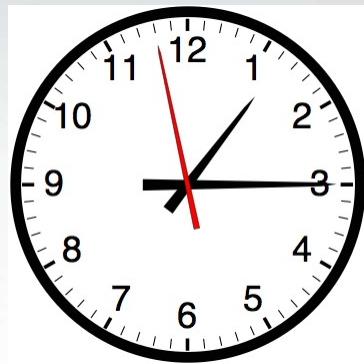
A Child's Sense of Time



"Isn't it always now?"

#4: Time Escapes Them! Make it Real

● Typical Adults



Children



Minimize Delays; Externalize Time

- ⦿ Children often have problems with using their internal sense of time to guide their behavior; time escapes them
- ⦿ They are also less able to wait for consequences or events and to defer gratification – they get impatient
- ⦿ So pay attention to the E-R-O arrangements in life
 - > Events that need to be addressed
 - > Responses to prepare for them
 - > Outcomes or consequences from them



"PSSSSSTTT! Mom! MOM! ...I just remembered... I have to build a diorama of the Hoover Dam by second period tomorrow."

Make Time Real (Physical)

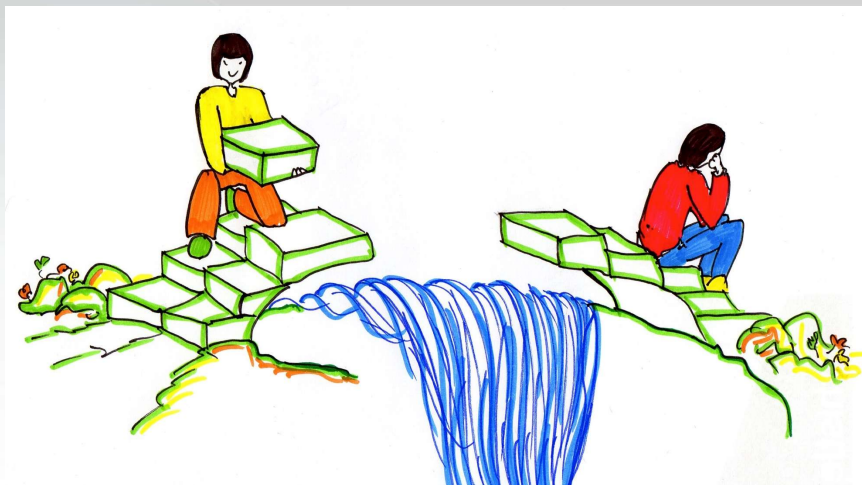
Large 12" Timer

addwarehouse.com



The Large Time Timer is designed to be wall hung for classroom and group activities. It's large size (12 inches square) and bold dial numerals make this timer easier to read for visually impaired users, as well. **How it works:** To set the Large Time Timer, move the red disc counterclockwise to the desired time interval. The disc diminishes as time elapses until no red is visible on the timer face. The disc may be moved clockwise or counterclockwise without harming the mechanism, however gentle handling will prolong the life of the timer.

Bridging Time By Doing A Block at a Time



Minimize Delays; Externalize Time

- ◉ Shorten the delays between the E-R-O situations in life when you can
- ◉ Break lengthier tasks down into smaller ones and do these smaller ones more often
- ◉ If they have to wait for something, divert their attention away from the time interval and toward something else more interesting in the situation (watched pots never boil)
- ◉ If they have to work for a period of time longer than a few minutes, make the time interval physical (externalize it)
 - > Use timers, clocks, counters, or other devices that show how much time there is to do something and how fast it is passing.

#5: Working Memory Isn't Working (remembering so as to do)



The GPS of the Mind



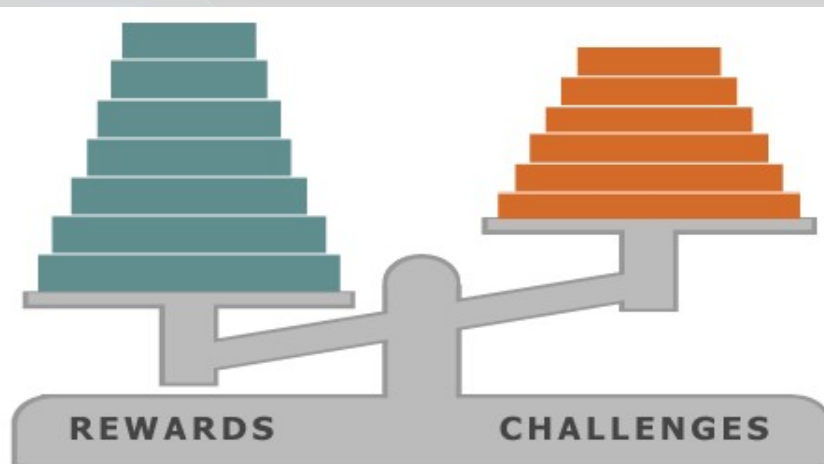
Our Two Working Memory Systems – Images and Self-Talk

- A special form of memory exists in our frontal lobes – working memory, or remembering to do.
- It consists of two types of information, just like a GPS in our car or on our phone. Images and words, or self-talk.
- When we have a goal we decide to pursue or a future event to prepare for, we upload relevant images of our past (maps, our hindsight) and think about the best way to pursue our goal (foresight). We then use these images along with self-talk to guide us toward our destination, just as your GPS uses images and verbal instructions.

Make Important Information Physical

- Children don't have adult levels of working memory
- So if you see problems with it, **off-load the demands** on their working memory on to other devices
- **Use pictures and images about the task** and goal to help keep them focused on it. (look for picture sequences on the Internet for many routine tasks)
- **Have them draw simple pictures** with arrows connecting them showing the sequence of steps to follow
- **Make important rules or other reminders and information physical** in situations where it is important for them to remember something
- **Use sticky notes, cards, cues,** and other ways of physically representing information in that setting to help guide their behavior
- As they get older, **encourage self-talk during tasks**
- Have them **rehearse "when-then" plans** in a situation to help prime their recall of what they are to do the next time they are in that situation. You can even write these down on a file card and keep it in that work area to refer to the next time they do that task.

#6: Make Rewards Part of the Task

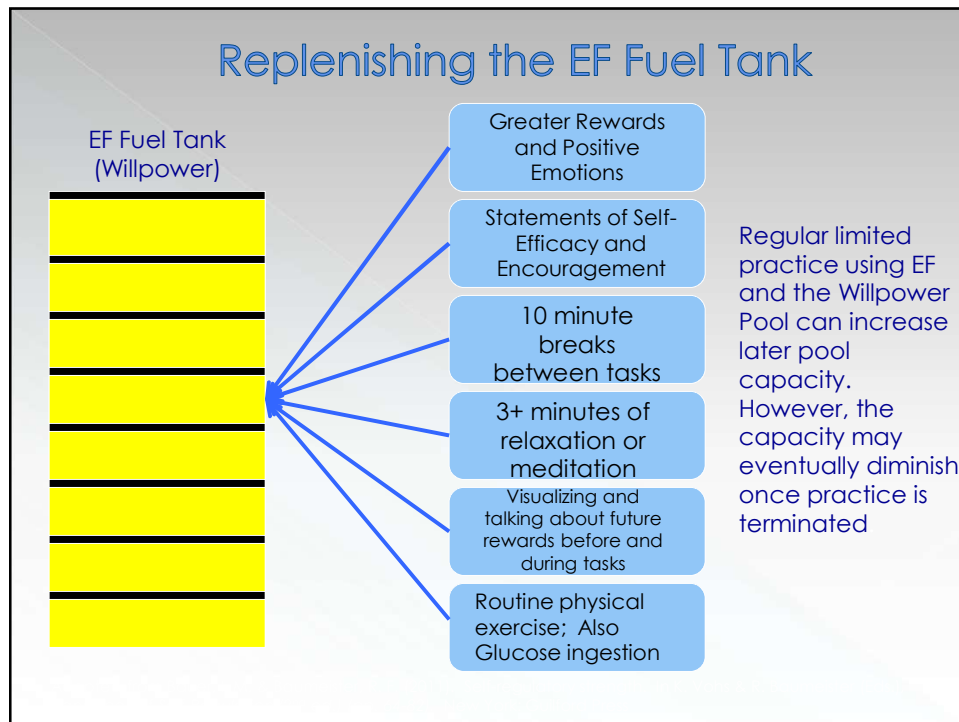


Add Artificial Consequences - (Externalize Motivation)

- ◉ Children often have problems in their capacity for self-motivation (internally created will-power)
- ◉ They may not persist at tasks that involve long delays to the consequences for getting them done
- ◉ This is why they can play videogames for hours or do things they really enjoy and cannot do homework and chores for more than a few minutes.
- ◉ You need to **think “win/win”** when it comes to work to be done

Add External Motivation

- ◉ When tasks must be done for which there are no immediate consequences, then **add artificial rewards** to that situation
 - > Add tokens, points, money, privileges, or other rewards that can be earned frequently throughout the task; change them up periodically
 - > Points can be cashed in later for bigger, salient rewards
- ◉ Also, have them **visualize the goal** and its rewards
- ◉ Even make or **find a picture of it** if possible and place it in front of them while they work
- ◉ Then have them **talk about the goal and the rewards** periodically while they are working on the task
- ◉ **Give feedback frequently** and more quickly
- ◉ **Keep their blood sugar up** throughout the task with a sports drink or lemonade



Use Rewards Before Punishments

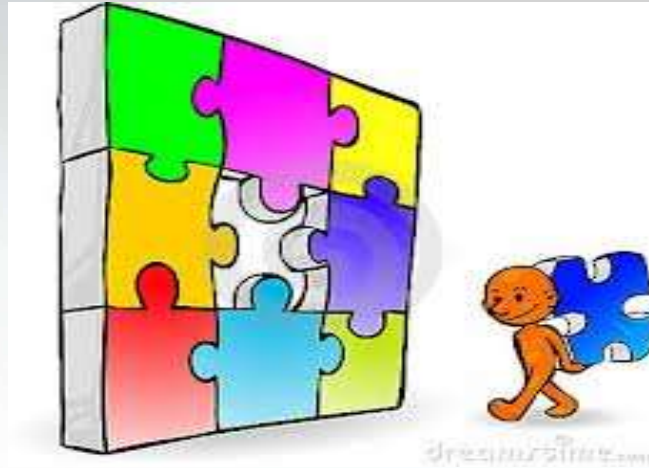
- Punishment by itself doesn't work
- To deal with a problem behavior, **always start with a reward program**
- **Think about** the misbehavior and what your child should have done instead – **the positive option**
- Now with that positive alternative behavior in mind, **think about how to encourage it**
- Then **arrange for positive feedback** and rewards to occur whenever you see that behavior
- **Do this often and for several days** before you focus on punishing the alternative misbehavior
- Only when a situation rewards good behavior is punishment likely to succeed for misbehavior
- Even then, **discipline should be swift but brief**



#7: Organize Tasks at Their Points of Performance

- What is required to get the job done
- Where should it be located
 - > At the point of performance !
 - > What is used most often (frequency)
 - > When is it used (temporal sequencing)
- Is the work-space child friendly ?
- What storage devices might be helpful
 - > Folders, notebooks, trapper keepers, bins, etc.
- Would signs, charts, checklists, or picture sequences be useful ?
- When is the best time to do this task?

#8: Make Problem-Solving Physical (Manual)



Make Mental Tasks and Problem-Solving Manual

- Children often have problems with the ability to do purely mental tasks; they can't hold the information in mind and manipulate it as well as older teens and adults (due to limited working memory)
- So break tasks and problems into pieces
- Think about how you could make those pieces physical
- Let them manually work on and manipulate the pieces of the task or problem – **help them to use their hands in solving the problem**

#9: Talk Less, Touch More



Touch More, Talk Less

- Act, don't yack! Parents talk too much
- When you must instruct, praise, or reprimand your child,
 - > Go to them
 - > Put your arm around their shoulder or your hand on their arm or hand
 - > This makes communication more intimate
 - > Look them in the eyes -- think Clint Eastwood
 - > **Briefly** say what you have to say
 - > Keep it short, business like, and to the point
 - > If appropriate, have them repeat back what you have just said (i.e. instructions)

#10: Be Pro-active, not Reactive



Be Proactive: Anticipate and Prepare for Problem Situations

- ⦿ Don't be just a reactive parent – someone who reacts (often negatively) only when problem behavior occurs
- ⦿ **Review** your child's life for typical problem situations
 - > Stores, restaurants, church, while visiting others' homes, play-groups, homework, while you are on the phone, chores
- ⦿ Now **think** about what you could do just before you enter those situations to head off any potential behavior problem
- ⦿ Now **develop your transition plan** to use the next time you are about to enter that situation

Transition Planning

- **Stop!** Wait before you enter that setting
- **Review** with your child a few **rules** that they are to follow in that situation
 - > Have them repeat them back to you
 - > Write them on a card to give to your child if necessary
- **Explain the rewards** your child will earn in that situation for following the rules
 - > Have them repeat them back to you
- **Explain the punishment** they will receive if rules are broken
 - > Have them repeat them back to you
- **Give them something to do** in that setting
- Enter the situation and **follow your plan**
- **Give frequent feedback**
- **Evaluate** how well things went when you are done

#11: Increase Accountability!



Increase Accountability to Others

- Children are less able to work independently, especially for long periods of time on their own
- **Break tasks down** into shorter work periods
- **Review the goals** or work to be done at the beginning of each short period
- **Check back often** with your child at the end of each period to review how much is done
- **Give positive feedback** for attaining these short-term goals
- **If they were not successful, break the task down into even shorter periods** of work and review that work with them more often
- **Remember the 10 & 3 rule**
 - › 10 minutes of work, 3 minutes break

#12: Get Your Priorities Straight



Keep A Sense of Priorities

- A lot of work we assign to children is not very important in the long run
- Yet by giving them lots of trivial things to do we create more problems with them
- **Know which battles are worth fighting** and which should not be fought
- **Focus instead on the most important** chores, tasks, and directives
- **Eliminate** giving those that are of less importance for awhile

#13: Remember – If Your Child Has ADHD or Other Self-Control Deficits -- It's a Disability !!!



Keep a Disability Perspective

- ⦿ ADHD and other disorders can delay a child's capacity for self-control and independence from others
- ⦿ **Remember the 30 percent rule**
 - > Reduce your child's age by 30% to find their executive age – age of self-regulation
- ⦿ Now **reduce your expectations**, and the responsibilities, or chores you give them to this age level
- ⦿ You have just reduced the potential for conflict with your child by **matching your expectations to their actual abilities**
- ⦿ Always remember that **ADHD, Learning Disorders, Autism Spectrum are neurological and genetic disabilities**, not choices

#14: Forgive!



Practice Forgiveness

- You are going to make mistakes in managing your child
 - > That's OK as long as you try to get it right next time
 - > **Forgive yourself** for these occasional screw-ups; we all make them, even experts
- Others are going to misjudge your child when they misbehave or show poor self-control; **forgive others** their ignorance
- Your child will make many mistakes as well
 - > That is OK as long as they try to get it right next time
Help them to do so
 - > **Forgive your child** for these mistakes as well
 - > Practice a daily exorcism of child problems
 - > Find ways to restore a positive view of your child
 - Picture on fridge; watching them sleeping

Conclusions

- Understanding and managing a child or teen boils down to understanding their unique level of executive functioning and self-regulation.
- To help promote their self-control, use these 14 basic principles of parenting
- Follow them and you will do as well as you can as a parent to raise a happier, more effective, and well adjusted child
- And you will have a more supportive and peaceful family
- You will also have built the foundation for a life-long relationship and a bond with your child that can help sustain you both throughout life