



# Preschool Parent Press

A publication brought to you by ECAC, the exceptional children's assistance center

## Positive Solutions for Families: 8 Practical Tips for Parents of Young Children with Challenging Behavior

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Has life with your young child become filled with conflict and confusion? Does it seem as if even the simplest activity feels stressful? Are things getting worse instead of better? You are not alone! Many parents find themselves struggling with the challenging behavior of their young children at some time. The good news is that there are effective strategies that you can use to create positive solutions for your family & summertime is a great time to try new ideas.

1. **Keep Your Expectations Realistic:** It is important to know and understand your child's abilities and limitations. When you expect too much or too little from your child it can lead to problems and frustrations for you both. *The waiter took your order over 30 minutes ago - but your food still hasn't arrived. Your child starts throwing her crayons and saying that she wants down. Instead of getting angry and frustrated with her, try taking her for a short walk to give her and others a needed break.*

2. **Plan Ahead:** Try to anticipate what your child *may do or need* in various situations. Plan ahead to set your child up for a successful experience. Hope for the best, plan for the worst and *always* have a back-up plan. *Bring some snacks and a sippy cup with you in the car just in case you get caught in traffic.*

3. **Clearly State Your Expectations in Advance:** Some undesirable behavior occurs because your child *can't* act differently, other times it occurs because your child simply *doesn't want* to act differently. Either way it helps for you to remember that your child cannot read your mind. Be sure to give him or her child clear enough instructions so that he *understands* what it is that you want him to do



4. **Offer Limited, Reasonable Choices:** Most children are not born with the built-in ability to make decisions and then accept the consequences. *"The car won't start until you get buckled in your seat. Do you want to climb up in there yourself or do you want Daddy to put you in?"*

5. **Use "When...Then" Statements:** "A "when...then" statement is a simple instruction that tells your child what he or she must do in order to earn a desired consequence (what he/she wants to do). When you use this kind of statement be sure you give it a positive focus, state it only once, set a reasonable time limit, follow through, and are prepared for your child's response - it might be NO!"

*Your child wants to play outside without her shoes. She starts outside and you say " no..put your shoes on". She starts to throw a tantrum. **Try this instead:** Tell her "when you put on your shoes, then you may go outside." You are not just saying "No". You are letting her know what needs to happen in order for her to reach her desired goal of going outside.*

6. **Catch your child Being Good:** Did you ever stop to think about how much time you spend telling your child what he should not do? Instead, try giving specific, positive attention to the behavior that you want to see. This will teach your child what you want him to do and increase the likelihood that this "good" behavior will occur again and again.

7. **Stay Calm:** When your child's behavior is unacceptable, you can choose to either respond to it or ignore it. If you decide that a reaction is required, remember that the least response necessary is usually best. Acting calm will help reduce the risk of increasing the very behavior you are trying to discourage. When you remain calm it also gives you time to think about how you want to respond.

8. **Use Neutral Time:** Neutral time is when everyone is calm enough to **think** and **talk** and **listen**. Use this time to talk about what happened earlier and about positive ways to handle problems in the future. Neutral time cannot be found in the middle of a difficult situation filled with strong feelings.

**Remember, if you have specific concerns about your child's behavior or if your child is having chronic behavioral challenges, be sure to talk with her or his teacher - and call ECAC!**

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adapted from: Positive Solutions for Families,  
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Young Children with Challenging Behavior  
<http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu>



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## Night and Day Fingerplay

The sun makes the outside a warm place to play  
(arms above head in circle)

It makes the flowers grow each day  
(holding up hands wiggling fingers)

The sun hides its face during the night  
(cover face with hands)

But during the daytime it shines - oh so bright  
(arms above head in circle)



## I'm a Little Fish

Sung to: "I'm a Little Teapot"



I'm a little fishy, I can swim, here is my tail,  
here is my fin.

When I want to have fun with my friends,  
I wiggle my tail and dive right in.

## Bubbles Flew Over the Ocean

Sung to: "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean"

My Bubbles flew over the ocean;

My Bubbles flew over the sea;

My Bubbles flew over the rainbow;

oh come back my bubbles to me.

Come back, come back, come back my bubbles

to me; oh come back, come back come back

my bubbles to me!



## Summertime Science Fun

### Colored Ice Cubes (explore mixing colors)

**Materials:** 3 Ice trays, red, yellow, and blue food coloring, 3 clear plastic glasses, and water.

**Description:** Tint water with food coloring and freeze to make one tray of red ice cubes, one tray of yellow, and one tray of blue. Place three clear plastic glasses on the science table and put a different colored ice cube into each glass.

Periodically, have your child observe as the ice changes to colored water. Then place a red ice cube and a yellow ice cube together in another glass and have your child observe as the ice melts and creates orange. Repeat the process using a blue and a yellow ice cube to make green and a red and a blue ice cube to make purple. Then let your child use the remaining colored ice cubes to set up their own color experiments.



## Ice Cream Sandwiches

### Ingredients:

Graham crackers (any flavor) (chocolate is best!)  
ice cream (any flavor) and plastic wrap.

**Directions:** Let the ice cream get to a soft stage. Take a graham cracker and spread one half with about 1/2 cup ice cream. Put another graham cracker on top and wrap with plastic wrap. Freeze for about 3 hours. These great summer theme treats are good for up to about 3 weeks!

## Summer Book Picks

### Sun Dance, Water Dance

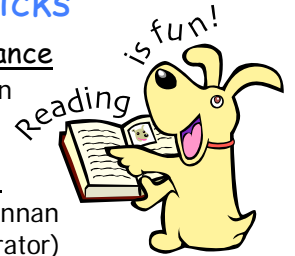
Author: Jonathan London

Greg Couch (Illustrator)

### Marshmallow Kisses

Author: Linda Crotta Brennan

Mari Takabayashi (Illustrator)



## Summertime Craft Ideas

### Sun Catchers

Cut the inside out of a paper plate for your child. Place clear contact paper with the covering removed over the hole. Help your child stick pieces of bright tissue paper all over his contact paper. When your child is finished, place another piece of contact paper over the tissue paper. Hang the sun catchers from your ceiling or windows.

### Outdoor Chalk Creations

On a sunny day take some chalk outside and let your children trace each other and your shadow. When the outline is complete, fill the shadow in with facial features and whatever you are wearing.

