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Connecting Big Plans' Parents to their Communities

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Eight Practical Tips for Parents of Young Children with Challenging Behavior

How to Use This List: Review each of the tips below and think about situations you have experienced that are similar to the provided examples. You will need to decide which strategies are likely to work best for your family. You might want to try one or two of the strategies at first and then add others as you become more comfortable with the process. Remember, the idea is to develop specific approaches for your own family that can be used in everyday life.

Tip #1: Keep Your Expectations Realistic

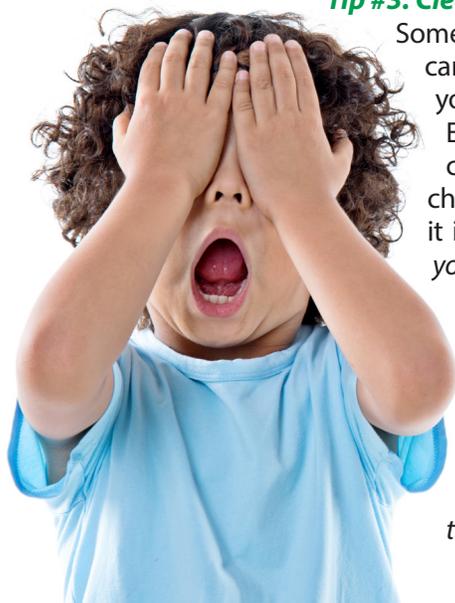
It is important for you to know and understand your child's abilities and limitations. When you expect too much or too little from your child it can lead to problems and frustrations for you both. ~You are in a restaurant with a group of friends. The waiter took your order over 30 minutes ago and your food still hasn't arrived. 2 ½ year-old Simone is getting impatient—she is throwing her crayons and saying that she wants down. Instead of getting angry and frustrated with her for acting up, try taking her for a short walk to give her and others a needed break.~

Tip #2: Plan Ahead

Try to anticipate what your child may do or need in various situations. Make sure that you plan ahead to set your child up for a successful experience. Hope for the best, but plan for the worst. Always have a back-up plan! ~Your family is in the car headed to your mother's house for dinner. It is usually a short drive, but rush-hour traffic is snarled, it's 6:30 pm, and you're already 45 minutes late. Your 3 year-old is screaming for food in the backseat. Luckily, you remembered to bring some snacks and a sippy cup of water to hold him over until you can make it home~

Tip #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 your child one clear instruction so that he knows what it is that you want him to do. ~You are visiting at your sister's house and your daughter has been playing with her favorite cousin. Over the course of the afternoon, toys have been tossed aside and scattered throughout the room. When you say, "Come on Alicia, it's time to get ready to go!" she ignores you completely and continues to play. A better approach might be to say, "All right, time to get going. Alicia, let's start by putting the blocks in their box. I see it over there in the corner!"~



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Tip #4: Offer Limited, Reasonable Choices

Most children are not born with the built-in ability to make decisions and then accept the consequences. In order for your child to learn to take personal responsibility they will need plenty of support and practice. ~*You have just picked up your son at childcare and he doesn't want to get into his car seat. You sense a battle of the wills coming on. One way to avoid a struggle might be to say, "Zachary, 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?"*~

Tip #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). This is also known as a contingency statement. When you use a contingency statement, be sure you: Give it a positive focus, State it only once, Set a reasonable time limit, Follow through. Are you prepared for your child's response- it may be "NO". ~*It's a sunny day and your barefoot child has decided she would like to go out in the backyard and play. She starts outside and you stop her and say, "No...put on your shoes." She starts to throw a tantrum. Here's an alternative approach you might want to use next time. "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 destination.*~

Tip #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 behavior will occur again and again. ~*You are enjoying a remarkably calm family meal. Instead of waiting for your 4 year-old to begin fidgeting, trying to leave, or stuff green beans down his shirt, you look at him and exclaim, "Manuel, it makes Daddy so happy to see you eating your dinner!"*~

Tip #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 with a minimum of attention will reduce the risk of strengthening the very behavior you wish to discourage. When you remain calm, it also gives you time to think about how you want to respond. Remember, you are modeling desired behavior for your child the more out-of-control your child becomes, the more self-control you need to show. When you remain calm your child learns appropriate ways to respond to difficult situations. ~*You are cleaning your house in preparation for your in-laws' annual visit. You go in the kitchen for just a moment and return to your family room to find that your 2 year-old son has colored on a white wall with red and blue crayons. Your immediate reaction is to scream in horror. However, you think twice, take a deep breath and say, "Christopher, paper is for coloring, Mommy's walls are not," and buckle him in his high chair where he can continue to create his art on paper.*~

Tip #8: Use Neutral Time

Neutral time cannot be found in the middle of a difficult situation filled with strong feelings. Instead, neutral time is when everyone is calm enough to think and talk and listen. It's important to remember that neutral time can occur either before or after a child's unacceptable behavior occurs. You can talk about what happened earlier and talk about positive ways to handle problems in the future. The challenge is to identify neutral time and make use of these opportunities. ~*You are sitting on the sofa reading books with your daughter when you look up at the clock and realize it is 7:30—bedtime is approaching fast. Getting Emma to brush her teeth each night has become more and more of a struggle. As you hold her on your lap you say, "Almost bedtime kiddo. Hey, tonight Mommy is going to brush her teeth at the same time you do-it'll be fun for us to do it together!"*~

Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior www.challengingbehavior.org

ROAD TRIP

10 REST STOP ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

A car packed full of crabby kids, still hours away from your final destination and, inevitably, someone needs a bathroom stop. Here are 10 great activities for kids to make the most of a quick break at a rest stop – get them up and moving, even just for a few minutes, and they'll be a lot happier for the rest of the trip!

1. Walk along a painted line on the parking lot
2. Balance on a curb
3. Jump in the squares of the sidewalk
4. Roll down a grassy hill
5. Whip up a quick obstacle course – find sticks to jump over, a bench to jump off of, a curb to balance on, etc.
6. See how fast your kids can complete a Sensory Motor Scavenger Hunt (*see our website*)
7. Trace your route on the giant map with your index finger
8. Use sidewalk chalk to sign your name at each rest stop along your route "Jane was here!"
9. Have a blanket in the car? Find a grassy spot and try one of our 10 Picnic Blanket Games for Kids (*see our website*)
10. Have a car clean-out relay race! See how fast kids can clear out snack wrappers and empty cups, running them one at a time to the garbage can – a great way to use up some of that pent up energy from sitting in the car!



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BUBBLE PLAY

Bubble play is just plain fun. And it helps children cooperate, take turns, and solve problems. Support your child's learning by talking about what's happening: "You blew a huge bubble," "The bubble floated away and popped," "You were very patient waiting for your turn." Ask simple questions: "Can you make it bigger?," "What is the wind doing to the bubbles?" Watch your child play to see what interests him. It'll also help you figure out what questions to ask to expand his learning. Make your own bubble mixture or buy some. Use it with these bubble games.

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2018/message-backpackm-bubbles-family-play-plan>



BUBBLE OBSTACLE COURSE

Make a start and a finish line and create a course using milk jugs. Have family members line up on either side of the course. The child who is it moves from start to finish dodging bubbles, trying not to let any bubbles touch him. First, one person blows bubbles. If the child successfully reaches the finish line without a bubble touching him, then two people blow bubbles, then three, etc. The more bubbles, the harder it is to make it to the finish line.

BUBBLE RELAY

Use one plastic bubble wand and the bubble mixture. Family members stand in a line. The first person blows a bubble and passes the bubble and wand to the next person. (If the bubble pops, the child blows another bubble and passes it again.) Ask your child to predict how many times your family can pass the bubble without popping it.

BUBBLE TAG

Use one plastic bubble wand and the bubble mixture. The person who's it uses them to tag others with bubbles instead of hands. Bubbles must land on another player to count. Play in a small space so children are able to tag others.

BUBBLE SOLUTION RECIPE

- 6 cups water
- 1 cup dishwashing liquid (Joy and Dawn work really well)
- 1/4 cup corn syrup or 1 tbsp. glycerin (available at drugstores)

Pour dishwashing liquid into water and slowly stir. Try not to let foam or bubbles form while you stir. Add corn syrup or glycerin and stir gently until combined. Now it is ready for blowing bubbles!

**Help Manage What your Kids See
and Do with Devices**

Free Workshop for Parents

Parents are invited to this 60-minute session to learn the features of iOS that help them manage what their kids see and do with their devices. You'll get an overview of Family Sharing, parental controls, and more to help make sure children use their devices in the right ways and for the right reasons. Offered at various times by the Apple Store in Market Mall and Chinook Centre in Calgary.

Visit <https://www.apple.com/ca/today> for details



Mobile Adventure Playgrounds in the City of Calgary



Play is the earliest means for learning and is of lifelong importance. Along with the physical health benefits, play is also a vehicle to support children's fundamental social and cognitive skill development. Children face challenges that many believe are reducing their chances of enjoying healthy and active lives. These challenges include physical inactivity; sedentary behaviours (ie; too much screen time); over structured/over planned schedules; and parental concerns over safety.

Adventure playgrounds are dynamic spaces where children can explore, create, imagine and learn in their own way. They contain a variety of materials and loose parts such as boards, tires, tape and cardboard that children are free to use to build, demolish, assemble and change their environments as they desire. Adventure playgrounds are unlike the traditional playgrounds commonly found in City parks. Traditional playgrounds are outdoor play areas usually equipped with standardized play equipment such as swings, slides, monkey bars and the like. They are typically placed in the centre of a large, defined, flat area filled with approved safety surfacing such as pea gravel or pour-in-place rubber. Most traditional playgrounds encourage active,

structured play that exercises the body through physical activity.

Although important, active play is not the only type of play children need. Play spaces that meet the needs of creative, imaginative, nature-based and self-directed play are also vital to children's cognitive, emotional and social development. Adventure playgrounds provide children with opportunities to grow and learn in these areas of development.

Mobile Adventure Playground

The mobile adventure playground is not a registered program, but a playground that offers a different way to play. Onsite play ambassadors are there to inspire play and keep the playground safe, but not directly supervise the children. Parents are encouraged to stay and watch their children play and see how their imaginations soar in this new adventure space. From May through August, the City will be setting up mobile adventure playgrounds in various parks throughout the city:

- Prairie Winds Park (223 Castleridge Boulevard NE)
- McKenzie Towne Toboggan Hill (160 McKenzie Towne Drive SE)
- West Confederation Park (previously Canmore Park - 3298 19 Street NW)
- North Glenmore Park (7305 Crowchild Trail SW)
- Pearce Estate Park (1440 17A Street SE)
- Stanley Park (330 42 Avenue SW)

Check the City of Calgary schedule for details:

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/Parks/Pages/Locations/Mobile-Adventure-Playground.aspx>



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reads

**CBC Calgary Reads
16th Annual
Big Book Sale**

*Shop for the books,
stay for the fun!*

*It's a literacy carnival with live
music, children's story corner
and book browsing for all.*

**May 11 to May 13, 2018
@ The Calgary Curling Club
720 - 3rd St. NW**

Come explore Calgary's BIGGEST used book sale! This is the 16th annual Big Book Sale event and an important fundraiser, supporting a year-long commitment to literacy for children across Alberta. Last year, they sold about 100,000 gently used books covering all subjects and genres. Donate or visit! Website: www.calgaryreads.com