

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST

- Understand why behavior occurs
- Change routines and settings to prevent problem behaviors
- Teach new skills
- Change how you respond to problem behavior

LEARN MORE ABOUT POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT BY READING JENNY'S STORY

Jenny is a very happy and loving three and a half year old. She is cute, sweet, full of energy, and always on the go! Jenny loves putting on her backpack to “go exploring” and often pretends she is Dora the Explorer. Jenny likes to climb fences. Sometimes she tries to climb things that aren't very safe like the fence at the petting zoo. Jenny is always getting into something. She knows she isn't supposed to climb, but that doesn't seem to stop her. Whenever her mom tells her “no,” Jenny climbs even faster! To learn about how Jenny's mom decreased Jenny's unsafe climbing, look for this symbol in the newsletter. 🌟



**She just won't listen!
Every time I say “no” she
just climbs faster!**

There are four important steps to improve a child's behavior:

- 1. Understand why behavior occurs**
- 2. Change routines and settings to prevent problem behaviors**
- 3. Teach new skills**
- 4. Change how you respond to problem behavior**

Look inside for more information!

PREVENT PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

What is PBS?

Positive behavior support (PBS) is a set of strategies that focus on changing routines to prevent problem behavior and teaching children new social and communication skills.

The Purpose of PBS

The purpose of PBS is to increase quality of life and prevent or decrease problem behaviors by using team-based problem solving strategies.

Prevent Problem Behavior

Research shows that letting your children know what you expect and praising them for positive behavior is a powerful way to prevent problem behavior.

UNDERSTAND WHY BEHAVIOR OCCURS

First, try to understand the behavior from the child's point of view. Children often engage in problem behavior to communicate something. Problem behaviors can communicate that a child wants attention, toys, or activities or is trying to escape or avoid a person, task or activity. In some cases, a child may engage in problem behavior when he or she is not feeling well. For example, sometimes problem behaviors may be due to ear infections, allergies, illness, and other physical discomforts. At other times, children engage in problem behavior because they have too much energy and need to release it in some way. Many different kinds of physical or medical conditions can be related to problem behavior.

JENNY'S STORY

Jenny's mother wanted to find out why her daughter wouldn't listen to her when she asked her to stop climbing over fences. Jenny's mom observed what happened when her daughter was climbing fences. In almost every case, Jenny seemed to really enjoy climbing as a way to release extra energy. Jenny was calmer after engaging in a lot of physical exercise. Jenny's mother also realized that she often gave up asking Jenny to stop climbing because asking her verbally to stop did not work very well.

Common reasons for engaging in problem behavior are:

1. To get attention (positive or negative)
2. To get an activity, toy, or item
3. To escape or avoid an activity or task
4. Physical or medical conditions

CHANGE ROUTINES AND SETTINGS TO PREVENT PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Be aware of how the routines and settings can trigger problem behavior. Learn from the past and try to anticipate future problem behaviors. Many types of routines and settings can trigger problem behavior. The candy counter at the checkout line can be difficult if a child frequently engages in problem behavior to get something he wants. Finding out ahead of time whether there are checkout lines that don't have candy set out could be an easy way to avoid problems behaviors.

JENNY'S STORY

Jenny's mom thought about the backyard and decided there was no opportunity for Jenny to climb at home in a safe place. Jenny's mom asked her friend John to build a series of wooden ladders and low fences that Jenny could climb on in the backyard. Before taking a walk or going to a new place, Jenny's mother learned to check the area they would be walking in ahead of time to see

what types of things Jenny might try to climb. In addition, Jenny's mom made sure that her daughter had a chance to get a lot of exercise before they went to the restaurant for a family meal. When Jenny had a chance to exercise before going to the restaurant she was less likely to try to climb over the chairs and counter tops.

USEFUL WEBSITE LINKS

Kansas Institute on Positive Behavior Support

<http://www.kipbs.org>

Click on the Online Library to find information on topics such as family supports, schoolwide PBS, and state-wide PBS efforts.

Beach Center on Disability

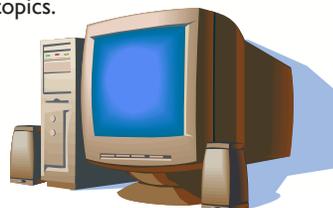
<http://www.beachcenter.org>

This site has information about disabilities and many other topics. It includes real stories, tips, research, groups, and discussion topics.

PBS Parents and Challenging Behavior

http://www.pbs.org/parents/inclusivecommunities/challenging_behavior.html

Information on this site includes facts everyone should know about how to prevent problem behavior and what to do when problem behavior occurs.



TEACH NEW SKILLS

What would you like your child to do instead of engaging in problem behavior? Teach your child to learn how to get what he wants using communication instead of problem behavior. A child is more likely to learn the new communication skills you are teaching him if these skills are easier to perform and result in the same outcome as the problem behavior. This may mean more work on your part at first: you may need to prompt and praise their use. Once the child learns the new skill he may use it a lot! This is a good sign because the child is learning that asking for something is more effective than engaging in problem behavior. Over time, you can decrease requests by teaching the child to wait for longer periods of time.

★ JENNY'S STORY

Jenny's mom wanted her daughter to tell her when she wanted to climb. Jenny's mom started by showing Jenny what things were okay to climb on and what was not. Jenny's mom also began prompting Jenny to ask her when she wanted to climb. For example, if Jenny's mom saw that Jenny was looking at a swing set in the park she would immediately say "Jenny, tell mommy what you want to do?" Over time Jenny's mom reduced the times she asked Jenny to make a request so that Jenny would be able to make a request on her own. When there were times Jenny could not climb because it was not a safe activity, Jenny's mom would redirect her daughter by offering

choices of safer climbing activities. For example, Jenny's mom would say "remember that this is not a safe fence for you to climb. Do you want to go home and climb on your play set or do you want go to the park?"

"Children do not engage in behavior if it doesn't prove effective in *some* way."

CHANGE HOW YOU RESPOND TO PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Think about how you respond to your child and remember, what you say or do can increase or decrease problem behaviors. It is easier to give in when a child is screaming and crying and let him have the candy he wants while you are waiting in the checkout line. However, if you do this, the child will be more likely to cry and scream for candy in the future, given that it has worked in the past. It is important that the new communication skill you are teaching enables the child to easily obtain what he wants. When responding to problem behavior, keep a calm voice and ignore the problem behavior if you

can. Instead, ask the child to use the new communication skill you are teaching. Next time try to anticipate when the child is wanting to get or avoid something, and prevent problem behavior by prompting the new communication skill. Sometimes it is impossible to allow a child something he wants because it is unhealthy or dangerous (for example eating lots of candy bars every day is not healthy). When a request for something cannot be given to the child, rather than simply saying "No," look for other choices (healthier/safer), and offer those.

★ JENNY'S STORY

Jenny's mom took photographs of the different settings like the play set, the playground, the petting zoo, and the city bridge. She taught Jenny to identify photographs of places where it was okay to climb and places that were not safe. Jenny's mother made sure that she was very close to Jenny when they approached an unsafe setting. If Jenny started to move towards an unsafe place she very quickly and quietly said "climbing on the fence is not safe" and then asked Jenny to use her words to ask for safe climbing choices.

Families and Positive Behavior Support: Addressing Problem Behavior in Family Contexts

Joseph M. Lucyshyn, Glen Dunlap, & Richard W. Albin, (Editors).

Published by Brookes Publishing. (2002)

This book contains 19 chapters by various families and leaders in the field of PBS. These chapters describe how to teach new skills, change problematic settings, and work with teams to implement a Positive Behavior Support plan at home and at school.





Kansas Institute for
Positive Behavior Support

**Kansas Institute for Positive
Behavior Support**

**University of Kansas
c/o Rachel Freeman
Dole Human Development Center
1000 Sunnyside Ave., Room 1052
Lawrence, KS 66045**

**Phone: 785-864-4096
Fax: 785-864-1284
E-mail: kipbs@ku.edu
Website: <http://www.kipbs.org>**

What is KIPBS?

The Kansas Institute for Positive Behavior Support (KIPBS) at the University of Kansas was established in collaboration with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) to create statewide training in PBS.

KIPBS Mission

One mission of KIPBS is to provide easy to access information for families, case managers, and other professionals about PBS. To learn more about PBS go to our website: <http://www.kipbs.org> and look for the Online Library on the right hand side of the webpage.

Become a Member of the National Association for PBS (APBS)

Learn more about how to prevent problem behavior and meet family members across the United States who are using PBS at the upcoming national conference: <http://www.apbs.org>



HELPFUL HINT - GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME

Most children love to play games. It makes sense that a child will be less likely to engage in problem behavior to escape a task or chore if it is made into a fun and interesting game. Although not all requests can be turned into fun and exciting activities, think about how you can present routine chores and tasks differently. Try incorporating things your child enjoys doing like running, shooting basketballs, or listening to music. Use favorite characters from books, movies, or television shows. Be enthusiastic when you introduce an activity. Children tend to get excited when you look like you are having fun. Games are also a great way to teach new skills.

JENNY'S STORY

Jenny's mom decided to create a new game that would help Jenny stop climbing in unsafe situations. Jenny loved pretending she was Dora the Explorer and liked to use her brother's backpack when she was playing this game. Jenny's mom introduced the

new game by saying that they were going to play Dora the Explorer and gave her a backpack to wear, which contained a map of safe places to climb. She told Jenny that Dora always stops when she hears the word "freeze" and listens carefully for her next adventure. Jenny practiced with her mom "freezing." After the word "freeze" Jenny's mom would say "Let's get the map out of your backpack and see where we are supposed to go next on our adventure!" Jenny had her monkey named Boots in the backpack, too, and sometimes they would pretend that Boots was telling them something important. Jenny was very excited to play the game.



At first Jenny didn't freeze very well. Jenny's mom decided to get her other children involved in the game too so that they could model "freezing" and all of the children practiced together. Jenny's mom praised them when they froze well and made sure that there were lots of opportunities to practice the game. Soon Jenny was able to freeze during practice sessions in the house and they started to play the game in the backyard.

Once Jenny was successful at home, Jenny's mom started using the game in the community when they were near places that Jenny had tried to climb in the past. Now Jenny's mom had a way to get her daughter's attention that worked well and she did not have to yell at her to stop climbing. Jenny's mom found that her daughter's climbing was no longer a problem when she used all of the interventions described in this newsletter. This became Jenny's positive behavior support plan.