Positive Attention: A Great Preventive Discipline Tool!

Sharon Millner, HS/EHS Family Services Manager

Giving your child positive attention not only builds a good relationship and connection, but also meets some of the needs your child may have in a positive way before your child resorts to negative behavior to meet those needs. Here are some ideas on how to use positive attention.

1. Make a “Special Time.” Set aside a special time each day to spend alone with each child. This helps avoid behavior problems. You are giving your child the message that she is important to you. It doesn’t have to be a long period of time, even 10 minutes of really being there will make a difference.

2. Show approval. Catch your children doing something you approve of and show approval. Don’t just say “good job.” Give the reason why the behavior is important to you. For example, “When you play quietly while I’m on the phone, it helps me hear what my friend is saying. Thank you for helping me.”

3. Give attention up close. Being physically close shows the approval is personal. It is helpful to position yourself within three feet of your child when you speak.

4. Make good eye contact.

5. SMILE! Remember how much our nonverbal messages contribute to our message and encourage connection with our children.

6. Be affectionate. A friendly pat on the back or hug will let your child feel acknowledged, appreciated, and awarded.

An excerpt from the Parenting Now! group parenting curriculum.
Fun fine motor activities to keep little minds busy during the long winter months in Minnesota! Fine Motor activities are very important because it helps young children develop and use small muscles in the hands, that later allows children to perform self care skills by themselves. I have activities for children 0-3 years old that are easy to do at home and with materials from home!

**0-6 Months**
- Rattle Grab: offer baby a rattle and grab on to it, slightly pulling on the other end!
- Tummy Time: lay baby on tummy and place different toys around baby for them to look at and touch!
- Baby Drum Circle: use pots and pans with spoons to make music!
- Board Books: Give baby large, thick books with bright colors and objects to look at and explore!

**6-9 Months**
- Baby Play Box-Use a Kleenex box, stuff felt pieces inside, have baby pull the pieces through the opening in the Kleenex box!
- Magnets and Cookie Sheets-Use large, chunky magnets on cookie sheets, putting them on and taking them off!
- Pom Pom Whisk-Put colorful cotton balls inside the whisk and have baby take cotton balls out of whisk!
- Ball Drop-Use paper towel/toilet paper rolls use different sizes of balls to drop through them!

**9-12 Months**
- Treasure Hunt-Hide a toy or favorite object under pillows or a blanket and have baby work their way by crawling or walking toward the objects!
- Popsicle Stick Push-Turn an egg carton upside down and use popsicle sticks to push through the egg carton!
- Cap Push-Use big can with a lid, cut a hole in the top of lid, uses lids of jars or bottles to push them through the hole in the lid!
- Edible Play Dough-use an easy edible play dough recipe to squeeze and mold into any shape!

**1-2 Year Olds**
- Yarn Play-Use an empty wipes container, cut pieces of yarn, and have child put yarn in the wipe container!
- Pom Pom Scoop-Put colorful cotton balls in a large clear container, us a spoon or ladle to scoop up the cotton balls!
- DIY Busy Board-Use different types of locks, items to latch, or unhook on a board, have children unlock, unlatch or unhook the different types!
- Magnetic Sensory Bottle-Put different type of magnetic objects in an empty pop bottle and use a magnet to connect the objects to the magnet!

**2-3 Year Olds**
- Net Fishing-Put a few different items in a container of water, and have the child scoop up objects with a net!
- Pom Poms and Tongs-Use a can with a lid, cut a small round hole in the lid, and use tongs to pick up small pom poms to put in the small hole!
- Clothes Pin Activity-Turn a laundry basket upside down, uses clothes pins to put on and take off of the laundry basket!
- Watercolor With Droppers-Use the droppers to squeeze water color paints or water into dropper and squeeze out into different containers or bowls!

These are just a few ideas for at home fine motor activities. Here is a website that has other easy fine motor ideas for children 0-2 years old. [10 Fun Fine Motor Activities for Babies and Toddlers - Happy Hooligans](#)
Top Ten Benefits of Art
by Shelly Peters, Marshall County Central Head Start Educator

1. **Engages all the senses.** Children are able to engage all five of their senses while experimenting with art. They feel, hear, smell, sometimes can taste, and see their creations or the materials used to create them; which gives them so much to talk about.

2. **Fine Motor.** By using scissors, crayons and glue children are developing their fine motor skills. At first, they may not be able to hit their mark but they are learning every time they play and engage with art. It also increases fine motor strength and coordination. A skill that is needed to write as well as do many other things.

3. **Enhances Visual-Spatial Awareness.** Playing with finger paints, cutting with scissors and pasting objects together increases a child’s visual spatial awareness. It teaches them to examine the world around them as well as discern between various colors and shapes. This is a critical skill kids need to learn to read!

4. **Increases Academic Knowledge.** Art projects can introduce young children to academic concepts such as colors and shapes. While creating, you can ask your child label shapes and colors. You should also ask them to show which is smaller and bigger as well as what is on top and what is on the bottom.

5. **Develops Critical Thinking Skills.** According to the National Art Education Association, the arts teach children there is more than one answer to a question. By the same, thought, there may be more than one solution to a problem.

6. **Increases Cultural Awareness and Understanding.** By looking at different art pieces and by creating art pieces that reflect a specific artist, our children are exposed to the world around them. They begin to learn about different cultural beliefs and learn to embrace diversity.

7. **Starts a Dialogue.** While this point might be more applicable to older children, think of a little child and all the interesting conversations you can have by attempting to find hidden images. It is that simple. This also helps expand vocabulary and enhance language development!

8. **Allows for Self-Evaluation.** Through art we can learn to self-evaluate. Through our drawings we begin to explore ourselves and the world around us. Through the artwork created by others we begin to look at the world through a different lens and then evaluate ourselves in that world.

9. **Increases Creativity and Imagination.** I find this an interesting benefit that art increases creativity when art itself is a creative expression. The more children can play with paints, markers and crayons, the more they are feeding their imagination. The book “The Day the Crayons Quit” takes you on a journey of different colored crayons who are quitting. Some crayons are quitting because they are tired of being ignored and suggest to the boy who uses them to color differently, for example a pink dragon. Thinking outside our traditional definitions increases creativity. PS: This is a great book, if you haven’t read it and the kids love it!

10. **Calming and Therapeutic.** If your child finds comfort in artistic expression, this can become an outlet during times of stress. It is not surprising to see grown adults coloring to relax. For some children, art can serve as an avenue to express their emotions before they are able to vocalize them.
Northwest Head Start/Early Head Start

Parenting Group Education Opportunities for 2020-2021

ONLY TWO ZOOM SESSIONS LEFT!

Parenting Now! “A” will meet through ZOOM on Thursdays at 7:00pm on the following schedule:

- When Things Break Down, Managing Challenging Behavior: March 18
- Bringing It All Back Home: April 22

Parenting Now! “B” will meet through ZOOM on Tuesdays at 2:00pm on the following schedule:

- When Things Break Down: March 23
- Bringing It All Back Home, A review of all prior sessions: April 27

Call or e-mail Sharon to pre-register for the Zoom link at 218-528-3227 or smillner@nwcaa.org or ask your teacher to share the link.

February is Dental Health Month

by Monica Byre & Jo Christian, Health Services

Good dental hygiene, regular checkups and good nutrition are essential to your child’s overall health. Having your child brush his/her teeth is an important part of their daily health care routine. Remember, your child imitates the things you do. By taking good care of your teeth and gums, you are setting a good example for your child to follow.

Head Start requires each child to have a dental exam each year. We can help you set up an appointment or find a dentist that accepts your dental insurance. Call us at 1-800-568-5319 for assistance.
The Importance of Outside Play
By Lucy Solar and Katy Johnson, LOW Early Learners Program

Living in Minnesota, the weather can be challenging at times. Getting kids outside everyday is so important and can be very beneficial, during all seasons of the year. According to an article from Sanford Health, “American children spend four to seven minutes a day in unstructured outdoor play compared to seven or more hours in front of a screen.” Here are 5 great reasons to encourage parents to incorporate outdoor time in their children’s daily routine.

1. **Build physically healthier children.**
   Nowhere is better than the outdoors for running, jumping, throwing balls, catching, pulling things, lifting and carrying objects. All these actions require motor skills that improve with practice. Children playing outside get aerobic exercise and gain skills, such as pushing and pulling outdoor play equipment. Studies show children burn more calories outdoors, helping to prevent obesity and strengthen bones and muscles. Playing in the sun builds vitamin D in the body, which means stronger bones and less likelihood of chronic diseases. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, many children have vitamin D deficiencies.

2. **Contribute to cognitive and social/emotional development.**
   Unstructured outdoor play helps kids learn to take turns, share and develop other positive behavioral skills. They are more likely to be inventive, explore and learn about the world around them and use their own abilities. While they invent and play games with siblings or friends, these interactions help improve communication, cooperation and organizational skills. Additionally, fresh air and free play reduce stress levels.

3. **Improve sensory skills.**
   An optometry and vision science study showed children who play outside regularly have better distance vision than children who are always indoors. Preschoolers, in particular, learn new things through their senses. Think of a toddler’s delight at seeing new animals (sight), stopping at a bed of fragrant flowers (smell and touch), watching the water form puddles for stomping (hearing and touch) or eating a parent-approved berry from a bush (taste). On the other hand, children glued to television and electronic devices use only two senses (hearing and sight). This can negatively affect development of perceptual abilities.

4. **Increase attention spans.**
   Children who play outdoors regularly are more curious, self-directed and likely to stay with a task longer. Children who spend most of their time indoors with little exposure to activities requiring their own initiation and follow-through show less ability to initiate or participate in new activities. In fact, studies of children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) found that children with ADHD who spent significant time outdoors exhibited fewer symptoms.

5. **Grow in happiness and immunity.**
   Outdoor light stimulates the pineal gland. This part of the brain is vital to keeping our immune system strong and making us feel happier. Spending time in nature is also associated with improving mood and happiness. An added bonus is that children who identify with nature are more likely to become adults who appreciate nature and want to protect the environment.

Sanford Health- Written by Danae Lund PhD, LP
Celebrating Milestones Big or Small
by Patti McKinnon, EHS Education and Disabilities Services

There are so many wonderful milestones to celebrate in your child’s life, whether it is making a birthday special or celebrating a developmental accomplishment. It’s important for each child to have those moments when they feel acknowledged, appreciated and special. This is especially meaningful when there are several siblings. Here are a few ways to make that happen in your child’s life.

- Offer words of praise
- Offer physical affection– hugs and kisses go a long way.
- Take photos–mark the occasion with photos and print them and display them when you can.
- Explain your feelings–make sure they know why you are happy or proud and that they should be too.
- Get a little silly with a special song or dance. Singing and dancing are a great way to create strong bonds with your child.
- Enjoy a reward together– a special movie night, get an ice cream treat or make a special cake together.

Celebrate any milestone big or small and each child will feel special!

NWCA Energy Assistance Program
Northwest Community Action’s Energy Assistance Program helps homeowners and some qualifying renters pay a portion of their heat bills and emergency heating system repairs. For an application call us at 1-800-568-5329 or visit our website at www.northwestcap.org and click on Energy Assistance Program.

Return your Energy Assistance application as soon as possible.

Applications are processed on a first come first serve basis.

It’s Recruitment Time!
If you know families who are expecting a new baby or have kids birth to four, tell them about Head Start and Early Head Start. Tell your teacher or have families contact us at 1-800-568-5319 or visit our website at www.nwcaaa.org