

## *Refrigerator Notes and Handouts Ignoring Misbehavior*



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# Ignoring Misbehavior

## HOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK



### *To Do:*

- **ON THE BEHAVIOR RECORD HANDOUT**, write a list of the behaviors you want to see more of and less of.
- **SELECT** one negative behavior from the list of behaviors you want to see less of (for example, whining or swearing), and practice ignoring the behavior every time it occurs during the week.
- **FOR THE NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR** you listed in step #2 above, think of its positive opposite. For example, the opposite of yelling is talking politely, and the opposite of grabbing toys from others is sharing. Then systematically praise this positive behavior every time it occurs during the week.
- **ON THE RECORD SHEET:** Praise and Ignore, write down the behavior you ignored, the behavior your praised, and the child's response
- **READ** and complete the handouts on self-control, self-talk and positive coping statements.
- **USE** the Self-Talk in Problem Situations handout to record the upsetting thoughts you have in problem situations, and write down some alternate calming thoughts. Bring this handout to the next meeting.



### *To Read:*

- Read Chapter 14, *Controlling Upsetting Thoughts*, and Chapter 9, *Time Out to Calm Down* in **The Incredible Years** book.

***Caution: Remember to continue playing!***



## ***Brainstorm/Buzz: Ways to Stay Calm***

When you first start ignoring misbehavior, the behavior will get worse before it gets better. It is important to be prepared to wait out this negative period. If you give into the oppositional behavior, this behavior will be reinforced and your child will learn that by protesting loudly, he or she can get his/her own way.



It is important to stay calm while ignoring. Try to think ahead and brainstorm ways to remain calm when ignoring misbehavior.

### ***Ways to Stay Calm While Ignoring***

*deep breaths*

*relaxation techniques*

*positive thoughts*

*walk away*

*turn on some music*

*Remember, all young children argue and protest to get what they want. This is not personal but a reflection of their strive to be independent and to test the rules.*

***Goal:*** I will commit to tell myself the following \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

when my child protests.

## ***Brainstorm/Buzz: Behaviors to Ignore***

Behaviors such as pouting, sulking, screaming, swearing, and arguing are good candidates for ignoring. These behaviors are annoying, but they never really seem to hurt anyone, and the behaviors will disappear if they are systematically ignored. The ignoring technique should not be used, however, with behaviors that could lead to physical injury, property damage, or intolerable disruption of an ongoing activity.



Parents often have trouble controlling their anger when dealing with misbehavior, and find it hard not to criticize the child. This emotional involvement can make it difficult to ignore your child's arguments or to praise compliance when it finally does occur. However, ignoring is one of the most effective strategies you can use.

### ***Child Behaviors I Will Ignore***

*e.g., whining  
tantrums*

***Goal:*** I will commit to ignoring \_\_\_\_\_  
behavior whenever it occurs. I will praise \_\_\_\_\_  
behavior, the positive opposite of the behavior I am ignoring.

## Using Selective Ignoring

Sometimes, children will show positive and negative behaviors during the same activity. For example, a child might follow directions (positive behavior) while whining or rolling their eyes (negative attitude). *Selective ignoring* is the technique where a parent praises or rewards the part of the behavior that is positive while ignoring the negative behavior. For example, a parent might praise the child for following directions, and pay no attention to the whining or negative attitude. This way, the child learns that she will receive positive attention for some behaviors, but will not receive attention for other behavior (e.g., arguing).



### Brainstorm/Buzz

Think about some situations where this kind of selective ignoring could be effective.



### When Would Selective Ignoring be Effective?

*e.g., when child is following directions but giving me "attitude" at the same time, I will praise his compliance and ignore his attitude.*

**Goal:** I will commit to praising \_\_\_\_\_  
behavior while ignoring \_\_\_\_\_  
behavior.

## Handout

### LEARNING SELF-CONTROL

Many family members find that in stressful situations they cannot maintain their self-control. Others report they suffer from chronic anger, anxiety or depression, and they are easily set off by the slightest event. However, when parents allow themselves to become so overwhelmed that they overreact, the consequences can be unfortunate. Parents may say or do something they will regret. After they calm down, they may feel guilty and avoid dealing with the child for fear of repeating the episode. It is frightening and anxiety-provoking for a child to see a parent lose control. Also, the child learns to imitate these aggressive behaviors in other situations. These cycles of parental overreaction and avoidance make it difficult to deal with the child in a consistent manner. The best approach is to achieve a middle ground—not be so overwhelmed that you can't respond or so upset that you overreact.

#### Upsetting Thoughts

"That child is a monster. This is getting ridiculous. He'll never change."

"I'm sick of being his maid. Things are going to change or else!"

"He's just like his father."

I can't handle it when he's angry."

#### Calming Thoughts

"This child is testing to see if he can have his own way. My job is to stay calm and help him learn better ways to behave."

"I need to talk to Michael about his clothes lying around. If we discuss this calmly, we should reach a good solution."

"I can handle this. I am in control. He has just learned some powerful ways to get control. I will teach him more appropriate ways to behave."

### THOUGHT CONTROL

Researchers have demonstrated that there is a relationship between how we think and how we behave. For example, if you view the child in hostile terms ("He is misbehaving because he hates me—he likes to get me upset"), you are likely to become very angry. On the other hand, if your thoughts emphasize your ability to cope ("I'm going to have to help him learn to control himself"), this will help to bring about rational and effective responses. One of the first steps for improving the way you think about your child is to replace upsetting thoughts and negative self-statements with calming thoughts.

# Handout

## Putting It All Together

1. Identify and label your emotions when they first occur. Pay attention to how your body feels (for example, tenseness, fidgeting, anger, headaches).
2. Decide what events make you feel frustrated.
3. Choose the most effective way to control yourself, and do it.

### ***Non-Constructive Thoughts***

"John never helps. All I get is work, work, work. I fix the food, take care of the house, the kids, everything. Boy, would I like to throw this at him!"

"After working 10 hours, I'm tired and frustrated. When I get home, all I get are hassles. The kids interrupt and yell, and Joan criticizes me. This place is a mess. What does she do all day? I feel like screaming or walking out of here."

### ***Constructive Thoughts***

"I'd better watch it and calm down before I do something I'll regret. What I need is help. Maybe if I ask John in a nice way, he'll give me some help. That's the best way. Then maybe I can have a relaxing bath."

"Take it easy now. Take a few breaths. What I really need is a few minutes of peace to relax and read the paper. Maybe if I ask Joan nicely to play with the kids while I read, then I could give her a break and play with the kids later. She needs a rest too. That's the most helpful way. I can already feel myself relaxing."

"I can handle this. I can stay in control. "She's just testing the limits. My job is to stay calm and help her learn better ways."



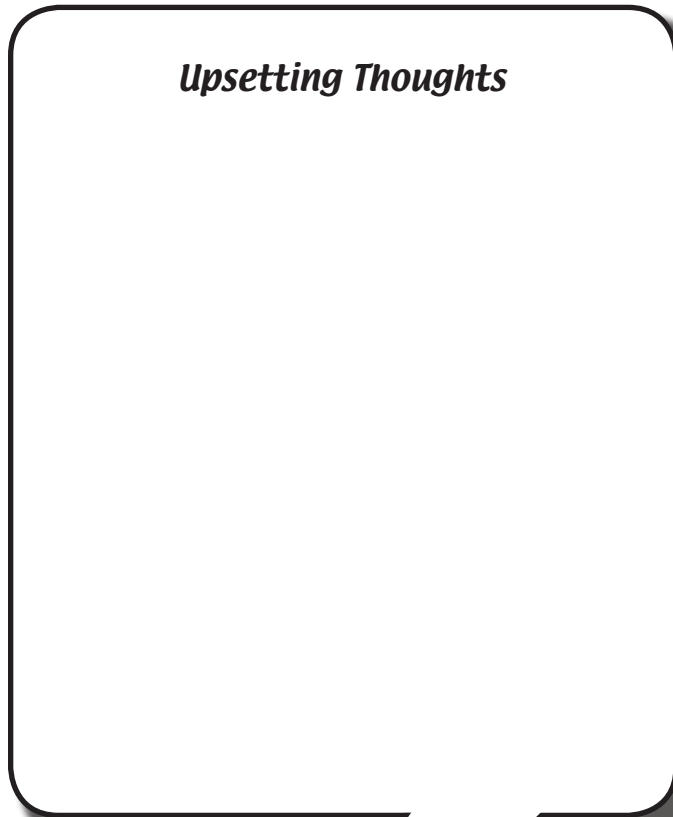
# ***Handout***

## ***Self-Talk in Problem Situations***

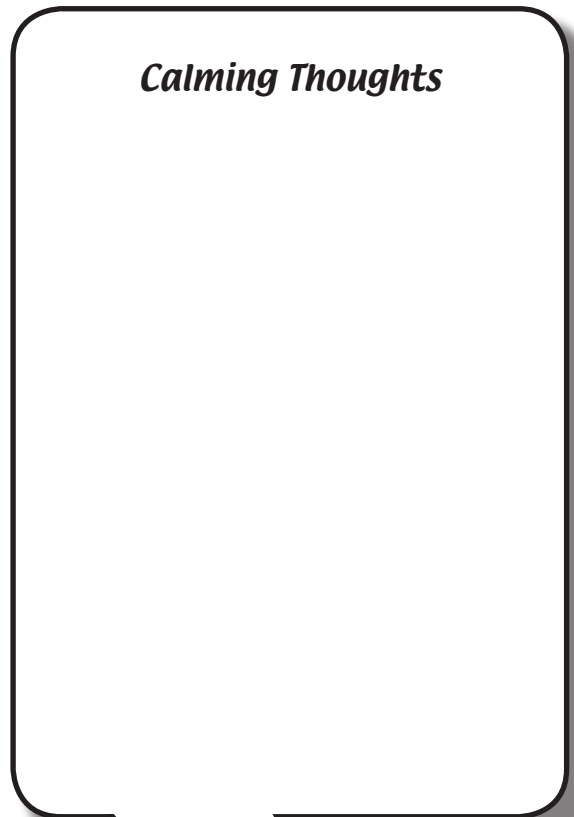
Identify a problem situation and the upsetting thoughts you have at the time. Write down some alternative calming thoughts that you might use to redefine the situation. Next time you find yourself using negative self-talk, give yourself some time to think positively and consider the alternatives available to you for dealing with the situation.

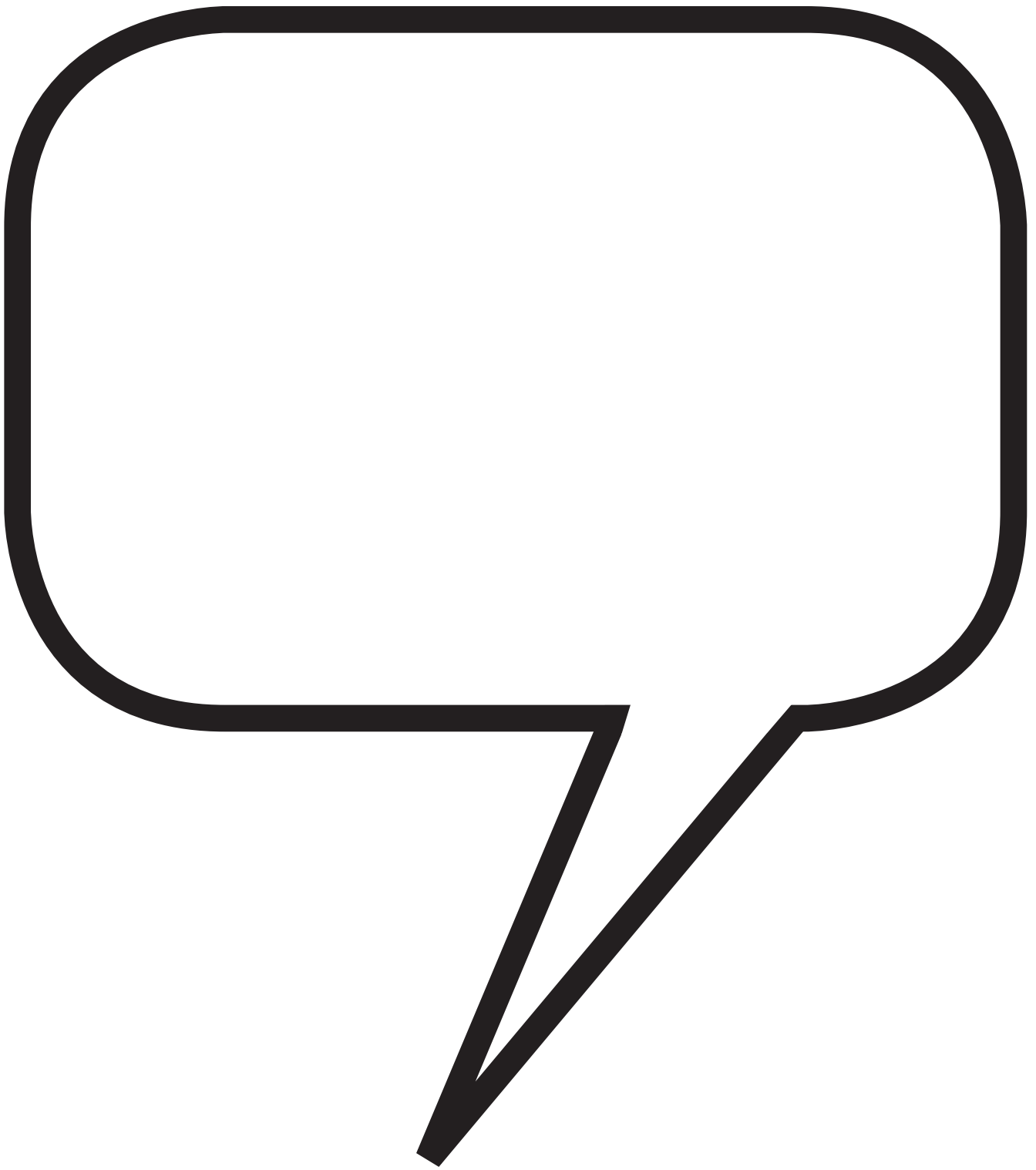
Problem Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

***Upsetting Thoughts***

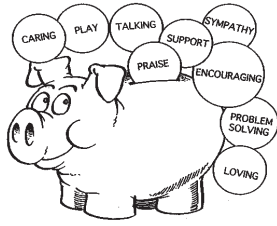


***Calming Thoughts***





*Write your own positive coping statements and practice them during the week.*



# Handout BEHAVIOR RECORD

*Praise "Positive Opposites"*

**Behaviors I want to see less of:  
(e.g., yelling)**

**Positive opposite behavior I want to see more of:  
(e.g., polite voice)**

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

4.

4.

5.

5.

6.

6.

7.

7.

8.

8.

9.

9.

10.

10.

# Handout

## Record Sheet: Ignore and Praise



**Behavior Praised**

**Child's Response**

*e.g.* Yelling

Monday \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday \_\_\_\_\_

Friday \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday \_\_\_\_\_

**Behavior Praised**

**Child's Response**

*e.g.* Talking Nicely

Monday \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday \_\_\_\_\_

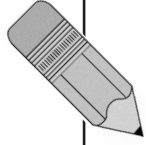
Friday \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday \_\_\_\_\_



Home Activities



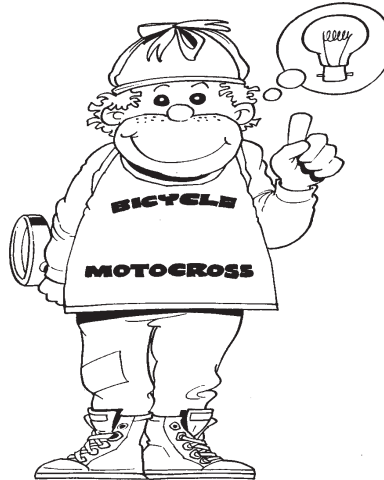
"Reduce your commands to the most important ones."

**RECORD SHEET: COMMANDS**

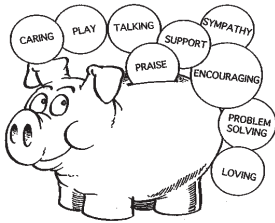
Date	Time	Commands Given	Child's Response	Parent's Response
Example	5-5:30 p.m.	"Put the toys away."	Child puts toys away	"Thank you for putting the toys away."
1st Day				
2nd Day				
		Example of When/Then Command		

1. How many play sessions did you have this week? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What positive behaviors are you working on praising? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## REFRIGERATOR NOTES ABOUT IGNORING



- Avoid eye contact and discussion while ignoring.
- Physically move away from your child but stay in the room if possible.
- Be subtle in the way you ignore.
- Be prepared for testing.
- Be consistent and patient.
- Return your attention as soon as misbehavior stops.
- Combine distractions and redirections with ignoring.
- Choose specific child behaviors to ignore and make sure they are ones you can ignore.
- Limit the number of behaviors to systematically ignore.
- Give attention to your child's positive behaviors.
- Try to regulate your own mood and stay calm when ignoring.



# Handout BEHAVIOR RECORD

*Praise "Positive Opposites"*

<b>Behaviors I want to see less of: (e.g., yelling)</b>	<b>Positive opposite behavior I want to see more of: (e.g., polite voice)</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

