Facing the Challenge
Part I

Positive Solutions for Families

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
### Learner Objectives

- Examine specific strategies that can be used to promote positive adult and child behavior in home and community settings.

### Suggested Agenda

1. Review *Things to Try at Home* activities.
2. Strategies That Help
3. Logical Consequences activity and *Things to Try at Home*

### Materials Needed

- PowerPoint or Overheads
- Chart Paper, Markers, Tape
- Ground Rules from Session 1
- Role Play Cards
- Optional Handout: *Positive Solutions for Families* Brochure (available at www.challengingbehavior.org in the resources section)
- Goals from Session 1

### Handouts

- *Positive Solutions for Families* workbook activities
- Review: *Things to Try at Home* activities
- Role Play Cards
- Redirection Activity
Post “Ground Rules” from the first session.

Show Slide 1: Solutions for Families.
Welcome back to the Positive Parenting Series. This is the fifth Solutions for Families Session, “Facing the Challenge, Part 1.”

Show Slide 2: What’s Happening Today?
Today we will start by reviewing your findings from “measuring” your child’s behavior at home and talk about some specific strategies that you can use with your child every day.

Let’s start by discussing your “Things to Try at Home” activities. Did anyone get a chance to work with their child on learning emotional vocabulary skills? What skills did you work on? Ask the group if anyone would like to share the strategy/ideas they tried at home and how it went. (The strategies participants were to choose from included feeling vocabulary, emotional vocabulary games, books, the turtle tuck, or problem solving.)

What did you do? How did it go? How did your child respond? How did it make you feel?

Show Slide 3: Measuring Behavior at Home.
Turn to the Measuring Behavior at Home, Things to Try at Home activity in your workbook. After our last group, you were going to try to observe your child, and write down a clearly defined behavior that you want to change. As you observed the challenging behavior over the past few days, did anything stand out that got your attention? (Allow responses.)

Did the behavior look the same across observations, or were there changes? (Allow responses.)

Were any of you able to answer the question, “Why do they do what they do?” (Allow responses.)

Once again, before we begin, complete your Parent Encouragement and Positive Comment Form. Give yourself a big pat on the back!!

Thank you for sharing! I think we are ready to face the challenge! We are going to continue to learn strategies that you can use to help your child learn new behaviors. Please don’t feel that you should attempt to use all of these at once. Take your time. Think about each strategy. Choose one to try out and then practice using that strategy until you are
comfortable using it. Then you can move on to another strategy. Your goal is ultimately to use these strategies in everyday life and routines without noticing where one ends and another begins.

The first strategy to consider is:

Show Slide 4: Know What Is Reasonable.

Remember that it is important to know your child's abilities and limitations. Expecting too much or too little can lead to problems and frustrations for you and your child. Keep your expectations realistic.

When you consider your child's abilities and limitations, it’s very important to take a look at the entire picture. For example, let’s say that you want your child to pick up his or her toys before bedtime.

First ask yourself: Does my child understand what “picking up your toys” actually means? Have I showed my child what it means to pick up your toys? Is my child physically able to pick them up and put them where they belong? Sometimes the answers may be obvious. And sometimes you may not be so sure.

Second: Even when you’re certain your child understands and is able, there’s still the matter of probability. What’s the history when it comes to this task and your child? Do you have to remind your child to get started? More than once? More than twice? Do you find yourself getting frustrated occasionally? More than occasionally? Reasonable expectations include not only what the child can do, but also how likely the child is to actually do it!

So what is a reasonable expectation when it comes to a desired behavior such as picking up toys? There’s not a single answer that applies to all young children. But when it comes to your child’s specific abilities and history, you might want to consider “starting smaller and growing taller.” For example, you could give a reminder followed by an immediate reminder to begin picking up toys instead of waiting for your child to remember without being reminded Or hoping your child doesn’t forget after you walk into the room, give a reminder, and leave. What about picking up one toy for every two toys your child
puts on the shelf? There’s nothing wrong with lowering the bar a bit in order to get started. In fact, that’s a strategy based on an excellent evidence-based approach called “shaping.” You will have more opportunities to acknowledge success and build from there instead of getting stuck in frustration.

Show Slide 5: Logical Consequences.

Logical consequences are consequences that are related to the behavior in some way. Participants can refer to their workbooks for the handout on Logical Consequences.

Here are a few examples:

A child throws a block at his/her sister—so the parent takes the blocks away.

A brother and sister are fighting—so the parent sends them to play in separate rooms.

Show Slide 6: Logical Consequences (cont.).

Large Group Activity: As a group, try to think of logical consequences for the scenarios listed on the slide. You may also chart the groups example of logical consequences.

Role Play: Have parents get into groups of three. One is the parent, one is the child, and the last is the observer/supporter. Have the parents role play several logical consequences scenarios. For each role play, have them switch roles until everyone has had a chance to be the parent. You need to instruct the parents to act out the roles. Have them notice that you have not determined what the parent will do or say after the problem behavior has occurred. After each role play, parents will discuss with a partner their feelings about the logical consequence that was chosen. (Pass out props.)

1. Child persists in pretending crayons are cigarettes after being told not to. Parent responds by ______.

2. Child turns TV up loudly after being asked to turn it down. Parent responds by ______.
3. Child is lying on the couch. Parent asks him/her to sit up and to make room for his/her sibling. He/she ignores the request and kicks his/her sibling. Parent responds by _____.

4. Child is asked to put his/her shoes on before going outside. Child refuses and begins to go out the kitchen door. Parent responds by _____.

Show Slide 7: You Try It!
Have participants pick a partner and open their workbooks to Activity #24. First, write down 3 challenging situations that commonly occur with your child. Your partner will write down situations that are specific to his/her child. Then, help each other think of logical consequences that you could use in response to that situation.

After parents complete the activity, let them know that for their Things to Try at Home Activity they will try out at least one of the logical consequences from the list above with their child this next week, and see how it goes!

Show Slide 8: Plan Ahead. Another strategy for your consideration:

Try to anticipate what your child may do or may need in various situations. Plan ahead to set your child up for a successful experience. Hope for the best, but plan for the worst. Always have a backup plan. Planning ahead is the key!

Not everyone likes surprises, at least not all kinds of surprises. And almost no one enjoys disappointment. The reality is that surprises, disappointment, and uncertainty are inevitable parts of life. We can’t surround our children with a protective bubble that guarantees all will go exactly as anticipated or planned. And the fact is that learning how to accept, adjust, and cope with surprises, disappointments, and uncertainty are very important skills to have. It’s just that when you’re three, four, or five years old, it helps to have some extra assistance in the process.
For example:

1. We want to encourage you to give some serious thought to how your child reacts to surprises and disappointments. We can learn a lot from patterns of past behavior. Some children tend to recover quickly, while others are more likely to collapse into a complete meltdown. How does your child react to surprises or to disappointment? Who wants to give an example? (Allow response.)

2. Talk with your child about upcoming events. Depending on your child’s ability to understand, you can keep it as simple as, “Here’s where we’re going and what we’re going to do” (“We are going to walk to the park to swing on your favorite swing!”) or as wide ranging as discussing something that could happen and what can be done if it occurs (“We are going to walk to the park, and if someone is swinging on your favorite swing, we can play in the sandbox until it is our turn to swing.”).

3. In any event, think ahead about what your child will need for things to go well and what your child might need if things begin to fall apart. For example, if you know your child is going to have to wait while you get a new tire put on your car, bring toys, books, or crayons and paper that he/she can use in the customer lounge. Give the service manager your cell phone number in case you want to take your child for a walk outside. Bring a snack. Hope for a 30-minute wait, but plan for an hour!

How do you “hope for the best—but prepare for the worst” in your family? Any examples? (Allow responses.)

Show Slide 9: Present Limited, Reasonable Choices. This is another strategy to consider using.

Most children are not born with the built-in ability to make decisions and then accept the consequences. Learning to take personal responsibility requires plenty of support and practice. A good way to help is to offer your child limited, reasonable choices throughout the day. Here’s an example of a bad choice: “Do you want mashed potatoes, French fried potatoes, baked potato, or sweet potatoes?” How could we rephrase this question into a limited reasonable choice? (Allow responses.)
Show Slide 10: Can You Offer a Choice? Offer examples as choice possibilities.

Show Slide 11: Limited and Reasonable? Offer examples as choice possibilities.

Example: “Do you want French fries or mashed potatoes with dinner tonight?”

How’s this for a limited, reasonable choice? “What do you want to wear today?”

Do you think there might be a better way? (Allow responses.)

Example: “Do you want to wear your red shirt or your blue shirt today?”

You’ve got the idea so far. Now, here’s a second element to consider. What should you do if your child decides that neither choice is that appealing, or wants to change his/her mind after making a choice? Our recommendation is that in almost all instances you should stick with your original offer. You can say, “That’s a pretty one, too. But today’s choice is either your red shirt or your blue shirt. Maybe you can choose your yellow one tomorrow.”

The next strategy is:

Show Slide 12: Say “First.” “First, put on your shoes, then you may go outside” is a contingency statement (first-then). Some people call this strategy “Grandma’s Rule.” A “first…then” statement is a simple instruction that tells your child what he/she must do first in order to do something he wants to do.

The basic guidelines when using contingency statements are:

- Have a positive focus
- Set reasonable time limits
- Follow through
- Be prepared for your child’s response; it may be “No!”

If the response is “No,” it is important to be consistent and not allow the “then” to happen.

Show Slide 13: First/Then Large Group Activity Let’s practice making contingency statements.
“When you pick up your toys, then you can go outside.” How about a few more examples before we move to the next strategy? (Allow responses.)

Show Slide 14: Redirection
A parent can interrupt a challenging behavior and redirect a child to another activity using either physical or verbal redirection.

Show Slide 15: Physical Redirection.
A physical redirection interrupts the child’s challenging behavior and re-engages the child in a more appropriate activity. For example, a child is playing in the sink and splashing water all over the bathroom. So the parent physically moves the child away from the sink and over to toys in the child’s room. At the toys, the parent sits down on the floor and begins to play in a way that is inviting to the child.

Show Slide 16: Verbal Redirection
A verbal redirection distracts the child and provides an alternative activity. For example, a child might be trying to gain the attention of a parent who is on the telephone with an important call. Another adult would then say to the child something like, “Hey, Ella, let’s go upstairs and read some of your new library books.”

Or if you are the only adult in the house, you could have a special “busy box” available nearby that you could hand to your child. The child would then busy him-/herself by playing with the special toys in the box while you finished your phone conversation.

Another example: A child is upset and throwing a temper tantrum because he/she was asked to turn off the television. The parent redirects the child by saying, “Wow, it is beautiful outside. I feel like going to the park to play.”

Show Slide 17: Redirection for Teaching.
Redirection can also be used to prompt a child to use new skills. For example, a child begins to have a tantrum because he/she is frustrated with putting a toy together. The parent says to the child, “Evan, you can say, ‘Help please.’” Evan says, “Help please,” and the parent then puts the toy together.
Another example: A toddler begins to fuss while sitting in the highchair after finishing dinner. The parent says, “You can say, ‘All done’ (using the sign for all done while speaking), Olivia.” Olivia signs, “All done,” and the parent helps Olivia get down from her high chair.

Redirection Activity: Have parents get in pairs to look at the redirection scenario handout which can be found in their workbook. They should examine each situation and develop an idea of a redirection that could be a response. After they complete this in pairs, read each situation, and ask the parent pairs to share their ideas of a redirection (get 1 or 2 responses for each situation).

1. Child grabs a toy from sibling.
2. Child throws toy when sibling asks for it.
3. Child throws sand in sandbox.
4. Child pulls hair when patting the dog.
5. Child cries “I don’t want to clean up” when asked to pick up toys.
6. Child says, “This is yucky” and spits out food.
7. Child screams to sibling, “No, it’s mine! Don’t touch!”
8. Child begins whining for attention when parent is making dinner.

Show Slide 18: If Your Child Doesn’t Comply (Do-WAWP).
It is important to follow through when redirecting or directing your child. So if your child has difficulty complying, or following your directions, you should Do-WAWP:
• State the “do” direction.
• Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
• Ask the child to restate the direction.
• Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
• Provide encouragement or help (helping will ensure success).

Show Slide 19: Catch Your Child Being Good!
Giving specific, positive attention to the behavior that you want to see teaches your child what to do. When you see a behavior that you would like to see again, encourage it. You don’t have to make a great big deal about it. Just acknowledge it. Tell your child you appreciate it. For example: “Maria, you are doing such a good job waiting for your turn on the swing. Maybe next time you can go first, and Tommy can wait for his turn.”
By the way, we decided to go ahead and use the original language to describe this strategy that’s been around for the past 30 years or more—“catch the child being good.” We’re not saying that your child is “bad or good” as a person based on specific behaviors. We’re just encouraging you to look for and pay attention to positive behavior instead of spending so much time and energy reacting to behavior that bothers you.

**Small Group Activity:** Have participants get with a partner.

Show **Slide 20: What Would You Say?**

This slide lists a variety of children’s actions. Challenge the group to come up with ways to catch the child being good and write out specific, positive attention for what the child did.

Show **Slide 21: Staying Calm.**

When a child’s behavior is challenging, you can either respond to it or ignore it. If reaction is necessary, remember that less is usually best. Acting calmly with a minimum of attention will reduce the risk of strengthening the very behavior you wish to discourage. Remaining calm will also give you time to think about how you want to respond. The more out-of-control your child becomes, the more self-control you need to use. We are modeling desired behavior for our child. When we remain calm, our child learns appropriate ways to respond to difficult situations.

**Note to the Facilitator:** What about spanking? It may be the case that one of the parents will bring up spanking as an effective response, something they use, or something they have a question about. Be sure to spend some time addressing this topic if it comes up. Ask parents if any of them were spanked when they were little. Then ask parents to recall how it made them feel (angry, afraid, disliked/distrusted parents, sad, etc.). Ask parents to list the disadvantages of spanking (or other violent consequences) on a sheet of flip chart paper.

Some examples of the disadvantages of spanking:

- Makes child fearful of parent
- Damages relationships
- Models violent behavior for the child
- Parent feels guilty afterwards
- When used in anger, the parent may lose control and really hurt the child
- Only effective in the short term
Then talk about how the responses discussed today do not share those same disadvantages. Ask parents that use spanking to identify how stressed they are when they hit their child. Offer the idea that they might want to identify strategies for reducing their stress so that they can avoid spanking and can be more effective at responding to challenging behaviors. It is also important to have them think about what the child is learning when he/she is spanked.

What can you do instead of spanking?

The final strategy we encourage you to consider is to:

Show Slide 22: Use neutral time.
Neutral time can occur before or after your child's behavior. When your child is calm and you are calm, it is neutral time. The best time to talk is when everyone is ready to listen.

We have covered a lot of material in these sessions. I hope that you are using them successfully with your child and beginning to see some progress. There is a tip sheet in your workbook to review today’s strategies: Strategies That Help.

Show Slide 23: Things to Try at Home, Positive Parenting Tips.

At this point, I want everyone to take out their workbooks. You have learned a lot and begun to try many strategies. You have learned how to observe your child’s behavior and gain a better understanding of what it is about. By knowing that, you are better able to decide what to do about the behavior. You have also learned a variety of ways to teach your child new skills, from introducing household rules to building social skills.

Finally, tonight we talked about how you might help your child in a difficult situation. I want you to thumb through your workbook and think about what you have learned and what you have tried. I want you to make a Strategies To Do List. There is a page for this in your workbook, Activity #27. One of your goals on this list should be the Logical
Consequences, Activity #24 that we talked about earlier. Add at least 2 more to your list. This will be your list of the strategies you want to focus on, improve, or do a better job of using.

In our last session, we will be discussing what to do about specific problems. For your homework, I want to encourage you to review the materials in your workbook and make a commitment to use the strategies we have discussed. Thanks for coming and I look forward to seeing you again soon.
Role Play Cards

Directions:

Print the role play cards before the session begins. Make 1 copy of each role play and cut each page in half so there is a card for each actor.

One person will act out the parent role and another person will act out the child role.

Pass out role play cards to participants during the role play activity.

Participants will read their roles aloud to the group.

Props might assist with this role play:
Bring crayons, a box or poster with a TV drawn on it, and use a “time-out chair” from the room. The door in the room can be used as the “kitchen door.” Indicate that in Role Play #3 the child is lying on the couch.
Example #1

Child persists in pretending crayons are cigarettes after being told not to. Parent responds by _____.

Example #1

Child persists in pretending crayons are cigarettes after being told not to. Parent responds by _____.

Child turns TV up loudly after being asked to turn it down. Parent responds by _____.

Example #2

Child turns TV up loudly after being asked to turn it down. Parent responds by _____.

Example #2
Example #3

Child is lying on the couch. Parent asks him/her to sit up and to make room for his/her sibling. Child ignores the request and kicks his/her sibling. Parent responds by ______.
Example #4

Child is asked to put his/her shoes on before going outside. Child refuses and begins to go out the kitchen door. Parent responds by ________.
Session 5—Activity #22
Parent Encouragement and Positive Comments!

Write an encouraging note or positive comment to yourself about something you did with your child this past week that you feel really proud about!
Logical consequences are an alternative to punishment.
• They are responses to the child’s behavior that are logically related to the behavior (example – If you break the toy, you won’t be able to play with it anymore).
• They teach your child that he/she has a responsibility for and control over his/her own behavior.
• They show your child the results of his/her behavior.

Logical consequences must be practical and enforced.
• Only select options that you are willing to enforce!
• Don’t intervene before the consequence takes place!
• If you feel empathy for your child, offer a chance to try again.

Choices should be stated calmly, clearly, and respectfully.
• Consequences should not be arbitrary, threatening, or punitive.
• Plan the consequences ahead of time.
• Options for actions or consequences should be logically linked to the activity.

Logical consequences help guide children in learning how they are expected to behave in the real world.
• Talk about the consequence with your child before the activity or routine where the behavior is likely to occur.
• Remember that logical consequences help to teach your child about behavior that is expected and why it is expected.

Examples of the Use of Logical Consequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Logical Consequence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roberto refuses to wash his hands before snack.</td>
<td>Roberto’s mom restates the rule to Roberto: “You must wash your hands to eat.” Roberto continues to refuse. His mom responds, “You can wash your hands and have a snack, or you can continue playing while your brothers have a snack.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyra throws blocks in the kitchen.</td>
<td>Her dad reminds her of the rule “toys need to stay on the floor in the kitchen.” When Kyra continues to throw the blocks, her dad provides her with a choice: “Blocks stay on the floor in the kitchen, or they will need to be put away in the box in the TV room.”</td>
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</table>
As a group, list some of your children’s behaviors that you have been working on at home. Once we have a list, we will try to determine logical consequences for each behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Logical Consequence</th>
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**Things to Try at Home!**

Logical Consequences

Try out at least one of the logical consequences from the list above with your child this next week, and see how it goes!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Logical Consequence</th>
<th>What happened</th>
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### Session 5—Activity #25
**Redirection Activity**

Examine each situation and develop an idea of a redirection that could be a response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Redirection Response</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child grabs toy from sibling</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Child says “This is yucky” and spits out food</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child screams to sibling, “No, its mine, don’t touch!”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Child begins whining for attention when parent is making dinner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Session 5—Handout #26
Strategies That Help

1. Know what is reasonable
2. Plan ahead
3. State expectations in advance
4. Present limited reasonable choices
5. Say “when”
6. Catch your child being good!
7. Stay calm
8. Logical consequences (see Handout)
9. Neutral Time
Session 5—Activity #27

Things to Try at Home!
Strategies To Do List!

3 Strategies that I will try at home:

1.

2.

3.