

Encouragement and Limit Setting

Kottman 6-7

Ten Basic Premises of the Encouragement Process

■ Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer & Sperry (1987),
Sweeney, (1989), p.82

Unconditional Acceptance

- Viewing children as good and worthwhile
- Valuing children as they are w/o wanting, needing, expecting any changes
- Suspending judgements
- Communicating warmth

Show faith in child's abilities

- Showing excitement when the child reports a victory (see examples p.83)
- Looking for small improvements (p. 83)

Recognize effort

- Reflect child's feelings
- Avoid using "but"

Focus on strengths and assets

- "What are some things that you do well?"
- "What are some things other people like about you?"
- Multiple intelligences--Gardner
 - Verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal
- Help parent/teacher to see and encourage strengths--redefining the child changing the "box"

Emphasize the deed , not the doer

- Avoid value judgements about the person
- commenting on behavior w/o labeling the child

Focus on the positive

- Give credit for the positive/useful aspect of their behavior and ignore the negative/useless aspects.
- Acknowledge the feelings/purpose connected with the negative/useless behavior

Demonstrate involvement in child's interest

- Discover interest and show interest in them

Model courage to be imperfect

- Send message that I can make mistakes, fix them, learn from them and that it is OK to be less than perfect
- "Perfectionism: What so bad about being so good"

Learn from mistakes

- Using errors and accidents to encourage and empower
 - "What can you do next time?"
 - "How could you fix it to be the way you want it?"
 - "What's the worst thing that can happen if you -----?"
- Focus on how child is feeling about the mistake--only intervene if the child has a negative reaction

Generate positive ways for the child to belong

- Help child discover positive ways to stand out at home and at school by using identified assets/strengths
- Put child in role of expert about something you want to learn, i.e. how to play a game, what children this age like to watch on t.v., do for fun, like to read, like to do at parties, how to play with a toy.

Purpose of limit setting

- Create sense of safety and security
- Increase child's self control and ability to generate alternative choices that can redirect their inappropriate behavior
- Create a sense of responsibility for following rules and accepting consequences

What types of things to limit-- Absolute limits

- Time of play session
- Damage to property
- Harm to child, therapist, other children

What types of things to limit-- Relative limits

- Water or amount of water in the sandbox
- Throwing certain objects
- Climbing/jumping on certain objects

When to set limits

- Immediately before child does limited behavior vs. trying to list and explain ahead of time

How to set limits

- Maintain calm non-verbals
- Use matter of fact voice tone, volume, speed
- Relaxed comfortable posture/facial expressions

Four steps in limit setting

- 1. Stating the limit (how to/how not to state limits)
- 2. Reflecting feeling/guessing purpose

Four steps in limit setting

- 3. Generating alternatives/redirecting behavior
 - Important that child be involved in generating alternatives
 - Practice negotiation skills
 - concrete vs. abstract wording of limits and alternatives

Four steps in limit setting

- Logical consequences
 - related to misbehavior
 - realistic
 - reasonable (restriction usually for one session, child will have another chance next session)
 - respectful (choice)
 - friendly, matter of fact tone and other non-verbals