



## **BEHAVIOR BITS**

### *Helpful Hints for Successful Parenting and Building Stronger Relationships*

#### ***A Child's Behavior:***

- Behavior is in response to some person or some kind of event.
- Children can respond to a feeling, a need, a thought or an experience.
- Needs drive most human behaviors, adults and children alike.
- Developing, using and controlling behavior is a learned response.
- All behavior has meaning - the adult's challenge is to find out first what the actions mean and then respond.

#### ***Making Limits Rather than Rules:***

- Rules are made by adults and broken by children.
- Rules place all the power in the hands of the adults.
- Rules often result in punishment.
- Rules teach children not to get caught.
- Instead of rules, try setting limits.
- Limits are flexible and adjustable.
- Limits have a boundary of safety, respect and responsibility.
- Limits have reasons, not "just because I said so".
- When setting limits make sure the children are old enough to understand the limits.
- Explain the limits clearly and repeat often: What they can do, what they cannot do and why.
- Make as few limits as possible.

#### ***Give Children:***

- Information about what is happening.
- Choices so they have a sense of self-control and situation control.
- Structure and limits they can count on.
- Activities that are age appropriate.
- Natural and logical consequences of their behavior.
- Coping, social and self-care skills.

#### ***Problem Solving:***

- Help your child identify the problem.
- Encourage your child to come up with ideas on how to solve the problem.
- Re-state your child's ideas in a positive way.
- Help your child decide on which idea they prefer - be sure you are willing to consider all ideas presented.
- Help your child carry out the solution.
- Reinforce the child by telling him/her how well they solved the problem.

***Avoid:***

- Placing blame.
- Scolding or lecturing.
- Trying to figure out who started it.
- Ordering them to take turns.
- Threatening, distracting or discounting their feelings.
- Yelling at a child from across the room - this is embarrassing to the child.

***Do:***

- Establish eye contact - get down to the child's eye level by kneeling, bending or squatting. This equalizes the situation and the parent is no longer a large force looming over the child.
- Prepare children for change and allow adequate time for transition.
- Be predictable by following a routine, being consistent and following through on consequences.
- Communicate limits, consequences and expectations clearly.
- Set an example.
- Try to catch your child being good and give praise. Use one of the "25 ways to praise your child".

***Treat a child the way you would like to be treated...  
with respect, patience, forgiveness, trust, fairness, understanding, acceptance and a  
sense of being heard. Believe in them!***

***It's okay to ask for help!***

Parenting is one of the hardest and the most important job that you will ever have. If you have questions, concerns or just need someone to talk to, then call the Chouteau County Public Health Department. Ask to speak to a Public Health Nurse.

**Chouteau County Health Dept**

**406-622-3771**

**Our hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

