

Planned Activities Training



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Planned Activities Training, or PAT, can help make the time you and your children spend together more positive. By learning new ways to talk to and play with your children, you can help prevent problems and have a great time with your children.

PAT helps you focus on preventing problems before they happen. When children know what to expect, when they are involved in fun activities, and when they get positive attention from their parents, children are more likely to have good behavior. When your children have good behavior, this makes your daily activities much more fun for your whole family.

When we talk about *activities*, we think of all of the different things your children do each day. Getting up in the morning, getting dressed, and having breakfast are activities. Play time and what your children are doing while you are busy cooking or talking on the phone are also activities. By having a plan for these times, you can turn difficult, challenging times in to positive times for you and your children.

Here are the 10 basic parts of PAT. They are described in more detail on the next few pages. Then, you will find checklists that you can use as daily reminders.

- ✓ **Prepare in advance**
- ✓ **Explain the activity**
- ✓ **Explain the rules for the activity**
- ✓ **Explain the rewards and consequences**
- ✓ **Give choices**
- ✓ **Talk about what you are doing**
- ✓ **Be child-friendly**
- ✓ **Ignore minor misbehavior**
- ✓ **Tell your child how he or she did**
- ✓ **Give rewards for good behavior**



Prepare in advance:

- ✓ Being one step ahead and planning in advance can make your day go much more smoothly.
- ✓ Having the **right supplies**, having a **simple plan** for your day, and being **prepared for surprises**, like a long wait at the doctor's office, you can prevent many problems.

Examples:

- ★ Put the meal on the table before calling your child to the table so he or she doesn't have to wait with nothing to do.
- ★ Go out or attempt challenging activities when your child is most likely to do well, like after naptime when he or she is well rested.
- ★ Bring toys or books with you when you go out.
- ★ Organize some of your child's toys so he or she can get them out on their own.
- ★ Use the Activity Cards to plan fun new activities to keep your child busy.
- ★ If there are things you do not want your child to touch, put them in a place where they can't reach them rather than always having to say "no."

Explain the activity:

- ✓ Sometimes adults go about their day without letting their kids know what to expect, and this can be difficult for children.
- ✓ By explaining **what is going to happen** throughout your day, your children will be less likely to have problem behaviors.

Examples:

- ★ It's going to be bath time in 5 minutes.
- ★ After we get dressed, we're going to the store.
- ★ We have to wait to see the doctor, so let's look at books.
- ★ We have to go do the laundry, but then we can go to Grandma's afterward.



Explain the rules for the activity:

- ✓ By explaining what the rules are for an activity, your child is more likely to have good behavior during that activity.
- ✓ Give only **one or two** very simple rules.
- ✓ Rules should always be **clear** and **simple**. Keep in mind your child's age when setting a rule.
- ✓ When talking about rules, be **calm**, get your child's attention by getting down on his or her **level** and making **eye contact**, and give rules **quickly and simply**.
- ✓ Rules should be stated **positively**. They should tell your child **what to do** rather than what not to do. For example:

☺ *Do say:*

- ★ Keep your hands to yourself
- ★ Keep your food on your plate
- ★ Touch nicely
- ★ Stay close to me
- ★ We need to put the toys away
- ★ Use a quiet voice

☹ *Don't say:*

- Don't touch
- Don't play with your food
- Don't hit
- No running around
- You left all your toys out
- Don't yell

Explain the rewards and the consequences:

- ✓ Explain what will happen if your child follows the rules.
- ✓ The best **rewards** are often your time and attention. Kids love to spend time with their moms! Play a game, read books, color together – **use the activities your child likes the most as rewards.**
- ✓ Be sure that you can **follow through**. If you tell your child he can watch a favorite video after he picks up toys, be sure to let him watch the video after he or she picks up the toys.
- ✓ If your child does not follow the rule, focus on just not giving the reward and find something else to do. Let her know why she is not getting the reward, but next time if they follow the rules, she will get that reward.

Examples:

- ★ If you get your pajamas on, then we can look at books before bedtime.
- ★ As long as you keep the play-dough on the table, we can keep playing with it.
- ★ If you stay with me in the store, then you can help pick out a cereal.

Give choices:

- ✓ There are many times in your child's day when he or she does not have much say in what happens.
- ✓ Children love to have a say in what happens in their lives, and choices take the pressure off by letting them feel like they are in control.
- ✓ By giving your child choices about some of the things that take place each day, you get your child involved in activities and can prevent some difficult situations.
- ✓ If your child doesn't choose, then very nicely say that if she doesn't choose, you will choose for her.

Examples:

- ★ Do you want to wear the dog or the car shirt?
- ★ Would you like to play with the blocks or cars?
- ★ Which do you want to do first – put your dishes in the sink or pick up your toys?

Talk about what you are doing:

- ✓ **Talking to your children** is the best way to get them involved in activities.
- ✓ When children are **involved**, they are less likely to be disruptive or misbehave.
- ✓ Watch for what your child is doing and **comment** about it, **describe** it, **ask questions** about it, or **expand** on what your child is saying about it.
- ✓ **Follow your child's lead** and give your child many chances to talk.
- ✓ Make your interactions **fun** and focused on your child.

Examples:

- ★ You see your child looking at books, so talk about them with him.
- ★ During dinner, you talk about what you did that day.
- ★ While getting dressed in the morning, you talk about where you're going later.

Be child-friendly:

- ✓ **Pay attention** to your child
- ✓ Get on your **child's level** and make **eye contact**
- ✓ Use a **friendly** tone of voice and **gentle, loving** touches
- ✓ Give **affection** and offer **kind words**.



Examples:

- ★ Take some time every day to focus only on your child.
- ★ Get down on the floor and play, rather than staying on the couch.
- ★ Even when you are busy, be sure to take a minute to talk to your child, smile, give a pat on the head, or say something nice about your child.
- ★ Try to use a calm, but positive tone of voice.

Ignore minor misbehavior:

- ✓ The saying "Pick Your Battles" applies here. Try to **avoid correcting or scolding** when you can, and spend more time **giving your child positive attention** for the **good things** that he or she does.
- ✓ Sometimes, children do things that parents do not like, like whining or saying things that aren't very nice. In many cases, these are minor behaviors that don't cause any real harm. In fact, **the more you pay attention to a problem behavior, the more likely your child will continue to do it.**
- ✓ In some cases, children misbehave in order to get parents' attention, or to "push your buttons." When this is the case, the best thing can be ignoring those behaviors. Instead, **catch them being good!**
- ✓ Certainly, parents should not ignore their children when they are hurting themselves or others or causing damage, but in many cases some of the behaviors that parents do not like can be ignored, and in most cases they will go away after a while.
- ✓ And, you can **ignore the behavior, but not ignore the child.** Ignore problem behaviors, while still interacting with your child and getting him or her involved in another activity.
- ✓ **Be consistent** with ignoring. If you ignore a problem behavior once, and then pay attention to it the next time, your child will learn that he has to just keep up the problem behavior in order for you to respond.
- ✓ **The problem behavior might get a little worse before it gets better.** Just know that it can be difficult, but be consistent and it won't be long before your child stops that behavior. Continuing to pay attention to good behavior is especially important.

Examples:

- ★ When your child "talks back," don't respond to what she's said. Continue with your interaction in a calm and consistent manner. You don't have to ignore her completely, just don't let the "back talk" get to you.
- ★ Your two children are starting to argue over a toy that they both want. Rather than scolding them for fighting, get them involved in a new activity. Next time, put out enough toys so they are more likely to play together nicely.



Tell your child how he or she did:

- ✓ **Praise** your child when he or she does something you like.
- ✓ Offer **kind words** throughout your day.
- ✓ Tell your child how he or she did following an activity. If your child followed the rules and had good behavior, be sure to let your child know that you like this.
- ✓ If your child did not follow the rules or did not have good behavior, remind your child of the rules and **talk about what your child can do better next time**.
- ✓ Keep it simple and clear, and be **positive**.
- ✓ You can *always* find something to praise. **Watch out for good behavior!**



Examples:

- ★ I like the way you're playing with your brother/sister.
- ★ All-right! You kept your hands to yourself.
- ★ Good job eating all your food! Next time, try to use your spoon.
- ★ Yeah! You picked up all the toys!
- ★ Next time let's work on *sharing* your toys.

Give rewards for good behavior:

- ✓ **Follow through.** You explained the rewards earlier. If you told your child there would be a reward for following the rules, and your child did her best, do what you said you would do.
- ✓ If your child does not follow the rule, don't give the reward, but do find something else to do. **Let your child know why** he or she is not getting the reward, and that next time if they follow the rules, they will get that reward.
- ✓ **Get your child involved** in something else, and focus on encouraging good behavior in that activity, rather than focusing on the bad behavior.
- ✓ The best reward is usually your **time** and **attention**. Think of fun activities that can be rewards, like watching a video together, finger painting, looking at a book, or playing with toys. You do not need to buy things for your child to give rewards.
- ✓ Use the **activity cards** to find new and fun activities to do together.

Examples:

- ★ You told your child that if he got ready for bed early, you would look at books together before bedtime. He got ready quickly and was helpful, so you let him pick out 2 or 3 books to look at in bed before he goes to sleep.
- ★ You told your child she could help pick out the cereal if she stayed with you in the store and kept her hands to herself. She touched a few things on the shelves, but when you reminded her of the rule, she put them down and stayed with you. Because she tried to do a good job, you let her pick out a cereal.
- ★ You said that if your child gets his shoes on by himself, he could watch a movie until it was time to leave. He whined and didn't put his shoes on, so you had to do it for him. You then tell him he can play with toys until its time to go, but can't watch a video.



My Notes: