



DISCIPLINE: REDIRECTING YOUR CHILD

Why do children misbehave?

- Attention seeking
Research has shown that the average child gets less than 15 minutes a day of real communication with their parents. Children may learn that bad behavior is a way to get attention from parents. For example, parents may not go to regular teacher conferences, but they'll come to the principal's office if the child is in trouble. Paying attention to good behavior can help prevent bad behavior.
- Power and control
As children get older, they seek more and more independence. They may resent parents telling them what to do. Let them make more decisions and more important decisions as they get older. This helps them feel as though they have some power over their lives. Let your child know that you love them no matter what; this does not mean that you may accept or approve of everything that your child does. Although they may protest, it reassures children when parents set firm boundaries.
- Revenge
When children feel hurt, they often act out to hurt others. Encourage children to share their feelings openly and honestly. This promotes healthy relationships and decreases the chance the child will feel the need to act out.
- Inadequacy
Research has shown that children hear an average of 400 negative comments each day, but only 32 positive comments. Praise your child's positive behaviors and try to focus on their strengths.

What is redirecting?

"Redirecting" is when you help your child to change activities. For example, if a child is throwing sand at another child in the sandbox, rather than taking a toy away or spanking, it's best to remove the child from the sandbox. When children misbehave, set limits and redirect their negative behavior:

- Remove them from the situation and talk calmly about the behavior
- Acknowledge the child's feelings, wishes and wants ("I see that you want to play with his toy")
- Communicate the limits ("Sand is not for throwing")
- Suggest other choices ("Why don't you play with this other toy instead?")
- Calmly explain the consequences. Consequences that match the behavior are more effective than punishment ("If you choose to throw sand again, you will not be able to play in the sandbox for the rest of the day")