



NORA NOTES

A SUMMARY OF

**1-2-3
MAGIC**

**EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE
FOR CHILDREN
AGES 2-12**

by Thomas W. Phelan, Ph.D.

1-2-3 Magic

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Revised 4th Edition

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I. Welcome to 1-2-3 Magic (i)

1-2-3 Magic is a program to help parents, teachers and caregivers manage the behaviors of children ages 2-12 years old. This strategy follows a few simple rules that put the parents back in charge without shouting, arguing or hitting. (i) The 1-2-3 Magic program helps kids become emotionally competent, self-disciplined adults. (2)

For Best Results (ii-iii)

1. Follow the “No-Talking” and “No-Emotion” rules consistently and exactly as described.
2. Both parents should understand and use the system whether they reside in the same house or not.
3. Other caretakers, such as relatives and teachers, should also be taught the system.
4. Use 1-2-3 Magic when children are physically and emotionally healthy. Kids who are sick or otherwise distressed are likely to have behavioral issues. These causes need to be addressed before implementing 1-2-3 Magic.
5. Professional counseling may be required *before* using 1-2-3 Magic if a child has had problems with violence, separation anxiety or self-punishing behaviors.
6. Professional counseling may be required *after* using 1-2-3 Magic if marital issues keep Mom and Dad from working together, a parent cannot seem to follow the “No-Talking” and “No-Emotion” rules or behavior problems escalate to a high level after three weeks.

About half of children cooperate with the program from the beginning. The other half will “test” this new program and demonstrate worse behaviors. If you implement the rules with consistency, you should see a change in 7-10 days. (4)

II. Orientation to the Parenting Profession (5)

Parenting will be one of the most important and rewarding, yet frustrating jobs you will ever perform. (2) 1-2-3 Magic draws upon the idea that parenting is like a profession, and it will become much easier with a little bit of training. (7)

Basic Parenting Philosophy (7-8)

Successful parents have two sides.

- The *warm and friendly* side focuses on meeting a child's needs. These include food, shelter and clothing, as well as emotional needs like love, comfort and sympathy.
- The *demanding and firm* side focuses on the expectations you have of your children. The way they behave in public, the effort they put into schoolwork and sports, how they treat other people and how they obey rules and laws.

When parenting, you use one or both sides depending on the situation. Finding a balance of both is important to ensure your children grow up to be self-sufficient and happy adults.

Automatic vs. Deliberate Parenting (9-10)

There are two different ways in which parents can react to a situation.

- When you do something without thinking about it first, it is *automatic parenting*.
Picking up a hurt child is a positive example, while yelling at a child who won't stay in bed is negative.
- Responding to situations by conscientiously using 1-2-3 Magic strategies like counting is *deliberate parenting*.

Identify the positive and negative *automatic parenting* actions you currently use, and as you learn the 1-2-3 Magic system, start thinking about how the negative actions will be replaced. Changing habits that are *automatic* can be difficult at first and will take lots of practice and thoughtful effort on your part, but eventually the new *deliberate* habits will become *automatic*!

Finally, another important form of automatic parenting is *modeling*. Children are naturally copy-cats. When you demonstrate calm and respectful behavior, your children will follow suit.

Dictatorship to Democracy (19-20)

In the early years, your household should be run like a dictatorship in which you make the rules. You decide on bedtimes and what will be watched on TV. When your children reach their teen years they will have more input on rules that affect them, hence your household will become more of a democracy. Family meetings can be held to discuss issues. Be respectful of your teen's opinions, but ultimately and when necessary, you must enforce limits.

The Little Adult Assumption (17-19)

Many parents falsely believe that their children are reasonable, unselfish and essentially "little adults." Therefore, if a child is behaving badly he must need more information and he will then do the right thing. We call this the "Little Adult Assumption." This assumption leads to endless hours of explanations and reasoning. The problem is, kids are not little adults. Children are, by nature, unreasonable and they want what they want, when they want it.

Two Biggest Discipline Mistakes (21)

The "Little Adult Assumption" leads parents into committing the two biggest discipline mistakes.

1. Too much talking

Lengthy explanations and lots of words rarely correct bad behavior and only serve to aggravate and confuse children. Endless banter often leads to the "Talk-Persuade-Argue-Yell-Hit Syndrome."

When your child is doing something you don't like, you tell her why she shouldn't be doing that. When that doesn't work, you try to persuade her to stop. Next comes arguing, then full out yelling. You are at your wits end and feel there is nothing left to do but spank. (18)

2. Too much emotion

The parent is ultimately having her own tantrum when a situation dissolves into screaming and hitting. When emotions run that high, your reaction makes your child feel powerful. (22)

When disciplining a child it is essential that you remain calm and consistent and employ the "No-Talking and No-Emotion" rules. (23)

III. Controlling Obnoxious Behavior (25)

Parents have three distinct jobs that each require different tactics. Jobs #1 and #2 involve discipline and behavior while Job #3 concentrates on your relationship with your child. (11)

Parenting Job #1: Controlling obnoxious behavior

Obnoxious behaviors include, but are not limited to:

Fighting	Pouting
Throwing tantrums	Arguing
Teasing	Complaining
Whining	Screaming

When we attempt to control obnoxious behavior, we want our children to “STOP” doing something that is negative or irritating. How we deal with “stop behaviors” is different than how we deal with “start behaviors,” in other words getting our children to perform, or “START” a task. (12) The strategy for dealing with stop behaviors is the 1-2-3 counting procedure.

Simple But Not Easy (25, 27-28)

The counting strategy may seem too simple at first, but it is extremely effective when performed properly. Some might say, “Like magic.” The *Magic* in 1-2-3 Magic happens when the parent is able to deal with any “STOP” behavior consistently and calmly and the child is able to think and take responsibility for his behavior. But in order for “counting” to be effective, parents must follow the No-Talking and No-Emotion rules strictly. This can sometimes be a difficult adjustment for parents. Especially in the heat of the moment.

Intro to Counting (28)

Imagine your youngster is having an epic meltdown on the kitchen floor because he wants a cookie, but you’ve told him “No.”

Instead of:

- Explaining that dinner will be ready in 10 minutes and why we can't eat cookies whenever we want.
- Persuading him to stop throwing a tantrum by telling him he can have a cookie after dinner.
- Giving in and giving him a cookie because you just can't take any more of this behavior today. (This becomes worse by reinforcing his bad behavior)
- Yelling at him to stop because "You've had it up to here!!!"
- Spanking him because nothing else is getting through to him.

Instead of all of these possible, and probably familiar, reactions - **simply count!**

Johnny: Shouts, "I want a cookie NOW!"

Mom: Calmly holds up one finger and says, "That's 1."

Johnny: Begins to cry and falls to the floor, "But I really want a cookie!!!"

Allow five seconds to pass

Mom: Shows no emotion and holds up two fingers, "That's 2."

Johnny: Begins to kick the cabinet and cry louder.

Allow five seconds to pass

Mom: Still remaining calm and emotionless, "That's 3, take 5." (28)

So what just happened exactly?

1. Mom gave Johnny two separate opportunities (counts) to stop his negative behavior. (29)
2. Mom also gave Johnny time between each opportunity (count) to think about his behavior and make the decision to do the right thing. When given those five second pauses, children learn to take responsibility for their actions. (45)
3. Because Johnny did not stop his negative behavior he faces the consequence of "taking 5." (29)

Time-Outs and Time-Out Alternatives

Taking five is the punishment earned from bad behavior, and this punishment comes in the form of a five minute time-out, rest period or a time-out alternative (depending on the child or situation). It's not always five either-it's the age of your child. So it's "Take 2" for a two year old, or "Take 10" for a ten year old. (29)

Time-outs can happen anywhere in the house. The child’s bedroom, a designated chair, a stair, etc. The time-out spot should be somewhere that eliminates visual contact with the parent so the child cannot attempt to provoke the parent or get attention. (45)

Time-out alternatives (TOA’s) can be used for numerous reasons. If you are on your way out of the house and don’t have time for a rest period, you want a consequence that better fits the crime, or you feel that a consequence with more “clout” is in order. TOA examples: (38-39)

Loss of TV time	No friends over	No dessert
Small chore- clean toilet	Large chore- weed yard	Monetary fine
Write an essay	Loss of game station	Loss of DVD or iPad
Grounding	Early bedtime	

After the Time-out

What happens after the time-out? Nothing! Carry on. Business as usual. The time-out has served to calm the child and redirect his attention. There is generally no reason to rehash and lecture the child about the incident. That will only frustrate you and the child. Soon enough you will find that your child stops his behavior at the 1 or 2 count. (29)

Occasionally your child will demonstrate new, unusual or dangerous behaviors that will require one quick explanation as to why that particular behavior is not allowed. Remember to avoid showing emotion and going on unnecessarily during this explanation. (30, 35)

Some kids need a little bit of reassurance after a discipline event and that’s okay. Give your child a hug if she needs it. Just do it silently. (52)

The Not-So-Easy-Part (30-32)

Some parents find that after several weeks of life with 1-2-3 Magic, the “Magic” stops working and behavioral issues rise again. Nine times out of ten this is because the parent is not following the No-Talking and/or No-Emotion rules without even realizing it.

Johnny: Shouts, “I want a cookie NOW!”

Mom: “That’s 1. Johnny, you know why you can’t have a cookie. We go over this every night.”

Johnny: Begins to cry and falls to the floor, “But I really want one!!!”

Mom: “Fine then, that’s 2. Keep it up and you are going to your room. I am so sick of your whining!”

Johnny: Begins to kick the cabinet and cry louder.

Mom: “YOUR BROTHER NEVER BEHAVES LIKE THIS! ENOUGH, THAT’S 3. GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!”

This is an example of two tantrums, Johnny’s and Mom’s. Mom was not implementing 1-2-3 Magic properly because she was:

- Modeling poor behavior herself.
- Talking too much. It was hard for Johnny to pick out the warnings in all of *Mom*’s ranting.
- Too much emotion. When Mom gets worked up, all Johnny hears is an invitation for an argument.

It is important to count firmly with an even or slightly stern voice without any extra words or emotions. It is also vital that you give a “pregnant” pause right after the warning, making sure the responsibility for behavioral changes falls squarely on your child’s shoulders. Remember- this silence will speak much louder than any of your words.

MBA- Minor but Aggravating! (43-44)

While most obnoxious behaviors need to be counted, some childhood behaviors are just aggravating. These are called MBA behaviors and include rolling eyes, squirming, humming, stomping, etc. They aren’t necessarily misbehaviors, but depending on your mood, can really grate on your nerves. Whether you decide to count these behaviors or not is up to you, but you must be consistent. Just because you are in a bad mood one day doesn’t mean that your child should be counted for actions that wouldn’t have earned a consequence the day before.

Benefits of Counting (35-38)

1. It makes discipline less exhausting by saving your breath! Remember to only give a short explanation when absolutely necessary, then count.
2. It saves time! The Talk-Persuade-Argue-Yell-Hit Syndrome can take up hours of your day. With counting, a situation is generally resolved in a matter of seconds. After the time out, things can get back to normal and you can start having more fun with your kids.
3. It establishes your authority. You are the boss and do not have to negotiate issues all day long.
4. The consequence (time-out) of bad behavior is always reasonable and well-defined. Time-outs are not cruel and unusual, but do give everyone the chance to calm down. Generally kids come back from a time-out having forgotten the whole situation, which is why you do not talk about it again after the time-out.
5. It’s not too complicated for caregivers, teachers and grandparents to learn and use. Consistency makes 1-2-3 Magic all the more powerful.

Getting Started (73)

Before launching head first into the implementation 1-2-3 Magic, have a kickoff conversation with your kids. Explain how counting works, the types of behaviors that will be counted (arguing, whining, yelling, etc.) and what the consequences will be (time-outs and/or time-out alternatives). Rehearse and role-play with younger children who may have a harder time understanding so they know exactly what to expect.

IV. Frequently Asked Questions and “What to do if’s...” (30-72)

When Counting

1. *If a child reaches a “1” or “2,” does he stay at that count for the rest of the day, even if he does nothing else wrong? (45)*

No. Children’s perspective of time is much shorter than ours. Use a 15 minute window for young kids and a two to three hour window for older kids. Start counting from one after the “window” has lapsed.

2. *What if my child does something so bad I don’t want to give them three chances to stop? (30)*

Some offenses are serious enough to go straight to “That’s 3, take 5” without giving them the first two chances to self-correct. A good example is hitting or using offensive language. Additional time-out minutes can also be added if the behavior warrants it.

3. *What do you do if the child counts you back?! (48)*

The child does not have the authority to count, nor should she be allowed to mock the process. If you say, “That’s 1” and she sarcastically mimics you back, silently hold up two fingers. If she continues, then that’s 3. Simple as that.

4. *How do you use 1-2-3 for sibling rivalry? (69-70)*

- a) *Count both kids.* Unless one child is obviously provoking the other, count them both at the same time. Odds are, they are both equally involved in the fighting and should both face consequences.
- b) *Never ask dumb questions.* Asking things like, “What happened?” and “Who started it?” are only going to result in more arguing and blaming. Skip the questions all together as they will never provide you with any worthwhile information.
- c) *1-2-3 Separate!* If siblings are bickering, and may not necessarily deserve a time-out, simply make them separate to different rooms once you reach 3.

5. *How do you count and handle temper tantrums? (71-72)*

You may choose to count or to just ignore a two year olds temper tantrum and walk out of the room. Once a child no longer has an audience, the tantrum tends to quickly fizzle out. If your child is 10 years old and throwing a tantrum, definitely count.

If you hit 3 with a tantruming child and he is still continuing to throw a fit after the time-out period is over, simply start the time-out after the tantrum is over. This may be 15 minutes, or it could be two hours. Regardless, start the rest period after the child has calmed down. This tactic works for children over the age of four. Two and three year olds don't always understand this concept, so count and time-out as normal.

However you decide to handle the situation, make sure you never talk to or argue with a tantruming child. This will only fuel the fire and your child is not in the state of mind to rationally listen to anything you have to say.

One caveat: some children have tantrums due to sensory issues such as the way a garment is rubbing or an offensive smell or sound. These are not misbehaviors and shouldn't be punished. Try to establish what the trigger is and help them avoid it.

6. Should I count pouting? (72)

Pouting is a “passive behavior” that children use to try and make you feel guilty. Ignore a pouter unless she becomes an “aggressive pouter” and follows you around the house trying to provoke you. That behavior should be counted.

7. What about 1-2-3 Magic and special needs kids? (59)

1-2-3 Magic can be used with children with ADHD, learning disabilities, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, depression and autism spectrum disorders. Some minor modifications may need to be made. If your child becomes very anxious when being counted, try using a visual stimulus like colored flash cards to signify each count. A green card = 1, a yellow card= 2 and a red card = 3. Do not “count” anxiety. Anxiety is not a misbehavior and it should be handled with comfort and structure.

During Time-Outs

1. What if the child won't go to time-out? (41-42)

If you've reached “3” but your child will not go to the designated time-out spot, you are not allowed to try to persuade him to do so.

- If he's a little kid- without using any extra words, walk toward the child. He may stay a few feet ahead of you all the way to the room. If not, “escort” him by gently taking him by the arm or carrying him, even if he is kicking and screaming. You must remain quiet the entire time.
- If he's a bigger kid- tell him that he has a choice between a time-out or the following time-out alternatives (list 2 alternatives). If he refuses, select the punishment for him. Because he hasn't

gone to a different location for a time-out, and emotions may still be running high, remove yourself from the situation for a while.

2. What if the child won't stay in her room for the time-out? (46-47)

If your young child will not stay in her room you can stand there blocking the door or holding the door shut for a few time-outs until he gets the idea. If this dissolves into a tug-of-war then it has lost its effectiveness. Try a gate or starting the time-out over if she comes out early.

If none of these options work some parents have used plastic door knob covers or turning the door knob around so as to lock it from the outside. Note that locking a child in a room is illegal for foster parents and in some provinces of Canada.

Try explaining to your child that if she stays in her room the door can stay open, but if she comes out before the end of the rest period, it will be shut and locked.

Some kids will test this new system by repeatedly trying to leave the room so securing the door in some way will be necessary. Once children understand that they cannot leave the room until their time-out is served, regardless of how hard they fight, they generally stop tantruming and serve it calmly.

3. Does the time-out room have to be a sterile environment? (48-49)

Not at all! The child can play with toys, read, draw, etc. The only things that are not allowed during a time-out are friends, phones and electronics. The time-out itself is not the most important aspect of 1-2-3 Magic, it's the interruption of his activities. Even if he says, "I don't care. I'll just go up and play." Really he does care- he would have already been up there if that's where he really wanted to be.

If it doesn't seem like the time-outs are working, try using a time-out alternative.

4. What if the kid wrecks the room during his time-out? (54-55)

A small percentage of kids will mess up a room out of anger and an even smaller percentage will break things. While it's often hard for parents to deal with this type of scary behavior and you are probably constantly worrying what he might do next, the message you send him needs to be firm and consistent through all behaviors.

One solution comes from a parent with a son who would continually destroy a just straightened room. They finally quit cleaning up the mess! Their son was forced to live in the pig sty, find his own pajamas, uncover the cluttered bed at night, etc. After about 10 days of wrecking an already wrecked room he began to calm down during time-outs. His parents then helped him clean up his room. Because his behavior was no longer getting attention, he never even made it to "3" after that!

Do make sure that the room is safe, that there is nothing he can accidentally hurt himself with, and

that there is nothing valuable that can be broken.

5. Room wrecking is one thing, but what do you do if your child urinates on the floor during a time-out? (55)

This kind of behavior occasionally occurs in preschoolers. The solution- he serves his time-out in the bathroom. If he still decides to urinate on the floor at least it's easier to clean than the bedroom carpet.

6. Should you ever spank a child? (57)

Spanking and physical violence are the result of a parent who has lost control. They are not effective ways to train or educate a child. Furthermore, research has shown that excessive physical violence leads to anxiety, diminished self-esteem and aggressive behavior in children.

7. What if the child won't come out of the room after the time-out? (52)

That's perfectly okay. Go to the door and tell him "Time's up." If he decides to stay and pout, let him. Just silently walk away. Do not, however, extend the rest period time because he is playing quietly in his room. That is not fair.

Around Other People & Out in Public

1. What if you have other people over? (50-51)

Some kids tend to act up even more when guests are over, and it's never fun to discipline with an audience watching, but consistency is key! Count your child's behavior as you would any other time.

- *If your child has a friend over:* count behaviors and send her to time-out, but the friend cannot be in the same room during the time-out. If the friend is participating in the behavior, count her as well- your house, your rules! If her parents are there, explain the system before you discipline their child.
- *If other adults are over:* you may feel uncomfortable using 1-2-3 Magic around others and you may let more behaviors slide than you would if you were alone. Kids will quickly pick up on this and take advantage! Even if you have to interrupt your conversation, count when you need to. You can explain the system to your company if you want!
- *If grandparents are over:* hopefully they are "cooperative" grandparents and use the 1-2-3 method right along with you! Even "passive" grandparents who let you discipline without interfering or saying anything are easy to deal with.

"Antagonistic" grandparents are the most difficult to deal with. They say things like, "I didn't need to read a book to know how to discipline you..." or "All my father had to do was look at a belt and I shaped up quickly." Some antagonistic grandparents will go as far as interfering while you are trying to discipline. "Oh Johnny doesn't need a time out. He's just tired. Come sit on Grammy's lap for a while Johnny."

It may be difficult for you, but these grandparents must be dealt with. “Mom, I know you are trying to help, but these are our kids and this is how we are going to discipline them. If you can’t go along with it, we may have to cut the visit short.”

2. How do I issue a time-out when we aren’t at the house? (62-63)

Simply find a “time-out place.” A time-out place could be in the middle of aisle 5 at the grocery store where you stand quietly holding your youngster’s hand for the duration of the time-out. A store bathroom works for a child that wants to throw a noisy fit. You can take her out to the car to serve the time-out. One mother carried around a small “time-out mat” in her bag and she pulled it out and plopped it down wherever they may be at the moment. Wherever you are, always follow the No-Talking and No-Emotion rules.

3. What about while you are in the car? (65, 67-68)

Unless you are very close to the house, do not wait to have time-outs served when you get home. There will be too much time between the offense and the punishment. Because your options are limited, count as usual, but issue a time-out alternative such as money taken from allowance or an earlier bedtime. Fifteen minutes of silence in the car or pulling over and sitting in silence for the time-out period may work if you are not in a hurry.

If the children are excited to be going on the trip, on your way to ice cream for example, say “That’s 1, third time blows the trip.” When you reach three, turn the car around and go home. Only use this tactic if you are prepared to follow through and go home. (65)

4. What if my child misbehaves at school? (59)

If the child was already disciplined for an action at school, do not discipline again at home. If the behavior is ongoing, talk to the teacher about a weekly behavior chart that the teacher can fill out and send home. Rewards and consequences can be given based on the chart. Keep in mind that bad grades are not a misbehavior and only using punishment methods generally fail. Try a rewards system.

V. Managing Kids’ Testing and Manipulation (77-91)

Because children are on the losing side of a power imbalance with their parents, they often employ six different testing and manipulation tactics to get what they want or to avoid being punished. (79)

Children test when they are frustrated: when you won’t give him cookies before dinner, when it’s time to go to bed or when he is being counted. He doesn’t like what’s going on and will try to get his way. This means that testing is a “purposeful behavior.” If he doesn’t get his way through testing and manipulating tactics, he may turn to revenge tactics. *“If you don’t give me what I want, you’re going to pay.”* It is even completely normal for very young children to skillfully utilize testing strategies and to attempt to “punish” the adult when they don’t get their way. (80)

Does your child have a favorite tactic that he uses all of the time? That tactic is his favorite because it works! He uses this tactic because it has been successful in the past in either 1) getting his way or 2) by imparting revenge. If your child can get you upset through the use of one or more of these tactics, and provoke a “counter temper tantrum,” then you’ve just been had. (87-88)

Six Testing and Manipulation Tactics (81-87)	
<p>Badgering <i>“Why? Why? Why? Why?”</i></p> <p>Badgering is a widely used tactic in which your child repeats a word or phrase over and over and often loudly, especially when in public. The goal of badgering is to wear the parent down until the child gets what she wants.</p> <p>Parents respond with explanations and distractions in an attempt to quiet the child, but most kids won’t stop until they get what they want.</p>	<p>Temper (Intimidation) <i>“I hate you!”</i></p> <p>Temper tantrums can range from obnoxious to outright aggressive behavior. A two-year-old throwing himself to the floor and screaming can almost be funny, an older child who swears, screams and destroys property is not. ADHD and bipolar children can tantrum for more than an hour at a time.</p> <p>Tantrums always last longer when a child has an audience and/or the adult tries to argue or plead with the child.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Threat <i>“I’m going to run away from home!”</i></p> <p>Children use threats to send you the message, “Something bad is going to happen if you don’t give me what I want immediately!” Some children’s threats are funny, but when a child threatens to kill themselves, it must be taken seriously and looked into.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Martyrdom <i>“I never get anything!”</i></p> <p>Children utilize martyrdom tactics such as not eating dinner, sitting in the closet or holding their breath in order to make the parent feel guilty. Acting hurt or deprived is an effective way for children to get what they want! It triggers a parent’s natural instinct to protect and keep their child happy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Butter Up <i>“You’re the nicest Dad in the world!”</i></p> <p>Unlike the previous four tactics which aim to make you feel uncomfortable, when a child is buttering you up she wants to make you feel good. The underlying message is, “You’ll feel so positively toward me that you won’t have the heart to make me feel bad.”</p> <p>This is the least obnoxious, but still a manipulation tactic.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Physical Tactics <i>POW! WHACK! BAM!</i></p> <p>This is the worst and can be the scariest of the tactics. Because they don’t have well developed language skills, physically attacking an adult, running away and breaking objects are tactics sometimes used by younger children. It is vitally important to get this behavior under control by age four or five.</p> <p>Hitting, kicking, biting and scratching a parent when being escorted to a time-out is not unheard of.</p>

How to Manage Testing and Manipulation (88-91)

Counting of course! With the exception of “buttering up,” all of the testing and manipulation tactics are “STOP” behaviors and should be counted. This is especially true in the beginning stages of implementing 1-2-3 Magic while children are adjusting to the new discipline system. As always, follow the No-Talking and No-Emotion rules. You will find that your child will start switching tactics in an effort to find one that will work in getting their way. Tactic switching is a good thing and proves that you are doing it right. Stick to your guns and be more persistent than your child. Eventually you can try ignoring that child. He will soon learn that your silence means he will not be getting his way, and he will give up.

Occasionally you may have a “delayed tester” on your hands. After an initial cooperation period, something may cause the child to begin testing. A disruption in routine such as travelling, a new baby, visitors or illness may provoke new testing. You might feel like the system is no longer working. Simply get back to the basic No-Talking and No-Emotion rules and gently but consistently count misbehaviors and things should get back to normal.

More Serious Offenses in Tweens (103-114)

A tween is an adolescent between nine and twelve years old. They display “STOP” behaviors that may be too serious for the standard 1-2-3 counting and time-out procedure.

- Lying
- Physically fighting
- Behavioral problems in school
- Property damage
- Smoking
- Stealing
- Cutting class
- Bullying
- Pranks
- Starting fires

Stronger actions on the part of the adult are needed to ensure that these behaviors are not repeated while trying to maintain a good relationship with your tween. This a vulnerable time for children and it is important to maintain a balance between the demanding/firm and warm/friendly sides of parenting. Early prevention is essential in dealing with this type of behavior before it begins to form a pattern. (104)

Oppositional Defiance and Conduct Disorder (104-105)

Serious behavior problems are generally motivated by 1) hostile and vengeful inclinations (fighting and bullying) and/or 2) thrill-seeking (smoking and skipping school). Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) refers to tweens that engage in hostile or vengeful behavior in order to annoy others. These kids are easily annoyed themselves and blame everyone else when things go wrong. Inconsistent parenting can cause and greatly aggravate ODD behavior.

Kids who continually engage in destructive behavior are often diagnosed with Conduct Disorder (CD), also known as a juvenile delinquency, and generally have learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder or issues with language and communication. Without intervention, CD teens become very dangerous with uncertain futures.

Most children only require standard 1-2-3 Magic techniques (counting, time-outs and time-out alternatives). However, with higher risk tweens, the Major/Minor System may be more effective. The goal is to prevent ODD from beginning, or eliminate early ODD behaviors before they escalate to CD.

Major/Minor System (106-111)

The Major/Minor System is used to handle serious behavior problems while minimizing upset. This is accomplished by creating a list of minor, medium and major offenses and corresponding minor, medium and major consequences. Creating a list of offenses and consequences informs the child of exactly what punishment to expect after he misbehaves, and takes the pressure off of the parent to come up with an appropriate punishment during the heat of the moment.

Examples:

<p><i>Major Offenses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming home more than 2 hours late • Playing with or starting a fire • Physical fighting 	<p><i>Major Consequences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounding: 2 week restriction to room after dinner and on weekends; no electronics • Fine: \$25 or pay back double the value of stolen/damaged articles • Chores: 15 hours of work around the house • Community service: 15 hours of volunteer service • Educational activity: 8 page paper, attend group counseling
<p><i>Medium Offenses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming home 1 to 2 hours late • Getting to school more than 5 minutes late • Lying about a serious matter • Carrying matches or lighter 	<p><i>Medium Consequences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounding: 1 week restriction to room after dinner and on weekends; no electronics • Fine: \$10 or pay back double the value of stolen/damaged articles • Chores: 8 hours of work around the house • Community service: 8 hours of volunteer service • Educational activity: 4 page paper
<p><i>Minor Offenses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming home up to 1 hour late • Getting to school less than 5 minutes late • Lying about homework (110) 	<p><i>Minor Consequences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounding: 2 day restriction to room after dinner and on weekends; no electronics • Fine: \$5 or pay back double the value of stolen/damaged articles • Chores: 4 hours of work around the house • Community service: 4 hours of volunteer service • Educational activity: 2 page paper (109)

Parental responsibilities:

1. Constantly praise your child for the things she does right. Nobody wants to constantly hear about what they are doing wrong. (108)
2. Categorize an offense as major, medium or minor and pick a consequence. Some parents allow the child to pick from the list of consequences. (110)
3. Remember to remain calm and refrain from lengthy lectures when issuing a consequence. Some discussion may **be** needed, but try to keep it to a minimum. (110)
4. No yelling or screaming is allowed on your part no matter how serious the offense. Excuse yourself and take a minute to calm down before you issue a consequence if need be. (110)

VI. Encouraging Good Behavior (117-170)

While it only takes seconds to “stop” a behavior, getting your child to “start” a behavior takes longer and requires much more effort. For example, getting a child to stop whining can be done quickly with counting. Getting a child to complete her chores takes a little more motivation because the task generally involves multiple steps to complete and probably isn’t something she is going to enjoy doing.

Focus on counting “stop” behaviors for a week or two. After you feel comfortable that you have regained control of your child’s obnoxious behaviors, begin to address “start” behaviors. It can be easy to confuse the two at first so tackle them separately. (117)

Parenting Job #2: Encouraging good behavior

Good behaviors include completing things like:

Cleaning	Homework
Chores	Bed time routine
Getting to school	Eating dinner
Staying in bed	

Unfortunately children are not born with an innate desire to eat their broccoli and brush their teeth. Essentially they have to be trained to perform those tasks. The following seven strategies can be used alone or in combination to encourage good behavior.

The same basic rules still apply when dealing with “start” behaviors. No yelling, arguing or hitting. As you may have experienced with counting, your child may try and test your new strategies in the beginning. That’s okay, you know how to handle testing and manipulation tactics with counting! (118)

Wonderful, Powerful Routines! (118-119, 135)

Establishing routines for tasks like getting ready for bed, getting out of the house in the morning or doing homework are essential. Once children begin to follow a routine at the same time and the same way every day, it will become automatic for them.

Begin by defining the routine for your child. Explain every step. Next rehearse the routine so your child clearly understands the sequence of events. Begin implementing the routine consistently at about the same time every day so the child knows exactly what to expect. Use the following seven strategies to establish and maintain your routines.

Seven Strategies for Encouraging Good Behavior (119-133)

1. Praise (Positive Reinforcement)

Most of us tend to get loud and vocal when we are angry and keep quiet when we are pleased. Unfortunately that means that often our children hear more negative rather than positive feedback from us.

For example, as you are making dinner you notice that the kids are quietly playing together in the other room. You may note how nice the peace is as you finish your task, but you probably don't stop what you are doing to tell them how pleased you are. However, if the kids were being noisy and arguing in the other room, you may yell at them to keep it down or go to their rooms.

Kids can begin to feel like they are just a pain in your neck so focus on praising your children when they are exhibiting good behaviors. Praising children in front of others is especially effective. Aim for your daily praise and positive feedback to outnumber negative interactions at a 3:1 ratio. This is a good rule for spouses too! (119-122)

2. Simple Requests

The level of cooperation you receive from a child when you make a simple request can vary widely all based on your tone of voice, the spontaneity of the request and the phrasing you use.

Tone: Are you using “chore voice” with your kids? The tone of “chore voice” is slightly aggravated with a little bit of nagging thrown in. It gives the feeling that the child is not meeting your expectations and it is really irritating you.

Instead of using “chore voice,” try a businesslike and matter-of-fact tone next time to issue a simple request like, “Samantha, bedtime.” This new tone tells Samantha, “You may not like this, but it has got to be done now.”

Spontaneity: Along with tone, the timing of your request can impact cooperation levels. Try not to tell your child to take out the garbage while he is out front playing basketball with friends or in the middle of his favorite TV show. Try to fix tasks into set routines to minimize spontaneous requests.

Phrasing: Never phrase a request as a question, or use the word “we.” For example, “Don't you think it's about time we got that room cleaned up?” Instead say, “I want your room clean by six o'clock.” (122-123)

3. *Kitchen Timers*

Digital timers on cell phones, hourglass timers or even old school egg timers can be an effective strategy for just about any “start” behavior. Younger children have a natural desire to “beat the clock” and their focus is taken off of you and put on the timer.

“You’ve got toys out in the living room. I’m setting the timer for 10 minutes. I bet you can’t beat it!”

Timers are portable and can also be used for time-outs. They are not “testable” and cannot be manipulated! If the task is not completed by the time the alarm sounds, use the *Docking System* (#4) or a *Natural Consequence* (#5). (124)

4. *The Docking System*

The Docking System docks a child’s “wages” and can be used for kindergarten-age kids and up. A child’s wages, or funds, can be from an allowance, birthday money, work around the house, etc. The basic idea is: *if you don’t do the work, I’ll do it for you and you will pay me.*

- If the dog is not fed by 6:00pm, mom will do it herself and charge Billy \$2.00.
- If the child’s laundry is not downstairs by 9:00am on Saturday morning, mom will go up and get it for \$1.50.

If docking money doesn’t seem to motivate your child try docking TV minutes or computer time. Do not nag or remind Billy to feed the dog. Simply do it yourself and deduct the money. No discussion is needed. (125-126)

5. *Natural Consequences*

Sometimes not intervening and letting your child experience the natural consequence of his actions is appropriate.

- Don’t nag your daughter to practice the piano. Let her experience the consequence of arriving at her lesson unprepared.
- Let your son find out what the consequences are for repeatedly arriving to school late because he wouldn’t get out of bed and get ready.
- Tired of the battle to get her young son ready for his car pool every morning, one mom simply sent him to school in his footie pajamas when the car arrived. He was never late again. (127-129)

6. *Charting*

Charting is a motivational technique that tracks how well a child is doing with her “start” behaviors. The days of the week go across the top, and the tasks down the left hand side. When a task is completed, like

getting to bed on time or doing the dishes, a sticker is placed on the corresponding day.

Ideally, completing the chart, parental praise and the satisfaction of doing a good job are natural reinforcers that will motivate your child. If this does not seem to be enough, consider using artificial reinforcers that the child earns after a certain number of stickers have been accumulated. These could be a small toy or game, extra minutes to stay up late, a special activity with a parent, money, etc. Get creative!

When charting focus on three or four tasks at a time and set a guideline that if the child completes a task for two weeks straight it can be removed from the chart and a special reward is earned. If the child starts to slip with a removed task, add it back. (129-132)

7. *Counting Variation: Brief Start Behavior*

While most “start” behaviors should not be counted, as they are too complex and time consuming, there is one exception. If the behavior takes less than 2 minutes, like hanging up a coat or brushing teeth, it can be counted. Just be sure to follow the No Talking and No Emotion rules. (132-133)

Sanity Saving Routines for Five Common Situations

1. *UP AND OUT IN THE MORNING (137-142)*

Most adults are not at their best during the wee hours of the morning. This goes for kids of all ages as well! Establishing a morning routine will help everyone get out of the house without a fight. The morning routine will include numerous “start” behaviors such as getting up, bathroom time, eating breakfast, getting dressed and getting out the door with all necessary materials.

While the No-Talking and No-Emotion rules are still in effect, you will not be counting, but utilizing the tactics described above. (137)

For Little kids

If your kids are between two and five years old they will need more help and supervision on your part. Do things in the same order every day so the kids always know what to expect. Use lots of praise every time they make a positive effort.

With four and five year olds, a basic chart can be introduced for tasks like getting out of bed, brushing teeth and getting dressed. A kitchen timer can be set for 15 minutes and she can earn stickers for all of the tasks she completes before it goes off.

If arguing, whining or any other “stop” behaviors arise, count as normal. Give a time-out if there is time, or a time-out alternative if there is not. (138-139)

For Older Kids

With children older than nine, you can try charting and timers, but at a certain age they lose effectiveness. This is when you allow natural consequences to occur. This is often hard for parents to

do and requires some self-restraint because you must keep quiet and allow your child to “get burned.”

Sit your child down and explain that from now on it is his responsibility to get out of bed and out the door in the morning, that you will not be supervising him or reminding him to do any of the necessary tasks. He probably won't believe that you are serious!

The natural consequences arise when he has to explain to the principal why he is late to school without a parents note. You can put food out, but you cannot remind him to eat. The natural consequence will be an empty stomach that morning. If he misses the bus, drive him, but don't be in a hurry about it and do not lecture on the way.

Sure, he'll be late to school a few times and he may get mad at you for not reminding him of the time, but he will learn a valuable lesson in responsibility and independence. (139-142)

2. *CLEANING UP AND CHORES (143-149)*

Unfortunately our children are not natural born cleaners! They must be trained to pick up their toys, clean their rooms and complete their chores.

Cleaning Rooms:

Option #1 - The Weekly Cleanup Routine

Pick a day and time once per week, like Saturday morning, that the kids will have to clean their rooms. This is the only time it has to be done all week, but it must be done to your standards. Clearly outline your standards and expectations and inspect the room after the child is done. If it is not complete, do not argue with your child about what needs to be done. Point out what is still needed and count if the child tries to argue.

“Mom, I'm done with my room!”

“The bed still needs to be made.”

“Ug, its good enough Mom.”

(Turn to walk away.)

“My show is about to come on!”

“That's 1.”

“Fine!” (Goes back to finish.)

The reward, or natural reinforcer for this routine is the freedom to go play after the room is cleaned. Praise should be given when the child completes the task. If artificial reinforcers are needed with your child, keep a chart that is updated upon check out. (145)

Option #2 - Close the Door and Don't Look

Constantly nagging your children to keep their rooms clean will only drive everyone crazy. This option may seem like blasphemy to some parents, but you don't live in that room so if you can't stand to see a mess all the time than simply keep the door closed! (144)

Picking Up Around the House:

While the “close the door and don't look” method may work for the kids rooms, it doesn't work for the rest of the house. To ensure the kitchen, dining and living rooms do not become a dumping ground of kid clutter, consider trying the following “start” behavior tactics.

Kitchen Timer and Docking System-

This is especially effective when something needs to be cleaned spur of the moment.

“Guys, Grandma and Grandpa are stopping by in 20 minutes. I need all of your stuff out of the living room by then. I'm setting the timer.”

Use lots of praise when the task is finished and “dock” their pay if it is not finished and you have to finish it yourself. (146)

The Garbage Bag Method-

Set a time of the evening in which everything (toys, clothes, books, etc.) must be picked up from all “public areas” of the house. Once that deadline arrives, say 8 pm, pick up everything that has been left out and put it into a big garbage bag. The kids lose the rights to those things until 8pm the next night. Feel free to remind them at 7:50 that the deadline is approaching, but do not nag or lecture. Quietly pick up anything that is left out. If your child starts complaining or tantruming, count. (147)

Chores:

- With little ones under five, remember to constantly praise all efforts, but do not expect them to be able to stay on task for more than a few minutes.
- With kids over seven, hold regular family meetings to divide up chores and plan their execution.
- Charting is very effective for keeping track of what needs to be done and how well it is being done. Use natural reinforcers (praise and job satisfaction) initially, and artificial reinforcers when needed.
- The Docking System is useful when you end up doing something yourself. If your child seems happy to pay you to do the chore, increase the cost or dock TV/computer time.
- Pet care is a sticky one. Natural consequences are obviously out because Fido is the one that

suffers. The Docking System is the most effective, but charting, praise and a timer can be used as well. In general, if you aren't willing to take care of all of the pet's needs yourself, do not get one. (148-149)

3. *SUPPERTIME (151-156)*

Picky Eaters-

Kitchen Timer

Set the timer for 20 minutes and start out by serving the child a ridiculously small portion of the food she does not like. This may be three peas or two bites of meat. If the child finishes the food before the timer rings, she gets dessert. Do not force the child to eat, simply reward when she does. And do not comment about time running out or what a shame it will be if Sally doesn't get dessert. Let the timer and reward of dessert/consequence of no dessert do the work for you.

If the food hasn't been finished within 20 minutes cover it and put it on the counter. If Sally decides within the next half hour that she does indeed want to eat it, rewarm it and let her finish. If she still does not finish, no dessert. (152-154)

The 3-Out-Of-4 Rule

If the child finishes 3 out of 4 items on her plate she may have dessert. She must have one little taste of the fourth item. (154)

The Divide-And-Conquer Routine

The world will not end if the family doesn't all gather for dinner every single night.

- On stressful nights let the kids have dinner by themselves and (gasp!) in front of the TV.
- Each parent can take one child out to dinner for special one-on-one time.
- Let the kids eat wherever they want in the house as long as they bring their dishes back to the kitchen. (155-156)

Sibling Rivalry-

If your kids fight or goof around, those are "stop" behaviors and should be counted. Just make sure you are not counting the "start" behavior of eating dinner.

4. *HOMEWORK (157-162)*

Most kids would rather be playing or watching TV instead of doing homework so a daily routine is essential. Set up a space and time where homework will be done every day. The routine should look something like this; get home from school, have a snack, play for 30-45 minutes, finish school work before dinner.

Never allow the TV to be on during homework time. (157)

If you've implemented this routine and your child still isn't keeping up with his homework try some of the "start" behavior tactics.

Natural Consequences-

Try not to intervene and see if the child and teacher can work it out. The child must explain why her homework is not done and face the consequences the teacher implements. (158)

Assignment Sheets-

Assignment sheets keep track of exactly what is due for each subject. The teacher and child can keep sheets current while the parent checks off the progress at home. (159)

The PNP Method-

PNP stands for Positive-Negative-Positive. When your child brings home a test or completed school work always begin your feedback with a positive comment. (159)

"Wow! You got a "B" on your math test. Nice work! Looks like you had some trouble with fractions. Those can be tough. I'm so proud of how hard you've been working."

Charting-

Try using a point scale instead of stickers on a chart. Five points can be earned each day for:

Neatness	1 point
Correct	1 point
Thorough	1 point
No complaining	1 point
Starting on your own without being reminded	1 point

Use the reinforcers that are effective for your child when rewarding for chart completeness. (160-161)

If completing homework is a chronic problem there may be a bigger issue like ADD or a learning disability. Talk to your child's teacher and investigate further.

5. *GOING TO BED- AND STAYING THERE!* (163-170)

Most children go through a phase where they fight going to bed. You've probably heard it all- asking for a drink, needing to go potty, saying they heard a noise, etc.

Getting into bed-

- Set a strict bedtime and stick with it EVERY night. Bedtimes may vary depending on whether it is a weeknight or weekend, but they should be consistent. Bedtimes should never be open to negotiation.
- Standard bedtime routine- (example is for a 9 year old with a 9:00pm bedtime). Set a 30 minute timer at 8:30 and tell your child that it is time to get ready for bed. This means everything like PJs, teeth and potty needs to be done in the next 30 minutes. She will then need to report to you. If everything is done the remaining time until 9:00 will be time for the two of you to read a story or talk. This special time together serves as a natural reinforcer. (163-165)

Staying in bed-

- The longer a child is up testing and negotiating, the more reinforcement he gets for his behavior. Therefore you need to “cut them off at the pass.”
- Place a chair in the doorway facing into the hallway. Sit in the chair and place the child back in bed when he gets up, but do not say anything. This is not an appropriate time to try and explain to a young child why he must remain in bed. Keep doing this until the child falls asleep. After a week or two he should remain in bed with no fuss. After another week try removing the chair. The parental presence is reassuring and helps retrain the child to stay in bed.
- Charting can also be effective. (165-166)

Nighttime waking-

- Some nighttime waking is normal and has to be accepted. These are usually temporary stages.
- Don't go into the child's room unless absolutely necessary. Let your little one make a bit of noise or fuss a little. They may go back to sleep on their own given the chance. If she is really upset, go check things out.
- If your child appears in your room, always assume she must need to use the bathroom even if that is not what she is saying. Guide her into the bathroom and then back to bed without talking or asking questions. If necessary, sit in the doorway until she goes back to sleep.
- Do not turn on lights and be gentle and very quiet as you guide her back to bed.
- While it may be tempting in the middle of the night, do not make a habit of letting your child sleep with you. It is a very hard habit to break. (167-170)

VII. Strengthening Your Relationships with Your Children (173-212)

Finally, parenting job #3 is strengthening your relationship with your child, or in other words, bonding with your child. When you do the first two parenting jobs well, bonding will come naturally.

Sympathetic Listening (173-180)

When kids say things that we don't like, our knee-jerk reaction is to correct or scold.

- Hadley:** "My soccer coach is a jerk!"
- Mom:** "Don't say that, it's very mean."
- Hadley:** "No, you don't understand!" (Raising voice)
- Mom:** "That's 1."

Hadley is obviously very upset and while the way she is handling it is not ideal, she may just need a sympathetic ear and a little support.

- Hadley:** "My soccer coach is a jerk!"
- Mom:** "You sound pretty upset. What happened?"
- Hadley:** "He made me run laps all by myself today. In front of the whole team!"
- Mom:** "That must have been embarrassing."
- Hadley:** "Yeah! All because I was five minutes late."
- Mom:** "Sounds like you don't think that was very fair of him." (Hugs Hadley)
- Hadley:** "Exactly."

Sympathetic listening is listening to another person while attempting to see the world through their eyes. It is a way of listening that focuses on respecting the other person's feelings and beliefs. Notice how mom didn't get upset at Hadley for the way she was talking, but tried to understand what was troubling her instead. Mom identified Hadley's feelings of embarrassment and supported her with a hug. Mom did not lecture her about wearing

a watch or tell her “that’s what you get for being late.” Hadley already faced a natural consequence from her coach for being late, she does not want to come home and be scolded by mom too.

How Do You Do Sympathetic Listening? (175-177)

Sympathetic listening is a skill that does not always come naturally and has to be practiced with intention. It involves keeping our opinions to ourselves, which isn’t always easy for parents.

Openers: Comments or questions that are used to gain more information, or “the facts” from the child. An opener tells your child that you are ready to listen and can include non-verbal actions like putting down your phone or sitting next to the child. It can be as simple as “Yeah” “What?” or “Oh?” “What happened?” was mom’s opener in the example above.

Nonjudgmental questions: These questions are usually necessary to gather more information, especially if the child is very upset and not offering all of the facts. It’s absolutely essential that these questions are not judgmental in any way or the child may shut down. “What on earth made you do that!?” is not a good question. “What were you thinking at the time?” is better.

Reflective feelings: You are attempting to let the child know that you think you understand how he was feeling. “That must have been embarrassing.” is a reflective feeling statement. These statements help affirm a child’s feelings, reinforces self-esteem and helps diffuse negative emotions.

Checks and summaries: Short comments that show you are actively listening and understanding the child like “Sounds like you don’t think that was very fair of him.”

Sympathetic Listening and Counting (177-179)

Finding a balance between sympathetic listening and disciplining bad behavior can be tricky at first. Not every situation calls for listening.

Jacob: “Mom, you’re so dumb! You forgot to wash my jersey!”

Mom: “It sounds like you are upset right now.”

This example shows a sympathetic listening response that should have probably been counted. Count “attacks” of any kind. Many parents would go straight to “3” for the name calling.

On the other hand, it is not appropriate to count every time a child is upset. Your child will begin to feel like they cannot talk to you about their feelings for fear of being disciplined. If your child is upset, but not being disrespectful to you, try your sympathetic listening techniques to help him through his problem.

Over-parenting: The Opposite of Listening (179-180)

Over-parenting is constantly issuing unnecessary corrective or cautionary comments. It is basically “anxious parenting” and results in angry kids. Over-parenting send the message:

“I have to worry about you so much because you’re incompetent; there’s not much you can do on your own without my supervision and direction.” (179)

Try to bite your tongue when you feel any over-parenting trying to slip out unless the child really does need to be warned of impending danger. It’s okay to let natural consequences occur sometimes.

Real Magic: One-on-One Fun (181-184)

Participating in fun one-on-one activities with your child will guarantee great bonding time. Instead of only scheduling whole family activities, set one-on-one dates with each of your children where they receive all of your focus and sibling rivalry is not an issue. Do something you both enjoy such as going to a movie, out to dinner, on a bike ride or stay up late and play video games together. The more you and your child like each other and like being around each other, the more positively they will respond to your discipline.

Solving Problems Together (193-196)

As your household makes the transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, your kids will need to take on a more active role in the development of the rules and policies that will affect them. When children are included in the decision making process they are more likely to cooperate with new policies. This will also help develop their independence and provide them with the valuable skills they will need when they have spouses and families of their own. (193)

Family Meetings:

Begin these meetings around the first grade. They can happen every week or every other week. Meetings are run by a parent or older child who is responsible for keeping everyone on task, following an agenda, making sure everyone is heard and no one is interrupted. The agenda should include a problem from each family member that will be addressed.

1. One problem is described in detail by the family member who placed it on the agenda.
2. Go around the circle allowing each person a chance to give their thoughts regarding the problem.
3. Open the floor to possible solutions.
4. Agree upon a solution. Mom and Dad have final say if an agreement cannot be reached.
5. Write down the solution in a running document so anyone can look back upon it later.
6. Start at step one with the next problem on the agenda.

If a solution does not seem to be working, continue to revisit it at subsequent meetings until a successful solution is found. Family meetings are far from easy, and can be exasperating at times, but they are effective in solving family issues and preparing your children for the real world. (194-195)

1-on-1 Meetings:

These meetings can happen less frequently or on an as-needed basis. A 1-on-1 can be requested by either the parent or the child. Tell your child that you would like to set a time to talk and quickly describe what you would like to talk about so he knows what to expect.

1. Describe the problem without lecturing. “I’m worried that you aren’t sharing your toys with your friends when they are visiting.”
2. Ask your child for his input. “What do you think about this?”
3. Come up with solutions. Allow the child to weigh in first before giving your ideas. “How do you think we can change this and what can I do to help you?”
4. Agree on a specific solution.

Make sure you follow up with lots of praise when your child implements the solution and meet again if it doesn’t seem to be working. Remember to use your sympathetic listening skills and try to fit in some 1-on-1 fun right after the meeting. (196)

Kids, Tweens and Tech (197-204)

Startling statistics:

- 8-18 year olds spend an average of 7.5 hours per day in front of the TV and on their phones and computers.
- By the 8th grade, kids will have seen approximately 8,000 murders on television.
- The average child is exposed to pornography by the age of 11.
- The largest group of internet pornography viewers are between the ages of 12-17.
- 1 in 7 kids have received sexually suggestive remarks from a stranger via the internet. (197, 199)

Technology provides children with immediate, never-ending information and entertainment. Unfortunately the content children are consuming is provided by large companies that are driven by a bottom line, not what is necessarily in the best interest of the child. Problems arise when parents fail to properly supervise the content their children are consuming. (197-198)

While there are many positive aspects of technology, there are just as many negative aspects. Online predators, cyber bullying, wasted time, desensitization and lack of physical activity are just a few. Children often surpass their parents in computer skill level at a young age and spending too much time “plugged in” can hinder a child’s development of important life skills. (198-199)

What’s a Parent to Do?

Technology issues should be regularly addressed during family meetings. Issues to address include:

Selection and Setup

1. Computers should be kept in public areas
2. Installation of monitoring software that keeps a record of what your child is accessing
3. Installation of filtering software to block the access of inappropriate websites
4. Deactivate internet capabilities on gadgets that can't be filtered
5. Set privacy settings to the highest levels

Input to Your Home

1. Teach kids not to open emails or spam that may lead to porn sites or viruses
2. Check ratings of shows, movies and games
3. Set specific time limits for tech play (2 hours after homework is complete)
4. Specify what websites, movies and games are strictly off limits
5. Do not leave your internet devices lying around

Output From Your Kids

1. Discuss not giving out personal info online like last name, address, school name, pictures, etc.
2. Discuss not giving out passwords or changing settings without your permission
3. Never meet an online friend in person without you to accompany them
4. Set rules for gossip and cyberbullying
5. What to do if a pornographic image pops up- turn off screen and find a parent
6. Discuss file sharing, as some is illegal and some file sharing programs can share info from your computer that you do not want shared

Outside the House

1. All of the previous guidelines apply when outside of your home
2. Talk about how to handle peer pressure, role play possible situations your kids may encounter

Expect testing and manipulation to occur, especially as the children get older. Make sure you are not modeling excessive technology use yourself. Do not be intimidated if you don't understand some aspect of technology your child is using. Ask them to show you and check in with other parents about specific situations that they have dealt with.

VIII. Enjoying Your New Family Life (207-212)

Staying On the Wagon (207-210)

We are all human and slip up from time to time. While some folks follow 1-2-3 Magic religiously for years, some slip up and old negative behaviors arise. Over time many parents begin to talk too much or show too much emotion. New babies, travel, visitors and illness are all situations in which children may act out more and/or parents may not follow the rules consistently. (208)

As soon as you realize you've "fallen off the wagon," go back to the basics. Follow the No-Talking and No-Emotion rules consistently. Do not allow testing and manipulation tactics to be successful. Make time for parenting job #3 and work on your relationship with your child.

Accept that slipping up is normal and happens to many busy parents. Life is complicated and never fails to throw us curve balls. If it's been a while since you've used the 1-2-3 tactics, sit down and redo the Kickoff Conversation. (210)

Your New Life (211-212)

When 1-2-3 Magic is successfully implemented you can expect a more peaceful, fun and affectionate family. You will be in control and there will be less chaos. Discipline is gentle and efficient. The children know exactly what to expect. The focus is off of the yelling and arguing and on the fun and bonding. Ultimately the goal is to *enjoy* your children, because in the blink of an eye, they will be grown.

Quick Reference Sheets

*Print out sheets and keep them posted on the refrigerator
or snap a photo with your phone to easily reference away from home.*

Counting Basics

1. Hold up one finger. “That’s 1.”
Wait 5 seconds after continued behavior.
2. Hold up two fingers. “That’s 2.”
Wait 5 seconds after continued behavior.
3. Hold up three fingers. “That’s 3, take 5.”

DO NOT:

- Talk between counts
- Express emotion

DO:

- Remain calm & firm
- Give short explanation when behavior is new, unusual or dangerous
- Skip straight to “That’s 3, take 5” for serious offenses.

Strategies for Encouraging Good Behavior

1. *Praise (Positive Reinforcement)*

“Thanks for playing so quietly guys.”

“You did a great job cleaning up. I really appreciate the hard work.”

- Daily praise should outnumber negative interactions at a 3:1 ratio.

2. *Simple Requests*

Tone: businesslike and matter-of-fact.

Spontaneity: fix tasks into set routines.

Phrasing: “I want your room clean by six o’clock.”

3. *Kitchen Timers*

“You’ve got toys out. I’m setting the timer for 10 minutes. I bet you can’t beat it!”

4. *The Docking System*

If you don’t do the work, I’ll do it for you and you will pay me.

- If the dog is not fed by 6:00pm, mom will do it herself and charge Billy \$2.00.

5. *Natural Consequences*

Do not intervene and let your child experience the natural consequence of his actions.

- Tired of the battle to get her young son ready for his car pool every morning, one mom sent him to school in his footie pajamas when the car arrived.

6. *Charting*

- Begin with natural reinforcers- parental praise and the satisfaction of doing a good job. Use artificial reinforcers if necessary.
- Focus on three or four tasks at a time. If a task is completed for two weeks straight it can be removed from the chart.

7. *Counting Variation: Brief Start Behavior*

If the behavior takes less than 2 minutes, like hanging up a coat, it can be counted.

Major Offenses

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Major Consequences

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Medium Offenses

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Medium Consequences

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Minor Offenses

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Minor Consequences

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

