

## HELP FOR BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN (without spanking)

Changing children's behavior is easier if you identify the problem, figure out what is causing it, and make a plan to prevent it or stop it.

**Fill out the form "Identifying Behavior Problems of School-Age Children" and then go to the next page "Help For Home Behavior Problems of School-Age Children"**

### IDENTIFYING HOME BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate if your child has behavior problems in the following situations by circling YES or NO. If YES, state the specific misbehavior and circle the number indicating how severe the behavior is.*

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR	SEVERITY						
	YES	NO	Mild 1	2	3	4	Severe 5
<b>At bedtime</b>							
<i>State specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Won't go to bed when requested.</i>							
<b>At mealtime</b>							
<i>State specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Interrupts others</i>							
<b>While playing with other children</b>							
<i>State specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Often fights with other children</i>							
<b>When it is time to go to school</b>							
<i>State specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Is often late for the bus</i>							
<b>When asked to help or do chores</b>							
<i>State specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Ignores requests to help</i>							
<b>When it's time to do homework</b>							
<i>State a specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Forgets homework at school</i>							
<b>With a babysitter</b>							
<i>State specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Often sasses the sitter</i>							
<b>In public places (i.e. stores, church, restaurants, etc.)</b>							
<i>State specific misbehavior:</i>							
<i>Example: Refuses to sit quietly in church</i>							

## HELP FOR BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

Now that you have filled out the form – “Identifying Behavior Problems of School Age Children”, choose one problem you have identified as most bothersome or severe.

Keep the misbehavior you have identified in mind and think about the following:

**Children seek to meet needs through their behavior. Is there an emotional need, a physical need or an intellectual need that isn't being met? Here are a few things to think about:**

Is this behavior related to a need for more routine or more consistency?

Is this behavior related to a need for more attention?

Is this behavior related to a need for friends?

Is this behavior related to a fear of failing or of being humiliated?

Is this behavior due to a failure to understand or perform what is expected?

Is this behavior related to boredom?

- Ask the child why he/she is doing a specific thing you do not like. You may find the answer to questions above.

### **What can I do to help meet the need?**

If more routine is needed, provide it. Example: Establish regular times for doing homework and for bedtime and mealtimes. With homework, let the child help establish a regular time. Stick to the schedule. That will help prevent problems. Make sure to follow through with family rules and consequences in a consistent manner.

For attention-seeking problems, try giving the child some individual time each day to talk together with you and do things the child wants to do for some of that time.

If the child doesn't know how to do what you ask, teach the child the behavior you want to see and make sure he/she is able to perform it. Give praise when it is performed.

If making or keeping friends is a problem, discuss how to be a friend with the child and help the child develop a plan for being a friend.

If a child seems to fear failing or being humiliated, help identify a specific situation or skill that is troubling to the child and help the child develop the skills needed.

If the misbehavior seems related to boredom, help the child identify the feeling of boredom and what things he/she can do when feeling bored.

**Need more help? Try this next:**

**Reward a behavior which is opposite the behavior you want to stop. Be consistent in doing this.**

Example:

**Behavior you want to stop:** The child calls his sister names.

**Behavior you want to see:** Using kind words in speaking to his sister. Tell the child the behavior you want to see, give examples and praise him when you see him doing this.

**Behavior you want to stop:** The child does not pick up her toys when asked.

**Behavior you want to see:** The child picks up her toys when she is asked. Tell the child the behavior you want to see. Work together picking up toys a few times so she can see how you would like it done. Praise her for picking up her toys when requested.

- Give this effort a good trial – at least a couple of weeks.

**Add this if you are still having problems:**

(1) **Explain the specific misbehavior that is not allowed and why it isn't allowed**, (2) **state the new behavior that is expected instead of the misbehavior**, demonstrate it and give the child a chance to practice it if needed, and (3) **have a set consequence if the misbehavior continues after being corrected** such as a time-out of "x" minutes (one minute for each year of the child's age) or loss of a privilege and make sure the consequence is immediate, is not severe or prolonged such as long time-outs or spanking and involves something that seems appropriate for the child's age and development, and (4) **praise the new behavior you want to see more of**. Until the behavior you want is established, praise improvements that are evidence of moving toward the behavior you want to see.

**Be consistent in carrying out your plan.** Make sure the child knows what the plan is and make sure all adults in the family follow the plan. A daily behavior chart with stars or checks for following the rule may help reward the child for appropriate behavior.

**Behavior is learned and behavior can be unlearned. It takes patience and consistency in our actions.**

Questions? Contact [info@stophitting.org](mailto:info@stophitting.org)

See Answers for Parents at: <http://www.stophitting.org>

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