

## HOW TO GET YOUR CHILD TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR:

### MAXWELL'S SHORTHAND TO CHANGE

Remember, as Dr. Rocky Wilson, Parenting Meister, says: "You can't force any child to do anything. You just structure the choices..."

It takes **time** to structure choices because we have to really come to know our child and understand what motivates them. Time, for parents, is the scarcest commodity these days.

1. Always strive to set positive (+) rewards; avoid punishment. Punishment usually teaches children to learn to avoid, cheat and sneak around the rules.
2. Never make a request of a child (with whom you're having behavioral problems) without letting the child know what the consequence is of their CHOSEN action. Do not say simply: "Put your shoes in your room." Say: "When you put your shoes in your room, you will get... to keep watching TV, have an ice cream, play a game, etc.
3. The BEST reward is TIME with you. Get on their level; "When you finish your homework by 7 pm, we can play cards together." Even if you have grounded the child, have them garden with you, go on a date with you, clean a closet together. Cook or clean the kitchen **with** you.
4. The punishment should fit the crime: If they got something dirty, they clean it up. If they stayed out too late, they don't go out the next night. Reward good behavior after completing a (-) consequence, with (+) trust, e.g., "Let's try it again: you can go out tomorrow because you stayed in without argument tonight. When you obey the curfew tomorrow, you get to go out again..."
5. Always set a time limit for the consequence. "You are grounded until tomorrow."
6. FOR ADHD KIDS: Remember, research shows that often the ADD child will know what he should not do, but does it anyway. They "forget" or "space out" at the "point of performance." You can remind them with behavioral cues (They are cueless, not clueless): Write on their hand or a post-it:
  - a. "FT" To do something the FIRST TIME they're told to do it.
  - b. "TF" To THINK FIRST before they respond or act.
  - c. "Q" To remain quiet.
  - d. "O" To remember to organize—the desk, the backpack, etc.\*\*Reward them when they tell you they did!
7. Hold an ACADEMY: At an inconvenient time for the child, hold an academy to teach the proper behavior, saying, "Apparently you just have not practiced enough to know how to... get up and get ready on time, or to get in the car nicely..." (avoid shaming the child!). Re-enact with the child the exact steps of the appropriate behavior TEN TIMES! This is based on research showing that kids report they "don't remember" or "don't really know how to do it properly." Learning-disabled kids report problems remembering non-defiant, cooperative behavior. Repetition helps them remember!