

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

This is episode 52. Let's get started.

Smarter Parenting welcomes you to our podcast series, The Parenting Coach for ADHD. Here to heal and elevate lives is your Parenting Coach, Siopa Kinikini.

Hello, my friends. How is everyone doing? I hope everybody's doing great. I am doing fantastic and actually today, we are going to be talking about one of the most critical skills that all parents need to know how to do effectively, which is [Correcting Behaviors](#). So before we begin, I do need to give a shout out to our sponsor, the Utah Youth Village.

Smarter Parenting is a division of the Utah Youth Village, which is a charity and their mission is to help heal and elevate the lives of children and families using proven family solutions. To keep this going, we actually depend on the donations of people like you. So feel free to give a donation to Smarter Parenting. You can find a place to give us a donation on the Smarter Parenting website so we can continue to update the website, and create new content and keep this podcast going.

Now let's talk about Correcting Behaviors. This actually is a skill that is very, very important for all parents to learn to master, but there are some really complex elements to it that we need to talk about. We really need to sit down and chat, and have a talk about Correcting Behaviors because in addition to doing the steps to this skill, this behavioral skill that you will be implementing, you have to do an evaluation of where you are emotionally in dealing with your child's misbehavior.

Usually what happens is when a child misbehaves, parents go into reaction mode and the reaction mode is often to squash the behavior immediately. That can have a lot of different manifestations. In many instances, parents talk louder. They yell. They scream. They become upset. The way their facial expressions are. The tone of their voice. Their body language.

I mean the way that they're communicating can actually be very detrimental to a child who is misbehaving, and actually help escalate that to something more severe. So using [Correcting Behaviors is a skill that will help your child and you correct the behavior and teach what they should be doing instead](#). It takes out that emotional piece so you are not caught up in this whirlwind of emotion. Now I know that this is a difficult concept for a lot of parents because the emotions are really upfront and in your face.

One of the most effective things that I have always taught parents is that they need to be able to remove emotional responses from what is happening around them. What this does is it helps children think more logically that circumstances and things that are happening, are happening and they may be beyond their control. However, an individual still has choices they need to make in how they react to those things.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

Think of how powerful it is for a child to see all of the chaos that is going on, and then to see their parent being able to maintain composure, being calm and being the element of peace and tranquility amid the chaos. What that does for a child is it helps them realize hey, I don't need to be sucked up into all of this. I actually have control of how I'm going to respond to things.

So it's one of those things that children will learn by seeing you doing, but again, it takes you as a parent to be able to maintain and control your own emotional responses to things that actually may be very triggering for you. Be aware and do a self-assessment on yourself. When my child misbehaves, how do I react to that? If you are able to see that and be able to take the emotional response, your emotional response out of it, then you're going to be a far more effective parent and actually, your child is going to grow into a far more effective adult, because they're not controlled by the environment around them.

They actually are able to deal with it in their own way. Super, super important. Now [Correcting Behaviors](#) does depend on you as a parent to do this. In many ways, the analogy I've used with parents is that Correcting Behaviors is the dance and sometimes your child will want to lead, but you need to be the one to lead and you need to be the one that maintains control and composure, and help them through it.

Now again, this is where the children may be super active and wanting to do things their own way and reacting to everything going around them, that's their decision to go ahead and do that. Your ability to maintain and just keep doing these steps is going to be super, super important. So be aware. You want to also be able to have these steps memorized. [So print this out, the steps to Correcting Behaviors so you can have easy reference to it, and what you need to do is actually work through it beforehand, before a situation arises.](#)

Many times, in fact, more often than not, parents wait until a behavior happens before correcting it. We talked about that in the previous podcast, which was about [Preventive Teaching](#). In Preventive Teaching, we actually are anticipating things that may go wrong and we're trying to address them beforehand. In Correcting Behaviors, we're actually addressing behaviors when they're happening in the moment. So again, what we talked about in [Preventive Teaching](#) is far more effective. Again, Benjamin Franklin's quote, "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." If we're able to prevent things, that's fantastic. However, we cannot anticipate everything a child is going to go through, or the meltdowns that they will experience and that's where Correcting Behaviors comes in.

So let's say you did everything you possibly could with Preventive Teaching and preparing your child for the week or for the day, and now your child, what you do is you move into Correcting Behaviors. This is a skill that you are going to be using now, and so you're going to start to teach to them how to correct that behavior. Now let me give you the steps to Correcting Behaviors because the steps are important. There are seven steps, and you can find this in the video lesson on the Smarter Parenting website. If you haven't watched it, if you haven't watched it, go back and watch it. It's an excellent video. Josh, who is the parent that teaches the skill is

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

fantastic, and he explains how he's used this and the video also contains two examples. One with little children, where a parent has to correct their behaviors because they're arguing over a video game.

Then a second example, which is a true-life example of a mother and her teenage son who is also dealing with a video game, and she needs him to do something else and then he starts to react. So there are two great examples in that video that will be very helpful for you, but let me go through the steps just so you are aware of them and we will work through them. So the first one is you need to get the child's attention.

Sometimes when they're in a tantrum or an excited mode, they don't pay attention to things, but you need to be able to get their attention. Call their name out, or get down on their level and make eye contact. So get the child's attention is one. Number two is express empathy. What that does is it breaks down the walls. "So I know you're struggling with this. I know you're struggling to keep the Lego with yourself." You're expressing empathy in order to break down some of the walls.

When people feel understood, they tend to be more receptive to feedback and children especially. So that's why that is step number two. Step number three, you're going to describe the bad behavior. Now, this goes back to [Observe and Describe](#). What did you observe and then describe it. So you're going to describe the negative behavior that they have exhibited. Number four, you're going to deliver a consequence. So a consequence, of course, you want to give a consequence that's appropriate for the behavior that they're having, and that is effective for the child. The fifth step is you are going to then describe what you want them to do instead. So what they should have done instead of behaving the way that they did, then you will be giving them a reason. Step number six is give a reason. This reason has to be important for your child. Then step seven is you want to practice the new behavior, what they should be doing instead.

If they're able to do this, you want to be able to reduce the consequence. I know you heard me right? You want to reduce the consequence. That's going to be a tricky one for a lot of parents, because they're like, "They earned a consequence. That's all there is and I'm not going to reduce." I've heard that a million times. Let me give you the reason why it's important to reduce the consequence because it proves that you are on the side of your child in helping them learn a behavior. It also emphasizes the idea that their behavior and adjusting their behavior is more important than the bad behavior. Being able to make a small correction deserves some type of reward, or deserves some type of acknowledgment, or some type of a reduction in the consequences.

If you have a hang-up with that, I can only tell you what's been proven in the [Teaching-Family Model](#) is that if you reduce the consequence, if they're able to do the right thing, it actually increases their ability to repeat the positive behavior when that problem arises. Okay, we've gone through the steps. I'm going to say them again because I think it's super important for you

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

to get it in your head, but if you don't, print it out. It's over on the Smarter Parenting website under this specific lesson of Correcting Behaviors. Step one, get the child's attention. Step two, express empathy. Step three, describe the bad behavior. Step four, deliver a consequence. Number five, describe what you want them to do instead. Step six, give them a meaningful reason to do the new behavior. Then step seven, you're going to practice it or Role-play it.

Now, as you can see in this skill, we are actually incorporating all of the other skills that we have been talking about previously in other podcasts, and they're actually included in this skill. So we have the Effective Communication. We have some praise going on. We have Preventive Teaching in a way because we're having them prepare for a future event where it might happen again. We're [Role-playing](#). I mean, think about it. We have been going through these skills for the past couple of weeks, and now we're incorporating all of them into this skill of Correcting Behaviors. The same thing happened with Preventive Teaching. We were incorporating all these pieces, and now it's come to fruition on how they work together, how they effectively work together. Fantastic stuff. I know.

I know your mind is probably blown by now, but as you can see, we have incrementally increased our ability and our effectiveness by focusing on specific skills, and now integrating them into a larger whole and seeing how they work together. Now Correcting Behaviors is a tricky skill. Largely again, because of the emotional component where a parent just wants to correct the behavior, and correct it immediately.

I get that. I get it. I mean I've worked with children, I have a child, I've seen it. Parents like to get the correction down immediately. However, incorporating all of these keeps your child engaged in the process, gives them a reason why the change in behavior is important, and actually helps to increase your relationship, the effectiveness and the power of your relationship with your child.

So following these steps, super, super, super important for you to do. Let's go through and actually talk about what it looks like, or how it looks like when you are doing this skill. We need a situation, so let's take a common situation where children are not sharing something together. In effect, a child actually steals something from another child. This is related to the example that's in the video, but we're going to use it for here so you can see what it looks like and how fast it can go. These steps, it seems like it's a lot, but however, you can cover a lot of these steps fairly quickly, especially with the younger children who don't have the attention span for you to explain, explain, explain. So, let's say that I have two children. One child has a toy, the other one comes over and steals the toy and pushes the other child down. That's the situation.

What I would do in following the steps, step one get the child's attention. So I'd say, "Samantha." Name of my child. Samantha, then I would express empathy. "I know you want to play with that toy. I know you want to play that doll. What you did just now is take the toy without permission, and you pushed your sister to the ground. Because of that, you have the consequence of not being able to play with the toy at all. What you should have done is you

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

should have asked your sister if you could play with the toy together. The reason that that's important is if you ask, your sister will share with you and then you guys can play together, and you both can have the toy. If you're willing to practice what you should do, which is ask your sister if you can play with the toy, then I will give you some time to play with the toy later after your sister has played with it first."

I have gone through all of the steps and that didn't take me more than a minute really to go through, but I got the child's attention. I expressed empathy. "I know you wanted to play with the toy." I described the bad behavior, but what you did was boom, boom, boom. Deliver a consequence. "Because you did that, you have earned a consequence which was you can't play with the toy at all." Then I described what my child should have done. What you should have done was ask your sister for permission to play with the toy. Now I gave a reason. "If you ask your sister, then you would be able to both play with the toy, but now we're going to practice it." What we're practicing again is focusing in on what I want my child to do, instead of the bad behavior. Can you see how that works? You can actually use those words too.

In fact, I highly suggest you do use those words. Give the child's attention. Call their name. Be sure that they're paying attention to what you're saying. You want to express empathy. Describe the behavior. So that's Observe and Describe. What you did, and you're describing very specifically.

Deliver a consequence. Use these words, "Because you did that, you have earned a consequence. Because you took the toy away because you hit your brother. Because you threw a Lego, you have earned a consequence." Now think about the wording in that, "You have earned a consequence." It's not about me. It's about their behavior and what they did, and that they earned a consequence. You may think that's weird verbiage, but actually, it's super effective in helping your child understand that the consequence is something that they are getting, because of something that they did.

It doesn't make you the consequence. It makes their behavior the result of a consequence that is happening. So use those words, because you... Explain the behavior, you have earned a consequence and then describe what the consequence is. After you describe the consequence, then you want to describe what you want. What you should have done. Use those words. That's in step number five, what you should have done and then describe the behavior. Be very descriptive, because children are concrete thinkers, and then you want to give a reason of why doing that behavior is important for your child. After you explain that, you say, "If you're willing to practice what you should have done, then we'll reduce the consequence." That actually gives them motivation to actually practice it with you. Yeah, I know. It seems like a lot of steps, but if you notice you can do this fairly quickly.

One thing that I do recommend for parents is to be very vigilant about following each of the steps. If your child becomes argumentative during the middle of this, don't go off-script. Continue to go through the flow of things. If your child becomes belligerent, you want to

continue that and you want to maintain your calm and your peace. If your child begins acting out to a point where they're just completely not paying attention to what you're talking about, it may be time to step out and take a timeout for both you and your child. Take a break and then come back to it. In fact, the second example on the video lesson, you're going to see a parent actually do this. Go through this process, where the child throws a mini tantrum or throws a tantrum and the mom actually addresses the behavior later. That's okay. That is absolutely okay. Do not go off-script.

Children are notorious for throwing things out there, whatever to get out of whatever you are addressing at the time. Don't go off-script when you're using Correcting Behaviors. If things escalate, take a break but don't go off-script. Okay. It was funny, I was working with a teenager who was struggling with this, and she was fascinating to me because when mom would go in and start to correct behaviors for her, correct her the way that she talked to her, it was very rude. She actually would start throwing up past things to her mom. So her mom would be like, I'm not going to say her name, but we'll call her Barbara. We'll call her Barbara. She would say, "Barbara, I know you're upset with me right now." That's step one and step two. "What you're doing is you're raising your voice to me, and you're calling me swear words."

She's describing the bad behavior. "Because you are doing that, you have earned the consequence of..." Mom would give a consequence, but Barbara, she knew her mom like most kids do, and they know what buttons to push. So Barbara was like, "Well, at least my husband didn't leave me." I mean, she started throwing out all this stuff like baggage that was emotionally triggering for mom. So the biggest thing that we worked on with mom was learning how to control her emotional responses to what was happening, and to stay on script. So she's like, "Well at least my husband didn't leave me." Of course, she wasn't married, but she knew that that was a soft spot for mom. We worked on that, and so what mom was able to do is just stay on script. In fact, having this skill and going through each of the steps, and just being almost robotic with it in a way helped her from reacting emotionally.

It actually is super helpful for you as a parent to be able to just continue in using this even though your child is going to try, and pull you and distract you in different areas. Stay consistent. Your consistency is going to teach them that hey, they don't have the power. Again, this is your demonstration to them that things can be chaotic, but you don't need to be chaotic. You don't need to be a part of that. You can address those things in your own way, and on your own terms. That's really what being an adult is all about, right? Is being able to make intelligent decisions without becoming emotionally wrapped up into it. Super, super helpful skill for you to have. So Barbara, for example, she actually began to escalate things even more by bringing up past topics. "Well at least I didn't go to jail like you did, I mean, who are you to tell me what to do, because I've never been to jail, but you have and you have all these problems."

She started throwing all this stuff, but mom, I'm so, so proud of her. After we were working on her emotional responses to things that may occur, mom just stayed on script. She would actually just repeat step number four. Because you did this, you have earned this consequence.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

Because you did... She did not veer off. Now, some parents are baited by this and they feel like, "Well, now she's attacking that, so I need to adjust and attack that." No, focus in on the original behavior that you're trying to address. Always bring it back to that original behavior, even if your child escalates it to other things. If the only reason that you would go off script is if your child is actually doing something that endangers themselves or endangers someone else, so those are the only reasons that you would go off-script.

Focus in on the original behavior and stay focused on that behavior. You want to bring them back, bring them back to what you're talking about. Otherwise, if they throw you a bone and you bite, or a hook and you bite it, they're going to pull you anywhere they want. They can do it and they will do it, because they're kids and they want to get what they want. Focus in on the original behavior and address it. Address it. Address it. Address it. And bring it always back to what they did. This is where Observe and Describe is especially powerful because when you're observing and describing the behavior you can always go back to it and say, "Okay, this is what you did. This is what I observed, this is what I'm describing." They have no room to argue with you about what it was, and where you're at.

So you're going to be the stable one in this dance. You're going to be the one consistently, as what happens when you're dancing with somebody, someone has to adjust. What we're doing is we're being so consistent and so focused in on what we're doing so your child is going to have to adjust, which is great because want to address the behavior. Now if your child does this and they're trained to pull you out and whatever, and you're staying consistent, don't let the emotions come out and don't react to those things that they may say, which may be hurtful or painful or hard to hear. Just stay consistent. Focus in on the behavior, the original behavior that you're addressing. It's all you're going to focus on. I know this is really difficult. I know. I know. I know and in fact, a lot of times even professionals struggle with children who do this.

However, using this and going through each of the steps and knowing them well, like so well that they're memorized, you're going to be a powerhouse in changing your child's behavior when they are acting out. Oh my goodness, this is great information. I know you're just probably eating it up. Anyways, so deliver a consequence and again for the consequence, you want to make the consequences appropriate for the behavior. You want to describe what you want them to do.

Again, this is part of Preventive Teaching where we talked about you always want to explain to your child what you want them to do, and never what you don't want them to do. Super difficult. I know a lot of parents are like, "Don't do that. Don't do that, don't do that, don't do that. Don't do that." I get it, but when you start saying don't do things, you actually are helping your child imagine doing those things.

Always, always tell them what they should be doing. This is what you should be doing. Well, the verbiage for that would be, "What you should have done, what you should have done" and then explain the behavior, and then the reason this is important. This is step number six. The reason

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

this is important, and you want to use a reason that's meaningful for your child. Then if you're willing to practice this with me, then we can reduce the consequence. Use those words, because I think actually having you have a script maybe more powerful for you to be able to stay in line with the skill. You want to be consistent with the skill, and you want to just be able to recall it without being pulled here or there. Children, the older they get become more sophisticated in their ability to distract and to throw you off. It really is up to you to stay on track.

If you need a timeout to regroup, then do that. I'm going to make the same recommendation that I made with Preventive Teaching, which is you really need to print out the steps, but you need to [write this down for a specific behavior that your child is struggling with](#). [You need to write down what you're going to say, what the consequences are beforehand](#). You need to do this all beforehand, so you are prepared for when this happens and you'll know exactly what to do. Again, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So if you're willing to take five, 10 minutes to sit down, jot this out, write it out, come up with the reasons that are meaningful for your child. If you write it out and get it down in your brain so it becomes muscle memory for you to do, then when a problem arises, you will be absolutely prepared to deal with that behavior.

This is particularly effective for children with ADHD, and let me tell you how. Children with ADHD tend to go wherever the wind blows. When you are able to refocus things and bring things back, what you're doing is you're helping your child also refocus and bring things back to the essentials. That is a skill that they are going to have to learn, is that even though there are all these distractions out there, and even though there are shiny things and cool things and all these other things happening around them, they have to learn what is the essential thing that needs to be addressed at this moment. By you being able to do that, focusing in on the behavior, the one behavior that you're addressing and not being distracted by everything else is going to teach them hey yeah, there are a million things, but I need to be focused on this right now. Right now.

I have seen this skill work with a young girl that I was working with. She was about six years old, and she was throwing a tantrum to the point that she actually was becoming violent, which was you don't think that a young child could do a lot of destruction unless you know a young child, and you know how much destruction they can cause. She was being very, very destructive actually. Using this, I noticed that in the second step, which was expressing empathy, she would stop and look. You could tell there was almost a connection there for a moment, and so what I did was I continued with the skill. Went down to the consequence, described what she should do, but I always went back to the empathy with her because that's what seemed to catch her attention and it was super helpful for her. I would go through each of the steps. I didn't skip anything.

I would go through each of them and told her if she wanted to practice, we would practice what she should do instead. Now when I was working with this child and she was behaving this way, it was actually a reaction to another behavior. So again, the temptation for the parents was, well now she's acting violently, let's address the violence. I'm like, "Okay, we can address the

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

violence, but we need to refocus her back on what caused this." Now if that sounds familiar, we're looking again at the [ABC's of Behavior](#). We're looking at the actual behavior and the antecedent to that behavior, and addressing that so the tantrum will not return later. Can you see how that works? Yes, we will focus on the tantrum. We can focus on the tantrum, but we need to go back and focus in on the original behavior that caused her to escalate into the tantrum.

I know it sounds really odd because you're like, "Well, why don't we just address the tantrum?" Well, because that doesn't refocus her on the thing that actually led up to it. If we can address what led up to it, the tantrum will disappear, but we can also deal with the tantrum at a later time. We want to help her refocus in on the behavior, the initial, the first behavior that started all of this and bringing her back to that so we can address it. This stuff is just so amazing, I'm not kidding. I mean once you see this in action, you're just like, "Holy cow, this is amazing stuff." Look, you're getting it all for free. Again, I got to give a plug out to people who support us, because we're so grateful here at Smarter Parenting for your help. So please continue to donate and give us some help, so we can continue to share this content with families around the world who can benefit from all of this knowledge for free, right? It's fantastic.

Anyways, Correcting Behaviors, print it out, write down exactly what you're going to do and what you're going to say in each of those. Use the verbiage that I gave you, which is step one, say their name. Step two, express empathy. I know that it's hard for you. I know that this is difficult. I know that you're struggling. You can use those words. Number three, describe the bad behavior which is Observe and Describe. Number four, deliver a consequence. Because you dah, dah, dah. Describe the behavior, you have earned the consequence of, or you have earned a consequence and described the consequence. Step five, describe what you want. It's important for you to describe what they should do instead. So you'd say, "What you should have done was..." Then described the behavior, and then you want to give a reason. "The reason that this is important..." Give a reason.

Now if you practice it with me now, we can reduce the consequences. If we practice, describe the behavior, then we can reduce the consequence. You're not going to eliminate the consequence. I do want to stress that. Don't eliminate the consequence, but you can reduce it, reduce it, reduce it. Again, print it out, write it out. Be sure all the pieces are there and again, we're spending five, 10 minutes now so when it does happen we are prepared and we are ready. We're ready for battle. Ready to just plug it in and go. This skill is a changer. It is an absolute changer. Again with Preventive Teaching, this is a skill that I teach all parents that they need to know and master well because you are going to be correcting behaviors in your children for a long time. As they are developing and growing, they're going to need the correction from you.

By using these steps, you are actually helping to encourage a better communication, and a better relationship between you and your child through this process of learning what they need to do and how to be effective. So if you haven't seen the video, jump over to Smarter Parenting

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

website, watch the video, watch it multiple times. Great examples on there, and the narrator, our parent Josh is fantastic. He's really good in explaining it. Then there's some additional helps on the website under this skill that you can use to help teach it to your child as well and help you. Remember, maintain your composure. It's a dance and you need to be leading the dance. So maintain composure. Your child's going to want to try some other things, that's okay. Stay on-script, stay in step, your child's will adjust. They'll begin to adjust to what needs to be done, and it will continually build your relationship, positive relationship with you and your child.

Okay, that's it for me for this week. So Correcting Behaviors, go back and listen to the other skills also to refresh your memory on the [ABC's of Behavior](#), [Observe and Describe](#), [Effective Praise](#), [Effective Communication](#), [Preventive Teaching](#). I mean all of those skills are integrated into this skill. As you can see, they're all interrelated with each other. They all support and help each other, and it's just an arsenal of tools that you can use as a parent to help your children grow up to become healthy and successful adults. Next time we will be talking about another skill. What makes consequences effective? We also are going to be covering how to help your child make better decisions. So those are coming up in the next few podcasts. How to really systematically help your child make great decisions, and then that will be followed by consequences and rewards. How we can make those more effective in helping our children, and shape their behaviors.

All right, thanks for joining me and I will hear from you again soon. If you need a 15-minute coaching session, feel free to register online. I would love to communicate with you directly and to answer any questions you may have. All right, that's it for me and I will talk to you soon.

RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THIS PODCAST

[Behavior skills of the Teaching-Family Model](#)

[Behavior skill: Correcting Behaviors](#)

[Steps of Correcting Behaviors](#)

[Correcting Behavior assignment: child](#)

[Correcting Behavior assignment: teen](#)

[Blog post: Correcting Behaviors vs punishing-a better way to discipline my child](#)

[Blog post: 3 tips for Correcting Behaviors](#)

[Behavior skill: Preventive Teaching](#)

[Behavior skill: Effective Praise](#)

[Behavior skill: ABC's of Behavior](#)

[Behavior skill: Effective Communication](#)

[Behavior skill: Role-playing](#)

[Behavior skill: Observe and Describe](#)

[The Teaching-Family Model](#)

[Ep #46: Understanding the ABC's of Behavior](#)

[Ep #47: Mastering Observe and Describe](#)

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

[Ep #48: What it takes to change behavior](#)

[Ep #49: Compound effect of Effective Communication](#)

[Ep #50: Changing behavior through praise](#)

[Ep #51: Finding Success with Preventive Teaching](#)

[Free 15-minute ADHD coaching mini-session](#)

[Podcast sponsor Utah Youth Village](#)

[Support the ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast. Donate.](#)

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#) with Siope Kinikini

© Smarter Parenting 2019