

Ep #73 Preventing temper tantrums using behavior skills

Today we are going to be talking about "What skills should I use?"

This is episode 73, let's begin.

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.

Last week I was able to coach a parent by the name of Sharon and she has a 10-year-old daughter who struggles with ADHD. The issue that she was working through was her child had [tantruming behaviors had usually escalated throughout the day](#). So it started off in the early morning and as the day progressed it would just increasingly get worse. And the reason that I'm sharing this [coaching session](#) with you is that this is a very common issue that a lot of parents have with children. Children who have tantruming behaviors the beginning of the day. They go to school. Then they return home and the tantruming continues to escalate throughout the day. I wanted to share this particular coaching session with you because I know so many moms can relate. In fact, Sharon is not the only parent to call in with this issue for the free coaching sessions. So this should be very helpful to a lot of you in using Preventive Teaching.

[So what you are going to hear is how we use the skill of Preventive Teaching in order to help Sharon and her daughter work through the issue of tantruming behaviors.](#) We came across this specific skill because it was something that Sharon and I determined would be the best approach in working with her child in addressing this issue. I'm going to go through the steps of Preventive Teaching because it's important for you to understand what we practiced in the steps that we use.

[There are six steps to Preventive Teaching.](#)

Step number one, say something positive about your child's behavior or express empathy about how they may be feeling. Step number two, describe how you want your child to act. Avoid telling your child what you don't want. Step number three, give your child a meaningful reason to behave that way. This reason must be meaningful to your child. Step number four, practice the expected behavior. This is the most important part of Preventive Teaching is practicing. Step number five, find something positive they did during the Role-play and correct only if necessary. Step number six, continue to practice once the child has done it correctly practice it at least four times.

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So we reviewed these steps and we talked about how she was going to introduce this idea that her daughter needed to communicate with her more appropriately when she returned home from school and she asked about homework, right? Sharon and I, we started to Role-play this. [And I actually gave her the example of how I would do it and then she, we reverse Role-played it and then she practiced it the way that she would do it with her daughter in preparation of her being able to do it with her daughter.](#) So, let me walk you through how I did it with her.

With Sharon I said, okay, "Our ultimate goal is to teach her how to respond appropriately to us when we return home when she returns home from school." Once she is in a calm place and they're going to teach this skill, I as Sharon or I as a parent would begin with step one. I would either say something positive about the child's behavior or express empathy. I could say something like because this is at a neutral time when we're practicing the skill.

Say something like, "You know, I really appreciate when you come and sit quietly so we can communicate and talk. You know. Thank you for coming and sitting quietly. Thank you for being here and being attentive to what we need to be doing. And thank you for being here so we can work through this issue." That's being positive. Or you can do something empathetic as step number one, which is, "I know that you've had a long day. I appreciate you coming in and sitting here with me."

That's actually a really good way to start step one. At least that's the advice that I gave her in our Role-play.

Step number two, describe how you want your child to act. So for step number two, I would describe the situation and describe what I expected. With Sharon I said, "Okay, when you come home from school, what I need you to do is when I ask you about your homework, I need you to speak, respond to me in a positive way. Calm voice tone and say, 'Yes, I have done the homework.' Or, 'No, I have homework that I still need to do.'" That's it. Calm voice tone and say, "Yes, I have completed my homework. I've done my homework." Or two "No, I have not done my homework and I still have homework left to do."

Notice how I did not go into what I don't want her to do. Okay. That's a pitfall for a lot of parents who are like, "I don't want you coming home yelling at me. I don't want you coming home saying things to me or throwing an attitude." That is not step two. What we want to be able to do is we want to describe to them what we want them to do.

In this example with Sharon, I told her exactly what I would want her to do, so it's very clear. Step one and step two or covered. Step three. Now I have to give a meaningful reason of why it's important for her daughter to come back and respond in a calm voice tone saying, "Yes or no." So why would it be important for Sharon's daughter? I had to ask Sharon, what is meaningful to your daughter?

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This is a tricky part for parents as well because a lot of times we give reasons as parents that are meaningful for us, for the way a child should behave. Finding that reason was very important. What is important to her child?

I asked Sharon, "What does your child do in her free time?" Because whatever she chooses to do in her free time is of interest to her. She said, "Well, she likes to play a video game. She likes to read books. She likes to do a lot of different things." I'm like, "Okay, well choose one." We decided on reading a book. So more time to read a book.

So in step three, I would say after following up with yes and no answers in a calm voice tone, I would give a meaningful reason. Which was, "When you're able to respond to me in an inappropriate calm voice tone saying yes or no, that allows us to end the communication quicker so you can have more time to read."

Or you could say something like, "Well, when you respond appropriately in a calm voice tone saying yes or no, that gives me the feeling that you are paying attention and that I want to give you more time to do things you like. Like reading a book." Now that one is kind of more leaning to what the mom wants, like "I want you," but it's also ties into the reason why it's important for her daughter to respond with a yes or no answer.

Giving a meaningful reason will be very important. As a parent, you should really focus on step three. Actually all the steps are important, but those are the ones that I have noticed over the years are tricky for parents. They're tricky. Give a meaningful reason is step three.

Now, step four is practicing this skill. In this example with Sharon, Sharon being the daughter and me being Sharon, I would practice it and I'd say, "Okay, let's practice saying, 'Yes, I've completed my homework,' in a calm voice tone, or 'No, I still have homework I have left to do.'"

I would say, "Okay, you're going to be Sharon." So Sharon would play Sharon and I would play the daughter and I would say, "Okay, let's pretend it's the end of the school day. Ask me if I have finished my homework." Then Sharon asked me and I responded in a calm voice tone. Now, remember I'm just demonstrating this so Sharon can know what it sounds like and what it feels like. We practiced it so she can get a sense for it. Then we switched roles where Sharon played her daughter and I played Sharon.

Now, that seems a little confusing, but this is the idea behind practice. The practice actually needs the parent to portray the child first. This is called a reverse Role-play. In a reverse Role-play, what this allows a child to do, is it allows them to experience the right way that it should be done because the parent is demonstrating it.

The parent is actually demonstrating what they want. I demonstrated for Sharon exactly what I wanted her to do first. Then we switched it and then Sharon had the opportunity to mimic what I had just done as the child. That is part of step four, which is the practice part.

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Step five is to find something positive. While I was practicing it with Sharon I'd say, "That's great. That's exactly what I wanted." Now there was a time when Sharon did something that I wasn't sure about, which was she responded, "Yes or no," but she didn't give me any feedback as far as needing more time to do homework cause that's what I wanted in step two. "No, I still have homework I have left to do." She just responded with a "No." So we practiced it again and I gave her that feedback.

I'm like, "Well, you said no, but you didn't tell me you needed more time to do the homework. And the reason that that's important to me as a parent is yes and no are just one-word answers. What I want is for the daughter actually to communicate in more than just yes, no. Which is why it was important for me to ever say no, I still have homework left to do."

Anyways, step five is to find something positive they did during the Role-play and [praise them](#) and that's something that I did. Then I found that I needed to correct her when she didn't respond with, "No, I still have homework left to do." Now that's just nuance for me. That's just something that I wanted during this Role-play. But this is what we were practicing and I wanted her to practice it the way that I had actually demonstrated it. I wanted her to do it exactly the way that I did it so she gets a feel and she knows what it's like.

Now, step number six was to continually practice it. So we practiced it multiple times and we got to a point where Sharon was comfortable enough doing it with me, that she was ready, when it was time to practice it with her child.

Those are the steps to Preventive Teaching and how I used it with Sharon in teaching her how she should respond and react to her child. And actually how to use the skill in teaching her child how to respond to her. I Role-played it with Sharon. Sharon Role-played it with me now she's going to Role-play it with her daughter. That is the framework that we established. The reason that we did that was to help Sharon see exactly how to do it, to get a feel for it.

When the time came she couldn't be sidetracked into other things or be distracted by anything. She knew exactly what needed to be done when it was time to teach her child how to respond to her appropriately. Can you see the beauty of that and the benefit of being able to Role-play something? When you're able to Role-play something, it keeps you focused on the task at hand. So regardless of what her daughter would be doing or may be doing during the Role-play, Sharon, because she's already experienced it, is able to keep things focused into what she needs to get done during the Role-play. It's a beautiful, beautiful skill.

Okay, so let's talk a little bit about the Role-play. Sharon and I worked through it and we were able to Role-play this and she was comfortable enough to try it. And then the idea is for her to practice it with her child and then to make it easy initially during the Role-play. Make it easy for her to be able to do that Role-play with her child by keeping it as simple as possible and then increasing the difficulty.

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Now we practiced it and made it simple and easy initially. The way that I did that by making it simple and easy was we just went through the skill exactly the way that I had just described it. Then to help Sharon delve deeper into what may possibly happen during this practice with her daughter. I started to make things difficult by throwing an attitude during step two, "Which was describe how you want your child to act. Avoid telling your child what you don't want."

Sharon would Role-play it with me and then I would throw an attitude like I do one of those things kids do where they, you know, go like, "Whatever." Right? We've all heard it. We've all heard it. To see how Sharon would react to that. Sharon was able to remain focused on the skill that she was teaching and she would address that behavior.

She would address it. Say, "Okay," but she would stay focused on the six steps of Preventive Teaching. As Sharon was able to navigate this change in attitude and my approach, then we practiced it again. This time I changed it up for step number three, "Which is give your child and meaningful reason to behave that way."

Sharon gave me a reason, giving me more time to read my books. And I responded with, "Well I don't care about reading books. I don't care about that." Okay. Sharon adjusted to that and she chose a different meaningful reason, which was play a game. Okay. What we were doing during this practice was we started off doing the skill in a very simple way without any type of distractions. Then as she became familiar and more comfortable using the skill, I started to throw in a little bit of attitude that teenagers have. I started to throw in excuses that teenagers have.

And all of this was meant to help her stay focused on what she needed to do with the skill and to keep her from being distracted and pulled away from what she was doing. Absolutely fantastic to Role-play. Role-playing is really the key to helping parents, and also youth, stay focused on what needs to be done. This is particularly helpful for children with ADHD because it is part of this inattentiveness that keeps their mind running in multiple directions where it is better served to keep them more focused. Initially, we started off with simple, which is we just went through the steps and got the wording down. And then we increased difficulty by having me during the Role-play, throw a little bit of teenage attitude and responding the way a teenager would, to increase the difficulty to see if Sharon would be distracted and get off-topic and she didn't.

She was able to follow through the steps. Now granted she did print out the steps to keep her on task and I would highly, highly recommend that for all parents. Print out the steps so you can follow through. You don't have to keep this all memorized. You have a printout on the Smarter Parenting website, so print out the steps. Follow through with each of those steps. Now we continued actually and did step number six quite a bit. We continued to practice. If you remember step number six in Preventive Teaching is continued to practice, right? We practiced more than four times and this gave Sharon the confidence that she needed in order to address this issue with her daughter. Now, during this practice, obviously Sharon had some additional

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questions and input that you wanted to put in there, and that was great because we were able to talk about those things.

Well, what if she decides she's not going to do that and blah, blah, blah, and I was like, "Well, that's why we chose Preventive Teaching because Preventive Teaching is a way to help your child prepare for those expectations before the actual situation happens."

We're like, "Okay, we're not doing this cold Turkey. This is something that you're going to be practicing with your child beforehand, and so when it eventually happens, it's already in her brain and she knows what the expectation is and how to follow through."

Now, I can still hear in some parent's mind out there that they're like, "Oh, that won't work." It will work. I promise. I've seen it a million times. It absolutely works when you practice with your children beforehand and prepare them for situations. They're able to make choices and decide how they're going to respond rather than just react. Okay.

We're actually giving her one more off-ramp on that road, so she can choose whether to get off and do what she needs to do. Rather than I'm just going to speed down because I'm in a mood and I just want to do what I want to do. [We determined that actually after dinner was the best time when things are calm in the home.](#) For some reason, her daughter struggles getting up out of bed, and that's another issue that we were exploring and talking about. Then we were talking about after school and just so much pressure to get things done. However, after dinner, things tend to wind down in the home and things are a lot more calm. And so for Sharon, this was the perfect time for her to start to teach the skill. The goal was for Sharon to practice this every evening.

She is going to Role-play with her daughter what she expects, showing her how to do it. The component that is the same is that she's going to use the same Role-playing technique that we did over the phone. However, I told her in real life, you want to actually be doing it in the same place this is going to happen. You want to be actually physically walking in the room. [You want to be communicating with body language.](#) You want to do all those things to make it as real as possible and that will help cement this in your child's brain as, "Okay wait, this has happened before and I know how to respond to that." We're actually giving children, we're creating this idea of Groundhog Day for our children, by Role-playing and Preventive Teaching the skill when you're Role-playing. It actually helps them know exactly how to respond to that and so they're not stuck in doing things repetitively over and over again.

The tantruming behaviors were consistently a repeat, and mom was already in Groundhog Day. So every day was pretty much tantrum, tantrum, tantrum. [What we've done by using this specific skill for tantruming behaviors was to help her mom find a way to change the discourse and change the outcome.](#) We're not repeating Groundhog Day over and over and over again.

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Now for you, the listener, you've been listening to me discuss what I did with Sharon and how we did it and the skill that we use to deal with tantruming behaviors. [This is an instance of what coaching is like](#). There are so many skills on the Smarter Parenting website that you could use. In fact, Sharon asked me whether or not using [Following Instructions](#), cause that's a skill that we have on the Smarter Parenting website would be a better skill to use.

After we discussed it, because we did discuss it in-depth, we determined that Preventive Teaching was probably a better approach for her child and her child's needs. No two children are exactly alike. They're not. They're unique. That's what I love about the Teaching-Family Model. All the skills come from this Model. But The Model always focuses on individualizing your approach to your child and your child's needs. Maybe that's why I'm so passionate about it because it doesn't treat children like they're cookie-cutter robots.

We're not raising robots. We're raising children to become responsible adults and we need individualized treatment and we need individualized approaches in the way that we deal with them. Again, the skills on the Smarter Parenting website, there are a lot and you can use them in various ways for various issues. And at the same time there are very powerful tools that you can use in your observation and your relationship with your child that will help you determine what skill actually would be best to help in dealing with a very specific behavior.

[I've given you an example of what a coaching session is like](#). I want to hear your story. I want to know what's going on. I want to understand the pain that you are experiencing. I want to understand the relationships that you're having with your children and how well it is and when they can be taught. I want to know all those things in order to give you something that's individual, something that is very personal in helping you with your child, with the ultimate focus on strengthening your relationship. Because in the end, the relationship is what is going to create the biggest change. Absolutely. So what I want you to do is I want you to dig deep. I want you to really dig deep and I want you to consider for yourself what changes need to happen and I want you to reach out to me. Call me.

[You can find the form on the Smarter Parenting website for a coaching session](#). Let's talk about this. If you are stuck, I hate it when I see parents who are struggling so hard and they feel like they have to do it by themselves. You don't. There's a lot of help out there. I'm here to help you. I am absolutely here for that reason.

I have to give a huge shout out to the [Utah Youth Village](#) for making this even possible for me to be here to do this work because my passion has always been focused on helping families. So thank you Utah Youth Village for giving me this platform and for teaching me about the [Teaching-Family Model](#) for teaching me the skills and giving me opportunities to grow and actually reach out more people. I love this format of podcasts. I love what it has become.

I feel connected to those of you who are listening out there, those who have reached out to me and those who are just listening. I want you to know that you're not alone. You're not! And that I

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care and you're important and your pain can be shared and there are people out there that would be happy to reach out and help if they could. So dig deep. Think about it. Think about what you need. [If you need a coaching session, call me up.](#) Let's nuance these skills to your child and to your family and to your needs and to your belief system. I do need to probably share this because I think it's fascinating. I run across so many people from different belief systems and different approaches and so what is fantastic is that these skills are applicable regardless of those things. So call me up. Call me up.

I would love to talk now that's it for me. There are some changes coming to Smarter Parenting so I just need to make you aware of that. One of the things that is coming up is that we are actually moving from two podcasts a week to one podcast a week. And we're doing this for a very specific reason, but the one podcasts a week will be moved to Wednesday. So just be aware that that is coming down the pipeline. That podcast, however, is going to be a one-two punch boom, boom. We're going to provide so much information in there and so much guided information for you that it is going to be absolutely worth it. And so just be aware that that is a change that is coming, but what you are going to receive during that one podcast is going to be fantastic information of things that you can apply immediately with your children.

So stay tuned and please, if you are listening to this, if you're on Apple specifically, please give us a rating and a five-star rating would be fantastic. That helps us reach out to more listeners and share this podcast if you can.

All right, that's it for me for this week. I just want to send you love and light and let you know that I am here and I'm excited to hear from you. So contact me, jump over to the Smarter Parenting website and you can sign up for a [coaching](#) session there. All right. Okay. I will see you later. All right, bye.

PODCASTS MENTIONED IN THIS EPISODE

[Ep #7: ADHD and anger issues in kids](#)

[Ep #11: What is the Teaching-Family Model](#)

[Ep #19: The power of a Parenting Coaching session](#)

[Ep #40: When do I need ADHD Parenting Coaching](#)

[Ep #41: How I coach parents of kids with ADHD](#)

[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](#)

[Ep #53: The importance of Following Instructions](#)

[Ep #66: Knowing when to teach behavioral skills](#)

[Ep #67: Consistency creates change](#)

RESOURCES

[Behavior skill: Preventive Teaching](#)

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[Behavior skill: Role-playing](#)

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