

PARENT'S GUIDE

Solutions to Today's Most Common Behavior Problems in the Home

**Stephen B. McCarney
Angela Marie Bauer**

Copyright © 1990 by Hawthorne Educational Services, Inc.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the
United States of America.
5/14



HAWTHORNE

**Educational Services, Inc.
800 Gray Oak Drive
Columbia, MO 65201
Telephone: (573) 874-1710
FAX: (800) 442-9509
www.hawthorne-ed.com**

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	5
II. Behaviors and Solutions	6
A. Difficulty Following Directions	
Behavior Number	
1. Does not follow directions.	6
2. “Forgets” to do things	8
3. Behaves inappropriately in the car	10
4. Behaves inappropriately walking to school	11
5. Behaves inappropriately on the bus	12
6. Behaves inappropriately in others’ homes.	14
7. Has to have several reminders.	16
8. Plays with matches, cigarette lighters, etc.	18
9. Ignores what he/she is told.	19
10. Puts off doing things	21
11. Does not follow rules for behavior	23
12. Has “bad” manners	25
13. Uses a phone inappropriately	27
B. Irresponsible/Careless	
Behavior Number	
14. Does what others do even if it is wrong	28
15. Does not complete chores	30
16. Watches too much TV	32
17. Leaves the yard, is late for meals, stays out late.	33
18. Cannot find things	35
19. Is careless	37
20. Makes excuses.	39
21. Does not take care of pets	41
22. Is not responsible	43
23. Is not ready on time	45
24. Does things in a hurry.	47
25. Does not take care of belongings	49
26. Pretends to be sick.	51
27. Blames other persons or things	53
28. Does not complete homework	55
29. Gets into things	57
30. Is afraid to try something new.	59
31. Is wasteful	60
C. Disrespectful	
Behavior Number	
32. Interrupts others	61
33. Argues with parents	63

34. Makes rude comments	65
35. Behaves inappropriately with a baby-sitter	67
36. Is insensitive to others' feelings	69
37. Talks back	71
38. Behaves inappropriately when others use a phone	73

D. Social Difficulties

Behavior

Number

39. Is critical of others	75
40. Mistreats younger brothers and sisters	77
41. Has trouble getting along with friends	79
42. Fights at school and/or in the neighborhood	81
43. Is overly competitive	83
44. Teases and makes fun of others	85
45. Is shy	87
46. Tattles	89
47. Forcibly takes things from others	91
48. Has little patience with younger brothers/sisters	93
49. Is overly critical of self	95
50. Does not take part in special family events	97
51. Is afraid of new situations	99
52. Has little confidence in school ability	101

E. Dishonest

Behavior

Number

53. Lies	103
54. Cheats in games	106
55. Exaggerates the truth	108
56. Uses things without asking	110
57. Steals	112
58. Plays one adult against another	114

F. Selfish

Behavior

Number

59. Is demanding	116
60. Is jealous	118
61. Does not share	120
62. Cries when does not get own way	122
63. Brags	124
64. Whines	126
65. Does not find things to do	128
66. Wants everything in stores and on TV	130
67. Uses public situations to get own way	132

G. Limited Self-Control

Behavior

Number

68. Has difficulty with changes in routine	134
69. Throws temper tantrums	136
70. Is overly sensitive	138
71. Eats too much	140
72. Has a short attention span	142

73.	Does not accept constructive criticism	145
74.	Does not settle down when excited	147
75.	Easily gets upset or angry	149
76.	Does not eat, sleep, or concentrate because of personal or school problems	151
77.	Does not consider consequences of behavior	153
78.	Is a bad loser.	155
79.	Is easily frustrated.	157
80.	Yells when angry or told to do something.	159
81.	Eats junk food between meals.	162
82.	Is impatient	164
83.	Curses	167
84.	Runs in the house, jumps on furniture	169
85.	Does not work out problems with others	171
86.	Does not deal with friendly teasing	174
87.	Is afraid of the doctor or dentist.	176
88.	Is impulsive	178
89.	Gets upset when bumped or touched	180
90.	Has inappropriate table manners	182

H. Defiant

Behavior

Number

91.	Does not take “no” for an answer	184
92.	Does not eat at mealtimes	187
93.	Does not cooperate when angry or upset	189
94.	Disobeys or does what he/she wants to do	192
95.	Does not go to sleep after going to bed	195
96.	Does not go to bed on time	197
97.	Does not get up on time	199

I. Careless with Appearance and Possessions

Behavior

Number

98.	Does not put things away	201
99.	Is not concerned about appearance	203
100.	Does not keep own room clean	205
101.	Is lazy and unmotivated	207
102.	Does not want to take a bath, wash hair, brush teeth, change clothes, etc.	209

III. Appendix 211

I. Introduction

The *Parent's Guide* is an attempt to provide the most logical and common sense solutions to the behavior problems exhibited by today's children and youth. By surveying parents, the 102 most common behavior problems have been identified. You will notice that, for some problems, there are as many as 50 possible solutions to the particular situation. The reason for this is that we believe there is no one best way to help children and youth be successful. We offer a variety of possible solutions so you will be able to find a solution that will work in your unique situation, based on all variables related to your family and considering the age, gender, maturity, abilities, etc., of your child. The variety is there in order for you to choose the interventions that are best for you and your child.

We chose the most logical and common sense approaches to the behavior problems children and youth exhibit in the home for several reasons. Our first reason to adopt this approach was to develop a guide that would serve as a resource for parent-training groups and parent problem-solving sessions with therapists and counselors. Additionally, we chose strategies with the greatest likelihood of success that can be easily shared by counselors, social workers, child psychologists, pediatricians, etc., with parents individually. At the same time, we chose to produce a collection of strategies parents can practice in the home, without the need for a therapist or counselor to explain how to "implement" those strategies. We also chose to develop a reference guide that parents can keep available in their homes to answer that primary question, "What do you do when your child....?", rather than a text parents read one time and then shelve without further use. And, lastly, we chose the most logical and common sense approaches because they are the ones that work best with children.

There are several reasons the *Parent's Guide* takes the form of identifying the most common behavior problems with a variety of solutions rather than individual chapters which explain principles and approaches, such as positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, etc. One very obvious reason is that the chapter approach to principles and approaches is the format which has been used over and over again and tends to be the one that gets shelved and not referred to again. We chose a format to which parents can relate and use time after time.

We chose a reference format that will take a few minutes to use and not require reading an entire chapter. There was also the very real recognition that chapters dealing with methodology rely on parents to interpret and apply general principles to specific situations. Under the best circumstances, teachers and therapists find the practice of applying principles difficult, while most parents find it nearly impossible. As a counselor told us recently, when a parent says to him, "What do you do when your kid....?" he has trouble thinking of any one thing/solution to recommend in that instant when those parents want an answer. But, on the way home, he will think of 20 possible solutions he could have suggested to them. He shared this story with us in the context of suggesting that, with the *Parent's Guide*, he will be able to turn to the behavior problem they have identified and say, "Here are forty-six possible solutions to that problem. Which of these do you think would be best for you and your child?"

We wrote the *Parent's Guide* because teachers and parents, who have been using similar materials we have developed for the behavior and learning problems of students at school, have asked that we develop a resource for parents as well. We also wrote the *Parent's Guide* for a little boy who came to live in my home a few years ago. He came with nothing but a trash bag containing a few mismatched pieces of clothing that were too small for him. He also brought all the love a little boy's heart can hold and an optimism and zest for life that would seem to negate his past. He has been my teacher for these past few years and he has taught me far more than I had accumulated in all the years prior to his coming. Some days have not been easy, with problems at school and some educational personnel who have been reluctant to be understanding. But, at night, after his bath, when he's in his pajamas and robe, wearing his slippers and smelling really good, and I put him in bed and pull up the covers and he wraps those little arms around my neck and booms out in that little boy voice, "I love you, Daddy!" I know the answer to all his problems. The answer is, "We will get up tomorrow and do all this again because we are all he has. And he is all we have."

We dedicate the *Parent's Guide* to you, Billy. You made it possible. May God bless you and watch over you always.

S.B.M.

II. Behaviors and Solutions

1 Does not follow directions

1. Establish rules for following directions (e.g., listen to directions, ask questions about directions you do not understand, carry out the directions). These rules should be consistent and followed by everyone in the home. Talk about the rules often.

2. Reward your child for following directions. Possible rewards include verbal praise (e.g., “You did a great job picking up your clothes!” “I like the way you follow directions!” etc.), a kiss on the cheek, a hug, having a friend over to play, staying up late, watching a favorite TV show, and playing a game with a parent.

3. If there are other children or adolescents in the home, reward them for following directions.

4. Carefully consider your child’s age and experience when giving directions to follow.

5. Demonstrate the appropriate way to follow directions (e.g., give your child directions to feed the dog, then you feed the dog with your child).

6. When your child does not follow a direction, explain exactly what he/she did wrong, what should have been done and why.

For example: You tell your child to clean up his/her room before 5:00. At 5:00, you tell your child that he/she has not cleaned up his/her room and that he/she needs to follow the direction to clean the room now, because company is coming at 6:00.

7. Write a contract with your child.

For example: I, William, for three days in a row, will follow directions without having to be told more than once. When I accomplish this, I can watch 30 extra minutes of TV.

The contract should be written within the ability level of your child and should focus on only one behavior at a time.

8. Make certain that your child sees the relationship between his/her behavior and the consequences which may follow (e.g., failing to follow the direction to bring in a bike at night may result in the bike being stolen).

9. Allow natural consequences to occur due to your child’s failing to follow directions (e.g., the child’s bike being stolen, loss of school books, school work not done on time, etc.).

10. Along with a directive, provide an incentive statement (e.g., “When you eat your peas, you may have dessert.” “You may watch TV after you get ready for bed.”).

11. When your child has difficulty following directions in front of others (e.g., at the grocery store, in the mall, playing a game with family members, etc.) remove your child from the situation until he/she can demonstrate self-control and follow directions.

12. To help your child follow directions, reduce distractions (e.g., turn off the TV, give directions in a room away from friends, etc.).

13. Do not give your child directions to follow with more than two or three steps. Directions that involve several steps can be confusing and cause your child to have difficulty following them. An example of a two-step direction is: “Please turn off your light and go to bed.”

14. To determine if your child heard a direction, have your child repeat it.

15. Deliver directions in a supportive rather than a threatening manner (e.g., “Please take out the trash.” rather than, “You had better take out the trash or else!”).

16. Give your child a special responsibility (e.g., answering the door, serving food, cleaning, etc.), to teach your child to follow directions.