



Discussion for use with Parents of Toddlers and Older Children

(10-12 minutes)

1. Common reasons children misbehave (5-7 minutes).

Ask: *“Why do children misbehave?”*

Sample responses:

- to get attention
- to gain power
- to get revenge (the child feels hurt and wants to get back at someone)
- and because they don't feel good about themselves

Say: *“It's important to think about why your child might be misbehaving so you can meet your child's needs. If your child is misbehaving because he or she wants attention, try giving your child attention for the good things he or she does. Sometimes children misbehave even if they know they will get in trouble. They may do this because they haven't been getting any attention – positive or negative.”*

2. Teaching your child expectations (5 minutes).

Say: *“Once you know how your child is developing and know what behaviors to expect, you can better work with your child to teach him or her appropriate behaviors. Think about your child's development and abilities and be sure that your expectations are appropriate for your child.”*

Ask: *“How do you teach your children what your expectations are?”*

- Write the phrases written in bold below on a flip chart or dry erase board.

Say: *“Tell your children how you expect them to behave. For example, if you expect that your child will sit at the dinner table until everyone has finished eating, then let your child know that this is a*

rule. Be sure this is realistic for your child's age. This is the first step, to let your child know what you expect.

*Then, **model for your children what you want them to do.** You can't expect your child to do something that you don't do yourself. If you are teaching your child to always wear his or her seatbelt, then you need to wear your own seatbelt to model the behavior.*

*Finally, **reinforce the expectations** you have by reviewing them often. If you expect your 4-year-old to pick up his or her toys after playing, reinforce that expectation by reminding your child to put away the toys after he or she is finished playing with them."*

Refer back to the Parenting with Love lesson plan and the activity, "Agree/Disagree game."