

Provider Tip of the Week

February 16, 2022

Positive Opposites

For every behavior a caregiver doesn't want their child to do, there is an opposite behavior that they would LIKE their child to do instead. That's a positive opposite. When you hear a list of frustrating or challenging behaviors in the visit, encourage caregivers to think of what they want their toddler (or older child) to do instead. Suggest that they start practicing asking for that, instead of focusing on what not to do. This may mean that something like "stop jumping" becomes "please keep your feet on the floor."

Using positive opposites achieves several things:

1. It helps teach children what to do, instead of only telling them what doesn't work.
2. It helps keep the tone and interaction positive. Avoiding the "don't" makes it less likely that caregivers will use anger in their response.
3. Using positive opposites can help save the "NO" or "don't" for when caregivers really need it. Children are more likely to listen when these words are used sparingly, and when they feel like they understand what is expected of them.

See this video for an example from the well child visits:



Watch the Video!

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