

SESSION 2

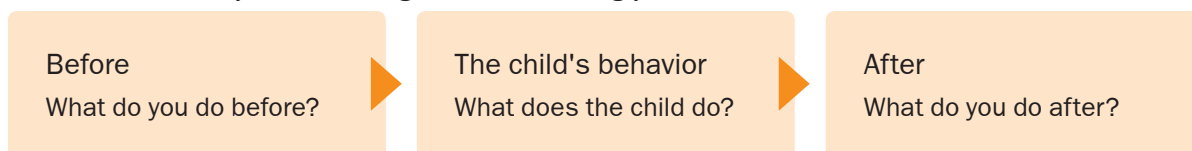
PREPARE AND INSTRUCT



INTERACTION ANALYSIS

Lots of us have probably thought a lot about it and tried to figure out why children act in certain ways. Behavior is affected by what happens *before* – there is often something that triggers the behavior.

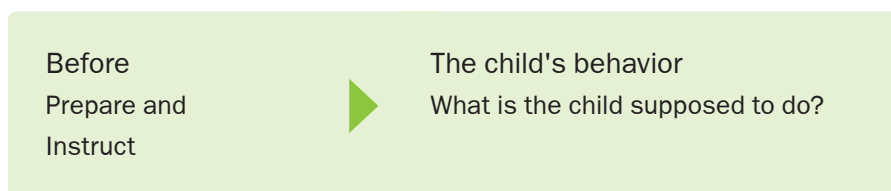
Behavior is also affected by what happens immediately *after* – if a behavior has positive consequences, it will usually increase. An interaction analysis makes it easier to understand what you are doing that is affecting your child's behavior.



Sometimes it is most important to focus on what you, the parent, do before the child's behavior occurs - Was it something I did that triggered the child's behavior? Sometimes it is more important to think about what happened after the behavior occurred - What did I do, and what did my child learn from that? Naturally, there are factors that affect your child's behavior other than your actions as a parent, but since Komet is about improving parenting skills, that is the piece of the puzzle we will be looking at.

Before

The focus of this session is preparation and instruction to help your child in situations that usually lead to conflict. We will talk about what you can do afterwards at the next session.

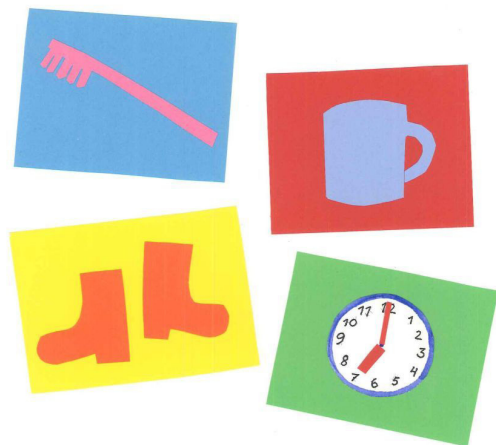


PREPARATION

One way to reduce conflicts is to prepare your child for what is going to happen. Preparation is useful when your child is supposed to stop one activity and start a different one.

What to do:

- Eye contact. Make sure you have the child's attention.
- Give your child time to wrap things up. Tell the child 5 or 10 minutes beforehand that it is time to stop doing the activity. You might want to set an egg timer so that your child can see for himself/herself how much time is left. Also tell your child that you will come back and tell him/her when time is up. You might want to ask your child to repeat what you said.
- Remind the child. It can sometimes be a good idea to remind your child once or twice before it is time for him/her to stop the activity.
- Routines. Another way to prepare your child is to stick to clear routines. For example, having the same bedtime or dinner time every weekday. It can also help to have a weekly schedule that clearly shows what activities and times are set for each day.
- Task cards. For younger children, you can draw or cut out pictures showing what they are supposed to do. You can also use photographs, of course.



INSTRUCTIONS

- Reduce all distractions. Make sure you have your child's attention before you give the instruction. Giving instructions when your child is preoccupied with something else is a common mistake.
- Be clear and kind. Avoid giving the instruction in the form of a question. Tell your child what you want him/her to do in a pleasant tone of voice. Children often hear only what they are *not* supposed to do, and negative instructions are harder to follow.
- Give one instruction at a time. Children easily forget if they are given too many instructions at once, or if the instructions are too long. If the task is complicated, you should break it down into several small steps. You can also ask your child to repeat the instruction. This can be especially helpful for children who have attention deficit issues.
- Give your child time to do what you requested. Parents often feel impatient and repeat an instruction too soon. The risk is that instructions will turn into nagging, which leads to conflict.
- Avoid arguing. Calmly repeat the instruction once or twice. Sometimes it works to distract the child, for example by asking "Do you want to squeeze the toothpaste?" if the child does not want to brush his/her teeth. Break down the instruction into smaller steps the next time.



HOMEWORK - SESSION 2

One-on-one time. Suggestions for activities and times.

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Prepare and instruct. In what two situations would you like to work with preparation and instruction?

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BEFORE SESSION 3

One-on-one time. What have you done together? Number of times:

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Prepare and instruct. In what situations? Number of times:

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