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Parenting Module Ten Supplement: Instructions for Tracking Behavior So You Can Treat It Professionally:

Use the instructions and Behavior Tracking Chart below to help you discover the cause-and-effect relationships behind your children's behaviors (which would otherwise be undetectable), so you can proactively and positively discipline them.

1. Begin with a precise description of the problem behavior so that anyone reading would know exactly what happened, for example "Billy hit Susan hard on her back with his fist," is clearer than "Billy was mean to Susan."
2. If possible, describe what prompted Billy to hit Susan ("Susan called Billy a scumball," or "Susan grabbed a book away from Billy," or "Susan just walked in the room and was minding her own business." *Don't be too concerned if you can't identify the prompt—sometimes they aren't obvious at all. But if you can, DO!*
3. Describe what immediately followed the behavior. This is the consequence, and since behavior is shaped by consequences, it is very, very important that these be clearly identified. For example, "Susan went crying to Mother," or "Susan hit Billy back," or "Mother/Father scolded Billy and gave Susan a lot of attention in the form of hugs, kisses, and verbal comfort."

Example 1:

Prompt	Precise Description of Problem Behavior	Consequences
Susan grabbed the book Billy was reading	Billy hit Susan hard on her back with a closed fist	Susan ran crying to Mother/Father who gave her a hug, kissed her, and told her Billy should not be so mean to her.
Mother/Father is angry at Billy	Mother/Father spank and scold Billy and send him to his room	Susan taunts Billy and says, "Haha to you, you meany."

Analysis:

It is altogether possible that Susan prompted Billy on purpose just to get him into trouble and to get a lot of personal attention.

Treatment:

Either ignore both Susan and Billy completely, **OR** use the Stop-Redirect-Reinforce strategy described in Principles of Proactive Parenting, Module Six.

Example 2:

Prompt	Precise Description of Problem Behavior	Consequences
Susan walked into the room, minding her own business	Billy hit Susan hard on her back with a closed fist	Susan cried out in pain and called for parental protection: "Mom/Dad, Billy is hitting me and hurting me and I didn't do anything to him!"
Mother/Father are in the room with Billy and Susan	Billy quits hitting Susan	Susan seeks the protection of her Mother/Father.

Analysis:

It is not clear why Billy hit Susan, only that he did and such behavior is intolerable. There appear to be no ulterior motives on Susan's part. She was simply an innocent victim of her brother's angry outburst.

Treatment:

- Briefly comfort Susan, "I'm sorry Billy hit you. I'm sure it must have hurt. You'll feel fine in a minute. *(Note: the key there is BRIEFLY COMFORT Susan. Simply show your genuine concern and move on, so Susan doesn't become conditioned to invite hitting so she can get extra parental attention.)*
- Take Billy aside and use the Stop-Redirect-Reinforce strategy from Module Six.
****Also**, discuss the positive consequences of Billy controlling his behavior and the negative consequences if he chooses to hit Susan again.

Example 3:

Prompt	Precise Description of Problem Behavior	Consequences
Susan called Billy a scumball	Billy hit Susan hard on her back with a closed fist	Susan cries out in pain and says, "I hate you, Billy. I wish you'd die!"

Analysis:

This is inconsequential, age-typical "weed behavior", a classic example of no-account sibling rivalry.

Treatment:

Stop the behavior by strategically ignoring it. If Susan comes crying in pain in search of comfort, the parent should simply say, "I'm sorry you chose to make Billy angry at you and got hurt. You'll feel better soon," and leave it at that. If Susan continues to seek attention, the parent should ignore it and, if possible, leave the room, go into the bathroom and lock the door, or whatever. Without the caregiver present, the crying and carrying on will not last long—typically less than 2 minutes.

If Billy seeks parental involvement, such as, "Susan always calls me bad names and I hate her! How come you don't make her stop that?!" the parent should briefly restate their expectations, comfort the boy, and leave it at that: "Billy, in this house, we don't hit each other. I'm sorry she upset you. Still, no hitting."

See below for a Behavior Tracking Chart for your use.

Behavior Tracking Chart

[illegible]