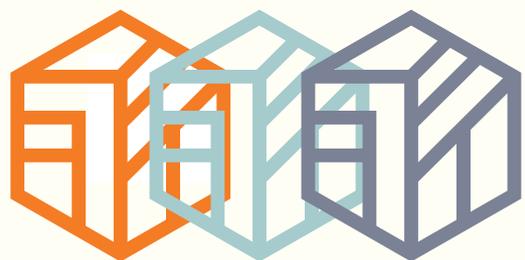
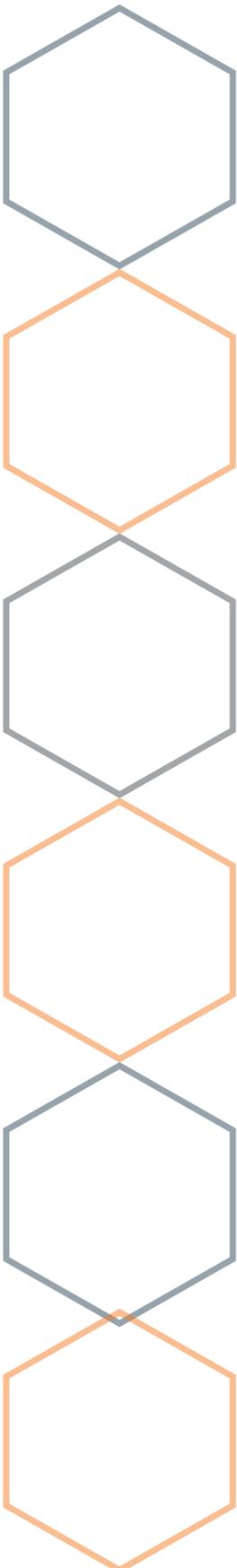


IMPULSE CONTROL TIPS & STRATEGIES



BROUGHT TO YOU BY





Children who lack impulse control can be difficult to manage. They react to situations quickly rather than thinking things through. This can make you feel like you are parenting a hand-grenade.

You never know when they'll have a meltdown, try to run away, throw something across the room, or act out aggressively. Learning impulse control is imperative for children whether they are neurotypical or they are experiencing a range of mental health or cognitive disorders.

Examples of Impulse Control Problems:

Young children – Pushing other children out of line or difficulty taking turns.

Pre teens/Teens – Bullying behavior or taking part in risky behaviors like vaping or self-medicating.

WELCOME!



IMPULSE CONTROL IS PART OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Impulse control isn't about "bad children" and "good children." It's about whether their brains have had a chance to develop executive function which includes the ability to put the brakes on impulsive actions. Just because your child is having fits or throwing something across the room does not mean they are a bad child. Their brain simply hasn't had a chance to develop the ability to stop, think, and then act.

Everyone will eventually develop these brakes that stop us from making poor choices impulsively - like eating an entire bowl full of cookie dough or chasing a ball into the street without looking.

Interestingly, a new way to conceptualize ADHD is as a developmental delay in impulse control. Like other personality traits, impulse control will vary in strength from person to person. It may develop at a slower rate for some. But that doesn't mean we can't give it a helping hand!

DID YOU KNOW?

Play Attention has specific games that will teach your child how to **STOP**, **THINK**, then **REACT**. They can see in real-time if they were successful.



TEACHING IMPULSE CONTROL



"I hear you!"

It's very difficult to live with a child who's throwing things, hitting people, or running out into the street because they're not thinking about consequences.

The good news is, you can help them develop impulse control with practice. It's also going to take patience because you must give their brain both the **opportunity** and **time** to develop and change.

You can help your child's brain start making connections and create the right pathways through practice. You've helped your child achieve many other milestones. You can help coach them to learn better impulse control too!

There are many similarities between teaching impulse control and potty training. In potty training, the child must recognize the feeling of needing to use the bathroom, understand what it means, and then choose to do something about it. In impulse control, a child needs to recognize the feeling of wanting to do a behavior, understand that behavior is not appropriate, and then choose to not do it. In both cases, some children will be very easy to teach, and others will be extremely difficult. Difficulties may arise due to temperament, developmental delays or cognitive differences.

The silver-lining here is that the most difficult challenges are the sweetest to overcome!

DID YOU KNOW?

Play Attention's personalized algorithm will **set goals** for your child to decrease impulsive behaviors and provide positive feedback. This enhances self-confidence.

PARENT OR COACH?



Coaching your child to go further than they thought possible is an amazing part of being a parent. However, it may be difficult sometimes to balance being the coach (who is trying to teach new behaviors) and being the parent (who thinks they are perfect just the way they are).

Don't pressure yourself too much to do both jobs perfectly and don't push your child too hard. Follow your child's lead with the following activities, set mini-goals, and remember to have fun!



DID YOU KNOW?

Play Attention's individualized program will SET GOALS and CHALLENGES for your child to help them reach higher levels of achievement. They compete against themselves. You simply provide positive feedback to reinforce the learning process.



ACTIVITIES FOR IMPULSE CONTROL

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

It may not be a fancy or glamorous game, but this has all the components necessary for developing impulse control. The child must listen, choose to follow the rules, maintain control of their body, and temporarily do something they don't want to (i.e.: stop at the "red light").

SIMON SAYS

Another low-tech, no-prep activity that focuses on listening, body control, and the ability to physically restrain yourself.

BALLOON TOSS

This one takes 15 seconds of prep-work. Give your child an inflated balloon and ask them not to throw it up in the air for 30 seconds (or less depending on your child – remember this isn't meant to be a punishment.) You want them to have that feeling of, "but I waaaaant to," before you let them toss it a few times.

Set a timer. Say, "Once the timer goes off, you can throw the balloon."

After the activity, ask them to reflect on this experience and talk about the feelings they had. Ask your child to explain how they were able to control themselves from throwing the balloon too soon.

Provide your child with lots of praise. They just exemplified impulse control.

BOARD GAMES

Taking turns is an excellent way to practice controlling impulsive behavior! Play games like Chutes and Ladders, Sorry, Trouble, or Monopoly. These games incorporate negatives like being sent back to the start or to jail! This provides a layer of 'fun discomfort' to challenge your child further.

ORGANIZED SPORTS

Many communities start offering organized sports around age 3. Don't worry about whether your child will be good or not! It's not about that. Organized sports at any age require basic listening skills, sharing, and self-restraint. Playing on a team can be a fun way to practice these skills and provide an opportunity to make friends.

TRANSFERRING THESE SKILLS TO REAL-LIFE

You may be feeling anxious about when and if your child will apply these skills in real life rather than just during games.

However, do you remember when your sweet little baby started walking? He or she didn't start just walking down the street by themselves! And you didn't scold them for holding onto the couch for assistance while you waved a stuffed animal encouraging them to walk to you. You played games, cheered them on, and maybe even caught those first steps on camera! When they fell, even after they learned to walk, you helped them back up. Your child will get there with impulse control too. It may not be on your timeframe, it may take baby steps, but it will happen.

To help this skill transfer to real-life, you should positively reinforce your child immediately when they exhibit self-restraint/impulse control. Do not wait to discuss later. Your child needs immediate feedback to help reinforce the learning process.

Play Attention games allow your child to see their attention on the computer screen. Seeing your attention in real-time is empowering! Hyperactivity, fidgeting, calling out, or other self-distracting behaviors cause the Play Attention games to stop. **Attention and behavior can finally be related and easily shaped using our integrated behavior shaping program.**

Sheer Genius assesses behaviors and helps you set mini-goals to extinguish interfering or counter productive behaviors!

Fidgeting, humming, daydreaming, and impulsive behaviors now can easily be improved without yelling or punishment. Increased focus and concentration can now lead the way to improved behavior.





WHY IS IT DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN TO MANAGE THEIR IMPULSES?

Children develop impulse control as part of their overall development. A very young child does not have this skill. In fact, there are those of us who have difficulty refraining from a second cookie as adults. Impulse control requires will power, delayed gratification, and self-control. For the child who struggles with development, sensory processing, attention, physical limitations, cognitive delays, or social impairments, the ability to control impulses is very difficult. These individuals are cognitively and automatically focused on the underlying needs. When other needs such as sensory or balance are the primary focus, it can be quite difficult to refrain from impulsive behaviors.

LACK OF IMPULSE CONTROL IN THE CLASSROOM:

- Speaking out
- Interrupting classmates
- Quitting games early or in anger
- Shoving in lines
- Cutting in front of others
- Jumping up from seat
- Asking questions about irrelevant topics
- Physical impulses
- Hyperactive behavior
- Hypo-active behavior
- Personal boundary issues



ACTIVITIES TO TEACH CHILDREN IMPULSE CONTROL:



- Break big tasks or projects into smaller steps
- Use a strategy checklist
- Increase time to complete tasks
- Impulse control journal
- Goal tracker
- Reduce clutter
- Set goals, make it visual
- Reflect on success, it builds confidence
- Make a schedule (picture-based or list)
- Act out situations beforehand
- Count to three before answering/responding
- Think through and predict social interactions before going into a situation



TIPS FOR PARENTS BEFORE TEACHING IMPULSE CONTROL ACTIVITIES TO TEENS

Whenever you're working with a teenager, you need to remember it's a two-way street. We must prepare ourselves

The following tips can help the impulse control activities for teens go smoothly

HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS



Don't set the bar too high, but don't set it too low either. If you know what they're currently capable of, your expectation should be 1 or maybe 2 steps beyond that. You should set small, achievable goals. An unrealistic goal will only cause frustration and no learning will take place. Understand that there may be some impulsive behaviors. However, try not to get frustrated with the little things. Focus on the small steps of improvement.

USE ROUTINES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE



Your child needs routines and structure. When your child's brain is acting like a pinball machine, structure is a safe place to rest - even if your teen seems resistant to it at first. If you're on a diet, (which takes an immense amount of impulse control) you would set yourself up for success by removing the treats from your house, planning your meals, and setting specific times for exercise. Give your teens the same benefit by providing a routine. Just because they're impulsive, doesn't mean they need - or even want - everything to be spontaneous.

PROVIDE EXTRA SUPPORT DURING THE EXTRA CHALLENGING TIMES



Create extra structure around a particularly stressful time of day (or event- like exams) to help provide more peace. Is getting to school on time a challenge? Implement a routine at night that includes making sure clothes are laid out, homework is in the backpack, lunch is made, etc.

TIPS FOR PARENTS BEFORE TEACHING IMPULSE CONTROL ACTIVITIES FOR TEENS



GET THEIR BUY-IN

When you're working with a teen, you need their buy-in to implement change. Find the common ground during a calm moment and choose your words wisely. For example, "Can we both agree that there's too much fighting in the mornings before school?" Instead of, "You're always running late, and it's not ok."

Maybe your teen has some ideas about what would help them be on time. If you give them the time and space to think about the situation and offer solutions, you might be surprised how insightful they are!



PICK ONE AREA TO WORK ON AT A TIME

Have you ever had multiple things going on at one time? For example, in one week you have a big project at work, you're trying to stay on a strict diet, and you're creating a new family budget. It's completely overwhelming. It can become difficult to control your own impulsive behaviors resulting in you breaking your diet or spending money you shouldn't.

Class work, peers, girlfriends, boyfriends, jobs, parents, and extracurricular activities are all vying for that limited amount of impulse control. You must decide where to start and focus.

Option 1– Consider where impulse-control issues are affecting your teen the most. Are they interrupting, chronically late, or participating in risky behaviors? Choose one area of focus, break it down into small goals.

Option 2– Consider where you will be able to make the biggest impact the quickest. Will simply making sure the homework actually gets back to school make a significant difference in your teen's life? If yes, choose to focus on that first.

TIPS FOR PARENTS BEFORE TEACHING IMPULSE CONTROL ACTIVITIES TO TEENS



UNDERSTAND THEY WILL STILL NEED YOUR HELP

Teens are doing everything they can to gain more and more independence. This is completely developmentally appropriate. So it seems counter intuitive to say that they need even more help right now. However, when we give them a new task to try, they're going to need our support. If they have support, they'll be more successful, which will give them more confidence, and make them want to continue independently. Once they're confident in the task, you can peel back some of your support - layer by layer.



PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

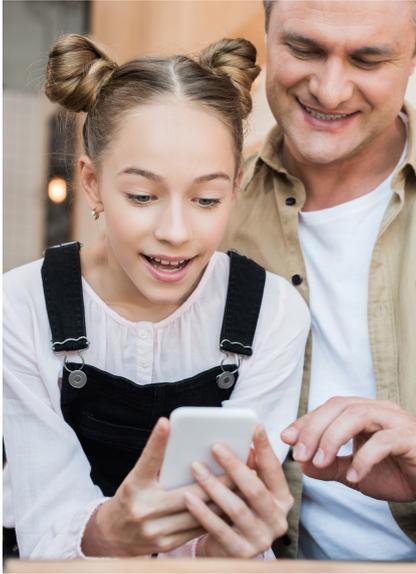
Impulse control is best compared to a muscle and not a set of knowledge. You can't go to the gym once a month, or even once a week, and really expect to grow stronger. You cannot teach your child impulse control one time, and expect them to know how to do it. It will take consistent work for a lifetime to grow and keep the impulse control 'muscles' strong.



BE A GOOD ROLE-MODEL

The need to continue practicing impulse control extends into our adult lives. Be the best role-model you can! If you can't be perfect, (and no one expects you to be!) talk about it with your child. You can even consider partaking in exercises and challenges that will improve your own impulse control.

TIPS FOR PARENTS BEFORE TEACHING IMPULSE CONTROL ACTIVITIES TO TEENS



CATCH YOUR CHILD BEING GOOD

Instead of constantly disciplining for bad behavior, look for good behaviors and reinforce them by a pat on the head, verbal praise, or a reward. You'll find that your child is far more likely to repeat a behavior that you've praised than to stop a behavior that resulted in discipline.

CONTACT US TODAY

This e-Book is brought to you by Play Attention.

Play Attention is a global leader in attention training and can help you develop the skills you need to be more successful with impulse control. Play Attention improves attention, memory, organization, processing speed, reasoning, and more. All of these skills are necessary for successful strong executive function and self-regulation.

See a live demonstration of Play Attention to learn more. Register for our FREE informational webinar [**HERE**](#).

Play Attention integrates feedback technology with cognitive skill training and behavior shaping.

Play Attention can help you, your child, or your clients to develop the cognitive skills necessary for strong executive function. If you want to talk to someone about your specific needs, schedule a FREE CONSULTATION [**HERE**](#).

800-788-6786

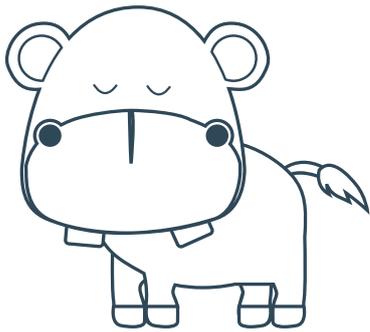
www.playattention.com

LET'S MAKE IT PRACTICAL

There are always a positive (**good**) and a negative (**bad**) consequence to every choice we make.

For example, what would happen if your parents told you to brush your teeth before bed and you didn't? A **positive consequence** would be that you could finish your play station game and just turn over to sleep. Some **negative consequences** would be that you are ruining your teeth and will have bad breath

One of your best friends did not finish his homework, and you let him copy yours:



Positive outcome

You are the best friend ever in his eyes, and that makes you feel good about yourself.

Negative outcome

Your friend has not taken responsibility for his own work. Now he may fail if asked to answer questions about that work.

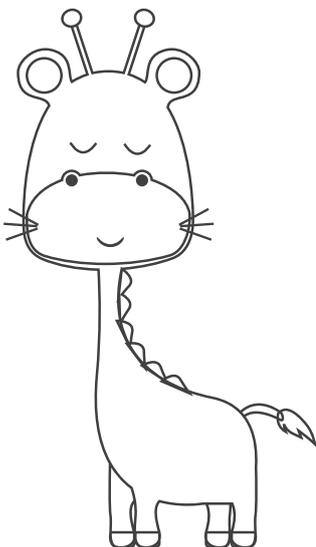
You scratched your brother's play station game because he made your mad:



Positive outcome

Negative outcome

You do an assignment and get some answers wrong. Now you need to do it again:



Positive outcome

Negative outcome

LET'S MAKE IT PRACTICAL

Write down some scenarios that your child struggles with in regards to impulse control. Now, talk through each one and list the positive and negative outcomes. This is a fantastic way to help your child work through feelings they often don't understand.

Scenario

Positive outcome

Negative outcome

Scenario

Positive outcome

Negative outcome

Some examples

- You don't clean your room when your mom asks.
- You bully children in your class.
- You have candy before dinner, disobeying your mom.
- You are running through the hallway.
- You lie to your parents about where you are going.
- You run with a big cup of hot cocoa.
- You eat all the ice cream that was left over from dinner.
- You get sent to the store for milk and you return with donuts.