

Parent Behavioral Management Strategies

QUICK TIPS/TRICKS

- Use explicit directives rather than demands phrased as a question (Do: “put the blocks in the bin”; Don’t: “can you clean up the living room?”)
- Use labeled praise (Do: “great job using your walking feet”; Don’t: “good job” or “thank you”)
- Use visual timers, verbal countdowns, and visual schedule to help prepare for transitions
- We reinforce behavior we want to see again; We do not reinforce behavior we want to go away
- Find what motivates and reinforces your individual (think: easily accessible, immediate, free); e.g., praise, excitement, one-on-one game with adult
- Visual Schedules and supports
- First-Then phrases (e.g., first potty, then play)
- Label feelings and teach functional coping skills (e.g., deep breathing)
- Use social stories to describe unfamiliar situations, expectations, and desired behaviors (e.g., vacation, sleep study, new school)

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Behavior change takes time
- There is no easy or quick “fix”
- We cannot expect perfection
- There are neurological differences that impact individuals with Down syndrome and behavior
- Teach in the areas of skill deficit
- Consistency with interventions and consistency amongst caregivers is key
- Challenge your individual and have developmentally appropriate expectations
- With a supportive family and medical/mental health/educational team, your individual can thrive