

PLAN

P = Pay attention and identify troublesome situations for the child.

L = Look realistically at the child's abilities in that situation.

A = Adjust difficult activities to maximize success and reduce negative emotions.

N = Never forget to prompt, suggest, and reward success!

Parenting Practices That Are Proactive

- Explain what will happen next.
- Give choices.
- Give prompts and reminders for when an activity will begin or end.
- Distract the child with an alternative activity or toy.
- Redirect the child or adolescent with an alternative activity.
- Eliminate "triggers" that may create negative emotional reactions.
- Teach or suggest a coping skill to the child.

Examples

Your 4-year-old refuses to get dressed in the morning and watches TV instead.

P = What is the problem? (Getting dressed in the morning.)

L = Can your child dress himself? (Yes, if you lay his clothes out for him.)

A = Adjust for success. (Lay out clothes; keep the TV off until he's dressed.)

N = Don't forget to tell him what a good job he did! (And let him watch his TV show.)

Your 12-year-old is not doing homework but is watching TV, playing on the computer, and listening to music at the same time!

P = What is the problem? (Not completing homework.)

L = For how long can your child do homework without distractions? (30 minutes.)

A = Adjust for success. (Create a place for doing homework separate from distractions. Make 15 minutes of computer time or listening to music contingent on doing 30 minutes of homework.)

N = Don't forget to tell her what a good job she did! (Acknowledge her efforts and notice when she is independently working on homework.)

Make a PLAN of Your Own

P = _____

L = _____

A = _____

N = _____

P = _____

L = _____

A = _____

N = _____

Note

When adjusting difficult activities, consider whether it might be helpful to create a new daily routine, or change an existing daily routine.

For example, if a problem area or trouble spot for your 8-year-old is getting to bed on time, create a bedtime routine of taking a bath or shower, brushing teeth, and reading a short story together, starting 45 minutes before bedtime.

When there are multiple problem areas, it can help to pick a specific time of day that is difficult and work on that routine first.