

Your Child's Problem Behavior: Getting to the Root of the Problem

- 1. How long has the behavior been a problem?**

- 2. How often is the behavior a problem?**

- 3. On a scale of 1-10, how severe is the problem behavior?**

- 4. Is the problem behavior situation-specific?**
If YES: In what situations do the problem behaviors occur? (Home vs. school, etc.)
If NO: Are there specific triggers that cause the problem behaviors? What?

- 5. Has your child's pediatrician been made aware of the problem behaviors?**
If YES: Has a biological or medical cause been ruled out?
If NO: Consult your child's pediatrician.

- 6. Has psychological testing or an evaluation been conducted?**
If YES: Has a diagnosis been determined?
If NO: Consider having an evaluation or testing done.

- 7. Has your child recently experienced a dramatic life change? (New sibling, divorce, new school, etc.)**
If YES: Find out what you can do to help your child adjust.
If NO: Consider other causes.

- 8. Has your child recently experienced a traumatic event? (Abuse, car accident, illness, injury, etc.)**
If YES: Assess the need for counseling.
If NO: Are you sure? A sudden, unexplained change in behavior could be a sign of unreported abuse.

- 9. Has your child been assessed for learning disorders and/or sensory integration problems?**
If YES: Have these problems been ruled out?
If NO: Consider having these assessments done.

10. Has your child been assessed for developmental and/or neurological disorders?<

If YES: Have these problems been ruled out?

If NO: Consider having these assessments done.

11. Does your child possess adequate social skills?

If YES: Consider other causes.

If NO: Practice social skills by discussing or role-playing various social situations.

12. Does your child possess adequate coping skills?

If YES: Consider other causes

If NO: Teach coping skills to your child and help him or her practice them.

13. Is your child's diet conducive to positive behavior?

If YES: Consider other causes.

If NO: Cut back on sugar, caffeine, and red food dye in your child's diet. Provide foods that are healthy.

14. Is your child's environment conducive to positive behavior?

If YES: Consider other causes.

If NO: Provide a clean, organized, quiet, non-chaotic environment for your child.

15. Does your child spend time with individuals that are negative influences?

If YES: Encourage your child to spend time with positive individuals.

If NO: Consider other causes.

16. Is your child easily influenced by violence in the media?

If YES: Monitor your child's viewing and gaming habits more closely.

If NO: Consider other causes.

17. Is your parenting style too harsh or too passive?

If YES: Consider changing your parenting style or taking parenting classes.

If NO: Consider other causes.

18. Is your style of discipline inconsistent, unstructured, or unpredictable?

If YES: Consider taking parenting classes or implementing a structured discipline program.

If NO: Consider other causes.

19. Do you model positive and appropriate behavior?

If YES: Consider other causes.

If NO: Be a better role model. Teach good character traits and positive social skills by example.

20. Do you have a tendency to "give in" to your child's crying, tantrums, or demands?

If YES: You may be reinforcing the problem behaviors.

If NO: Consider other causes.

21. Are you and your partner "on the same page" when it comes to discipline?

If YES: Consider other causes.

If NO: Work with your partner to develop a consistent and effective discipline plan.

22. Have YOU ever been evaluated for anxiety disorders, personality disorders, or any other problems that could affect your ability to be an effective parent?

If YES: Consider how your actions might be contributing to your child's problems. This is more common than you might think.

If NO: Consider other causes.

23. Does your child act out to get attention?

If YES: Ignore minor misbehavior and give attention to positive behavior.

If NO: Consider other causes.

24. Does your child act out to gain power and/or control over others?

If YES: Offer you child choices more often. Seek professional help to find out why your child has such a need for power/control.

If NO: Consider other causes.

25. Does your child act out because he or she is bored?

If YES: Encourage your child to participate in extracurricular activities. Spend more time with your child.

If NO: Consider other causes.

26. Is your child using or abusing drugs or alcohol?

If YES: Seek professional help.

If NO: Consider other causes.

27. Do you or your spouse ever put drugs or alcohol ahead of your parental responsibilities?

If YES: Seek professional help.

If NO: Consider other causes.

28. Have you contacted a mental health center or support group to solicit the help you need?

If NO: Consider doing so.

29. Have you sought the advice of friends or relatives to help you with your parenting issues?

If NO: Consider doing so.

Notice: The content of this page is based upon my own personal opinions. I realize that it is simple and brief, but I wanted parents to explore the many factors that could be influencing their child's negative behavior.