Best Practices in Parenting Adolescents

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Presentation Overview

- Theories related to tweens and teens
  - Who is this creature whose well-being I am trying to promote?
- Theories related to parenting
  - What broad dimensions and styles of parenting should I strive for?
- Informed parenting practices
  - Exactly WHAT SHOULD I DO to establish a positive parenting style and promote my tween’s or teen’s well-being?
StolzH_Best Practices Parenting
Adolescents. Promoting Healthy
Weight Colloquium, The University of
Tennessee, Knoxville

Understanding Tweens & Teens:
9 Golden Nuggets from 6 Helpful Theories

- Erikson: Psychosocial Theory
- Marcia: Identity States
- Vygotsky: Socio-Cultural Theory
- Elkind: Adolescent Egocentrism
- Bandura: Cognitive Social Learning Theory
- Adler: Basic Needs / Goals of Misbehavior

Psychosocial Theory
Erik Erikson (1902-1994)

- IN A NUT SHELL:
  - Series of developmental tasks
  - Tweens (up to age 12) = Industry vs. Inferiority
  - Teens (ages 13-19) = Identity vs. Role Confusion
- GOLDEN NUGGETS for parents:
  - Support tweens’ quest for competence
  - Support teens’ experimentation with roles, activities and behaviors

Socio-Cultural Theory
Lev Vygotsky (1896 – 1934)

- IN A NUT SHELL: Children acquire ways of thinking & behaving through cooperative dialogue with more skilled peers
- GOLDEN NUGGET for parents:
  - Provide scaffolding within the ZPD

  ZPD
  (Can’t Do)
  (Can Do With Help)
  (Can Do)
**Identity States**

James Marcia

IN A NUT SHELL:
Adolescents move through one or more of four identity states:
- Identity Diffusion
- Identity Foreclosure
- Identity Moratorium
- Identity Achievement

GOLDEN NUGGET for parents:
- Allow identity moratorium!

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**Adolescent Egocentrism**

David Elkind (1896 – 1980)

IN A NUT SHELL:
- Tweens and teens (ages 11-16) hold the belief that they are unique and that others are as focused on them as they are on themselves.

GOLDEN NUGGETS for parents:
- Consider the Personal Fable
- Consider the Imaginary Audience

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**Cognitive Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura (1925 – )

IN A NUT SHELL:
- Behavior is shaped by rewards and punishment, but also by observational learning and vicarious reinforcement.

GOLDEN NUGGETS for parents:
- Set a positive example
- Consider other models
Goals of Misbehavior
Alfred Adler (1870 - 1937)

IN A NUT SHELL:
- Children have basic needs and will DEMAND to have them met
- Underlying Need -- Outward Display
  - Involvement..............Attention
  - Independence...........Power
  - Justice....................Revenge
  - Withdrawal..............Inadequacy

GOLDEN NUGGET for parents:
- Consider “the belief behind the misbehavior”

Summary:
Golden Nuggets from Developmental Theories

- Support tweens’ competence
- Support teens’ identity exploration; leave room for moratorium
- Provide scaffolding in the ZPD
- Consider cognitive limitations: personal fable & imaginary audience
- Evaluate what we and others model
- Consider the belief behind the behavior

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Summary: Golden Nuggets from Developmental & Parenting Theories

WHAT YOUTH NEED:
- Support for competence
- Room for identity exploration
- Scaffolding in the ZPD
- Patience w/cognitive limitations
- Positive models
- Involvement, justice, independence, ability to withdraw

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:
- Be authoritative
- Provide support & BC, avoid PC
- Avoid over-control (PP, PS, Sculptor)
- Avoid under-control (AV, OI, Johnny Appleseed)

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Parenting Plan

Potential Problems

Whose problem is it?

Prevent Problems

Engage with Parent Problems

Assist with Child Problems

Parent, Child, and Problem

Step 1: Preventing Problems

- Parents need Cooperation Tools
  - Avoid Bribes
  - Offer Choices
  - Don’t Say “Don’t” & No “No”s
  - Use Humor

- Parents need Independence Tools
  - Teach Skills
  - Model
  - Ask Their Opinion
  - Let Go & Trust

Whose problem is it?
Step 1: Preventing Problems
Cooperation Tool: Avoid Bribes
- Bribes are manipulative control attempts
- Identify a bribe
  - Is the reward contingent?
  - Is your motive to control (bribe) or encourage?
  - External payoffs work in the short run, if at all.
  - Danger of creating “bribe junkies”
Let’s use our developmental & parenting theories – Why or how does this tool work?

Step 1: Preventing Problems
Cooperation Tool: Offer Choices
- Don’t give a choice if there is no real choice – all options must be valid and acceptable
- Make choices respectful
- Allow tween/teen to suggest choices
- There is always something a tween/teen can control
  - If not IF, then HOW or WHEN
- Account for individual personalities
Why or how does this tool work?

Step 1: Preventing Problems
Cooperation Tool: Avoid “Don’t I & “No”
- Don’t describes the negative behavior
- “No” equals power
- Give a conditional “yes”
- Offer alternatives
- Give information
- Take time to think
- Recognize feelings
- Give wishes in fantasy
Why or how does this tool work?
Step 1: Preventing Problems

Cooperation Tool: Use Humor

- Humor can prevent power struggles
- Funny voice
- Charades
- Sing (even works w/ teens!)
- Private jokes

Why or how does this tool work?

Step 1: Preventing Problems

Independence Tool: Teach Skills

1. Plan ahead
2. Explain the value of the skill
3. Let them watch
4. Let them try

Why or how does this tool work?

Step 1: Preventing Problems

Independence Tool: Model

- Model behaviors
- Model problem solving
- Model emotion processing

Why or how does this tool work?
Step 1: Preventing Problems
Two Independence Tools

- Ask their Opinion
  - Ask when it doesn’t matter for practical purposes
- Let Go & Trust
  - You aren’t “trusting” that they will get it right. You are “trusting” that it is time to let them try.

Why or how do these tools work?

Step 1 Summary
Preventing Problems

- Use Cooperation Tools
  - Avoid Bribe
  - Offer Choices
  - Don’t Say “Don’t” & No “No”s
  - Use Humor
- Use Independence Tools
  - Teach Skills
  - Model
  - Ask Their Opinion
  - Let Go & Trust

Parenting Plan

Potential Problems

- Assist with Child Problems
- Engage with Parent Problems

Whose problem is it?

Prevent Problems
Step 2: Assisting youth with “their problems”

- Two tools for helping tweens and teens with problems that they should take the lead in solving.
- Understand your and their problem solving styles
- Use FAX Listening

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Step 2: Assisting youth with “their problems”
Understanding Problem Solving Styles

- Problem Solving Typology
  - Internal | External
  - Venter: IV | EV
  - Conqueror: IC | EC
- Which type are you?
- What are the needs of each type?
- Why or how does this tool work?

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Step 2: Assisting youth with “their problems”
Tool: FAX Listening

- Focus on Feelings
- Label the feeling
- Identify belief or event that led to the feeling
- Summarize & Restate
- Ask Helpful Questions
- Examine possible solutions
- Brainstorm
- Evaluate each idea
- Choose one & commit to timeframe
- Why or how does this tool work?
Step 3: Engaging with Parent Problems

4 tools for when SHARP RV* have been violated
- Address “unintentional” behavior problems
- Use I statements
- Allow natural consequences
- Take 4R action

* Safety, health, appropriateness, rules, property, rights, values

Step 3: Engaging with Parent Problems Tool: Address Unintentional Behaviors

Causes of unintentional problem behavior:
- Developmental stage, personality, accident, medical condition, lack of information
- If the tween or teen has not consistently demonstrated an ability to do something, s/he probably can’t do it!
- What to do:
  - Teach skills, use environmental engineering, make a plan.

Why or how does this tool work?
Step 3: Engaging with Parent Problems
Tool: I Statements
- These help you stay calm and let the message be heard
  - Describe what you see
  - Describe how you feel
  - Describe the negative outcome
  - Describe what you want, expect, or what needs to be done
  - State the bottom line

Why or how does this tool work?

Step 3: Engaging with Parent Problems
Tool: Allow Natural Consequences
- Use only when safe
- No additional blame or shame allowed
- Empathy is encouraged

Why or how does this tool work?

Step 3: Engaging with Parent Problems
Tool: 4R Action
- The 4 R’s of discipline
  - Revealed “If I see _____, I’ll know you’ve decided to _____.”
  - Related
  - Reasonable
  - Respectful

Why or how does this tool work?
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Parenting Plan

- Potential Problems
- Call “YES”
- Parent SHARP RV
- Engage with Parent Problems
- Prevent Problems
- Assist with Child Problems
- Child’s problem is life

Acknowledgement

Let’s practice prevention

- Bruce is concerned about his 11 year-old daughter’s weight and lack of physical activity. He establishes regular walking times for the two of them. He is starting to get some resistance and needs to promote cooperation before this becomes a problem.
- Try any of these tools:
  - Avoid Bribes
  - Offer Choices
  - Don’t Say “Don’t” & No “No”s
  - Use Humor

Let’s practice problem ID

Who’s problem is it?
- Sarah, age 10, says she feels left out at school.
- Theo, age 15, violates the “no laptops in bathrooms” rule, and ends up with a laptop in a puddle of water.

PESS (youth problem) = peers, emotions, siblings, school
SHARP RV (parent problem) = safety, health appropriateness, rights, property, rules, values

Let’s practice assisting with a youth problem

- 12 year-old Devon: “I can’t believe I missed that catch. We lost the game because of me.”
- 16 year-old Amari: “I’m not sure if I want to go to Tom’s party. Jason will be there.”
- FAX Listening:
  - Focus on the feeling
  - Label feeling, identify belief or event, restate
  - Ask helpful Questions
  - Xamine Options
  - Brainstorm, evaluate each, pick one, commit
Let's practice engaging with a parent problem

- 15-year-old Michaela’s report card shows a D in Spanish.
- 17-year-old Samuel drives home at 2 am, clearly drunk.

Try these tools:
- I Statements
- 4R Action
  - Revealed, Related, Reasonable, Respectful