



## ***The Noncompliant, Oppositional and Hyper-RE-active Child***

These Recommendations work best with a system of incentives and consequences in place for behavior.

### **1. Low Expressed Emotion**

This is the single most important modality for managing the Hyper-*re*-active child. Children who are oppositional and noncompliant often evoke emotional responses in caretakers which results in yelling, scolding or threatening with consequences. These same children, because of anxiety or other traits tend to hyper-*re*-act or misunderstand vocal tone, strong or even mildly negative emotions. They respond with anger which over time turns into resentment. It is up to you to **BREAK THE CYCLE.**

- Use a matter-of-fact or neutral tone when re-directing the child from an inappropriate behavior.
- Your tone should be **firm** not **stern**. This will take practice. **Firm** is compatible with "kind" and "reassuring"; **stern** is not; **stern** is scolding.
- Practice sounding bored when the child's behavior appears to be deliberately provocative. The more outrageous the child's behavior the more bored you should sound.

### **2. Follow-through with physical proximity.**

*A neutral calm voice does not mean that you are a push-over as a parent.*

- Use a positive or upbeat tone when giving the child a routine instruction. Repeat the instruction, if needed in the same upbeat tone especially for the autistic spectrum or ADHD child who has difficulty *shifting* attention.
- Along with the **second** prompt, move to where the child is and make sure you have his attention.
- Repeat your request in a neutral tone but remind him in a positive tone of the incentive which you hope he will earn. Do not threaten the *loss* of the incentive or other consequence. If possible, do not talk about what he is doing; focus on what you are expecting him to do. *Stop talking or talk very little.* Use your body.
- Remove any distraction or other activity which is interfering with his compliance and position your body to make it clear that he will not engage in any other activity until the request is honored. Use *physical prompting unless it causes escalation.*
- Praise your child with a modestly positive tone when he completes the request (even if he had no choice or if you did most of it.)

### **3. Making Changes**

- A child's response to the changes you make in your own approach may be immediate for some behaviors or take several weeks in coming. Do not expect for changes to "work" immediately or to be permanent unless your change in approach and follow-through is permanent.
- *Usually* when limits are being set which were not being set in the past, there will first be a burst of tantrumming, crying and whining followed by improved compliance only when the child has experienced your new approaches repeatedly.