

### In This Session

#### Learning Objectives

- ▶ Examine why children do what they do.
- ▶ Practice ways to determine the meaning of behavior.
- ▶ Understand effective ways to develop and teach household and community rules.

#### Agenda

1. Welcome (3 min)
2. Reflect on Apply It and Try It (20 min)
  - a. Activity 1: Affirmations (3 min)
3. Determine the Meaning of Children's Behavior (12 min)
4. Being a Behavior Detective (10 min)
  - a. Activity 2: Apply It and Try It (10 min)
5. Time-out (15 min)
6. Developing Rules (15 min)
  - a. Activity 3: Apply It and Try It (5 min)
7. Teaching Rules (18 min)
8. Closing (5 min)

#### Family Materials

- ▶ Positive Solutions Family Handbook
- ▶ Resources
  1. Teaching Rules at Home
  2. Making a Scripted Story
  3. Time-Out Tips

#### Facilitator Materials

- ▶ Ground Rules from Session 1
- ▶ Chart Paper, Markers, Tape
- ▶ PowerPoint
- ▶ Positive Solutions Family Handbook
- ▶ Sample Rules Poster
- ▶ Scripted Story for Rules (Sample)

#### Icon Key



Chart Paper



Role Play



Group Activity



Discussion



Family Handbook



Apply It and Try It

# Welcome

Post “Ground Rules” developed in the first session.



## Show Slide 1: Session 3: Positive Solutions for Families – Behavior Has Meaning

Welcome Back! I am glad to see you at our third *Positive Solutions for Families* Session: Behavior Has Meaning.



## Show Slide 2: What's Happening Today?

We have a lot to cover today. We will start by sharing what happened when you used positively stated instructions with your child. We will also talk about the behaviors you want to see less of, more of, and the ways you might encourage your child. We will also continue with trying to determine the meaning of your child's behavior—remember, today is where we will practice being behavior detectives. We will spend the last part of our session thinking about expectations and ways we can help children learn and follow family rules.



## Show Slide 3: Apply It and Try It Reflection

Let's start by discussing your Apply It and Try It from last session. You had two activities. The first activity was to try to write down the times in which you used positively stated directions during situations when you normally might tell your child no, stop, don't or what not to do.

Would anyone like to share when you were able to use positively stated directions, instead of telling your child what not to do?

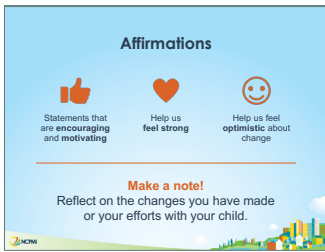
- ▶ How did it go?
- ▶ How did your child react?
- ▶ How did it make you feel?

*Allow time for a few participants to share. As participants start to share, encourage them to talk to each other. Ask follow-up questions or connect similar responses. For example, if a participant says their child reacted positively and followed the directions and they were feeling proud, you might ask others if they had a similar experience.*

The second activity was to start thinking about the kinds of behaviors that you would like to see less and more of and how you might encourage the behaviors you want your child to do more. Can each of you share one example?

*Allow time for discussion as each participant shares. It will be important to point out any connections or similarities participants might share. You might say something like, “Looks like many of you are wanting to see more behaviors that are about following directions and listening and less of tantrum or yelling behaviors.”*

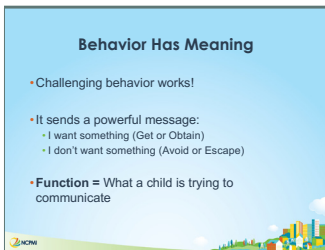
# Activity 1



## Show Slide 4: Affirmations

I'd like everyone to take a moment and think about the hard work and effort you are putting in at home. Turn to Session 3, **Activity 1** in your Family Handbook. You can use this space to write down an affirmation about what you accomplished last week *or* use this time to think of those affirmations. Remember, there is brain science about how using affirmations are helpful in helping you feel strong and optimistic about changes.

# Determining the Meaning of Behavior



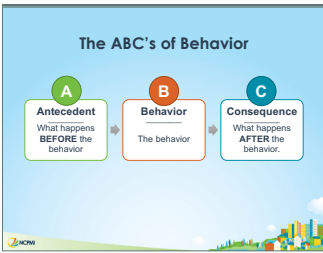
## Show Slide 5: Behavior Has Meaning

Let's do a quick review about what we talked about last week. We spent time thinking about how behavior is meaningful and communicates a message. Sometimes when children do not have an appropriate way to communicate a message (e.g., talking, signing, using picture symbols), they use challenging behavior (e.g., hitting, screaming, spitting) to get their needs met. Simply put, children engage in challenging behavior because it works for them. It works for them by sending a powerful message, which results in the child obtaining, or getting, something or someone (e.g., attention, toy, food) or avoiding, or escaping, something or someone (e.g., an adult, activity, or demand).

A term that we use when we determine the meaning of behavior is function. The **function** of the behavior is what the child is trying to communicate or the purpose of the behavior. Your child either wants to obtain, or get, something or someone, or is trying to avoid or escape something or someone.

To understand a child's challenging behavior, we need to become behavior detectives. We look for clues by thinking about what happens before and after the behavior. Even though it can seem like it, behaviors do not happen "out of the blue." Something always happens before a behavior and something always happens after a behavior. The more we observe what happens before and after the behavior, the more clues we will have to figure out why children do what they do.

Our goal is to identify the meaning, or the function, of the behavior so that we can create an intervention plan that will change it. By the end of all our sessions, you will have a good idea of how to develop a plan for reducing your child's challenging behavior and teaching them new skills to use.



## Show Slide 6: The ABCs of Behavior

Call participants' attention to the graphic that is one the slide.

Let's look at the ABCs:

You might have heard the term ABC's of behavior. The clues to figure out the meaning of behavior can be found in 3 things:

**“A” stands for Antecedent.** Antecedent refers to what happened directly before the behavior happened. This might include specific times of day, settings, people, and activities that set off or turn on challenging behavior. Here are a few examples of questions you might ask yourself when thinking about the before of a behavior:

- ▶ Was your child's sister playing with a toy he wanted?
- ▶ Were you talking on the phone and it had been a while since your child received attention from you?
- ▶ Did you say, “It's time to go up to bed, let's clean up the toys so they're ready for us to play with in the morning”?

These are all things that can happen before a child has challenging behavior that might “turn on” or result in your child's challenging behavior.

**“B” stands for Behavior.** Behaviors are observable and measurable. Behavior refers to what the child did or the specific actions you saw the child do. Behaviors can be appropriate too, not just challenging. Let's say you ask your child to clean up the crayons and paper she was coloring with (this is what happens before). Your child might:

1. Put the crayons away, or
2. Throw the crayons and rip up the paper.

These are both examples of behaviors.

When thinking about your child's challenging behavior, you might ask yourself, “What did my child's behavior look like?” Again, we want to be able to describe the behavior. You might think of things like, “Oh they got so angry or were so upset.” But that is not the behavior. If you describe the behavior, what you observed, you might think, “She threw her crayon down on the floor and ripped up her paper.” Throwing and ripping are the behaviors that made you think your child might have been angry.

**“C” refers to the consequence** of your child's challenging behavior. Consequence simply means what happened AFTER the behavior. We typically think that consequence is what adults do after a behavior to punish the child. But here we are going to think about the word “consequence” differently. It is whatever happens right after the behavior. It might be something the child wants or a way that someone responds. Here are some examples of consequences:

- ▶ Your child's sister giving her brother a toy when he hits her is a consequence.
- ▶ You say, “Give mommy 2 more minutes,” after your child yells while you are on the phone is a consequence.

- ▶ Giving your child 5 more minutes to play before bedtime after they had a tantrum is a consequence.



## Show Slide 7: The ABCs and the Meaning of Behavior

You might be asking, how do I use the ABCs to figure out the function, or reason for my child's challenging behavior? A great question.

Looking at antecedents can help us figure out the function of a challenging behavior. Children tend to use challenging behavior in the same situations and around the same types of antecedents. Have you ever thought, "Every time we're in the car they start fighting" or, "She does this every time we try to sit and eat dinner at the table"? These consistencies in different situations can give us information about why behaviors occur. Knowing when your child is most likely to have challenging behavior and when challenging behavior is less likely to occur is some of the information you can use to plan how you can help your child.

What happens after the challenging behavior or the consequence will also tell you a lot about the meaning, or the function of behavior. That is, how we respond to a challenging behavior, even if we think it should reduce or stop the challenging behavior, makes it more or less likely to happen. If you tell your child to clean up their toys and they start crying and screaming and you respond with saying, okay you can have more time to play, the child will learn that when it is time to clean up and they want to play, they can cry and scream. They will cry and scream to get more play time in the future. Your child was communicating with screaming and crying that they wanted more time to play and did not want to clean up. Of course, we don't want our child to scream and cry and we don't intend to reward challenging behavior, we're all just doing the best we can. As we go through our time together, you will learn different ways to respond to challenging behavior that can help decrease challenging behavior.

## Behavior Detectives



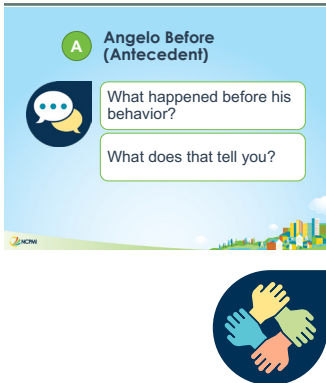
## Show Slide 8: Behavior Detectives

Now that we have learned about the ABC's of Behavior, we can use this information as clues as we are "behavior detectives." Let's practice. I am going to read a scenario and you will be looking for clues:

1. What happened before the behavior or the **A**ntecedent?
2. What did the child do, or the **B**ehavior?
3. What happened after the behavior or the **C**onsequence?

*Read the behavior scenario aloud to the group. Remind parents that while you read, they should be paying special attention to what happened **before** the behavior, what the **behavior was**, and what happened **after** the behavior.*

Angelo's mother tells him that it is time for dinner. She begins to guide him to sit in his chair. He falls on the floor, begins kicking and screaming, and shouts, "No!" His mother tells him to "stop" and tries to pick him up. He kicks her, and she sends him to his room.



**A** Angelo Before (Antecedent)

What happened before his behavior?

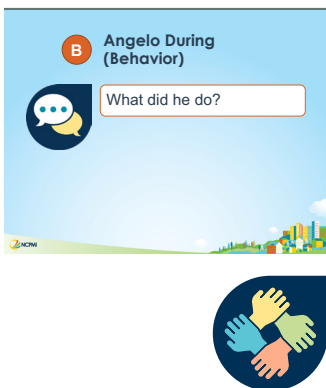
What does that tell you?

## Show Slide 9: Angelo Before (Antecedent)

Let's examine the situation.

- ▶ What happened before his behavior? (*Wait for response*)
- ▶ What does that tell you? (*Wait for response*)

Yes, his mother asked him to come to the dinner table; the behavior is in reaction to his mother asking him to the dinner table.



**B** Angelo During (Behavior)

What did he do?

## Show Slide 10: Angelo During (Behavior)

Now let's look at what Angelo did when his mother asked him to come to the table and guided him to his chair.

- ▶ What did he do? (*Wait for response*)

He had a major tantrum; he was kicking and screaming. That lets us know the request to come to the table was met with major resistance.



**C** Angelo After (Consequence)

What did Angelo eventually get?

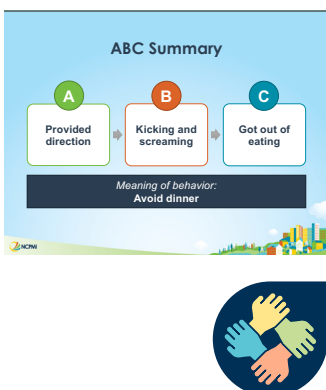
Do you think he might try this behavior again?

What might be the meaning of Angelo's behavior. What is he trying to tell his mother?

## Show Slide 11: Angelo After (Consequence)

Now let's look at what happened after his behavior.

- ▶ What did Angelo eventually get? (*Wait for response*)
- ▶ Did his need get met? (*Wait for response*)
- ▶ Do you think he might try this behavior again? (*Wait for response*)
- ▶ What can we take from Angelo's story? What might be the meaning of Angelo's behavior? (*Wait for response*)
- ▶ What is he trying to tell his mother? (*Wait for response*)



**ABC Summary**

**A** Provided direction

**B** Kicking and screaming

**C** Got out of eating

Meaning of behavior: Avoid dinner

## Show Slide 12: ABC Summary

You are doing great at being a behavior detective. Here is what you observed and discussed:

- A.** Provided direction
- B.** Kicking and Screaming
- C.** Got out of eating

If Angelo wanted to get out of avoid dinner, did his behavior work for him? (*Wait for response*). Yes. It very much worked. Once we understand the meaning of the child's behaviors, like we just worked through for Angelo, we can start to think about what we can do differently.



## Activity 2



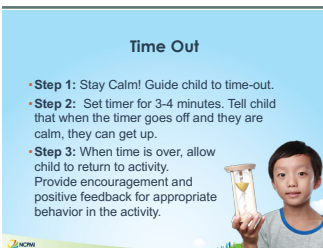
### Show Slide 13: Apply It and Try It

Does trying to determine the meaning of behavior make you want to go home and observe your child? Do you want to try and see if you can figure out why they do some of the things they do? It takes time to figure out function of behavior. Remember, the more you observe – the more clues you will have to figure out why they do what they do. Let's look in your Family Handbook at **Activity 2**. This will be your first Apply It and Try It Activity to do before the next session. Take a few minutes to look at the form and then we can talk about it to make sure that everyone understands what they are supposed to do. *(Give everyone time to look at the form.)*

As you can see on the form, you will be observing your child when they are using a challenging behavior. Select one of the behaviors you wrote down last week that you would like to see less of. You will look at what happens **before** the behavior starts and write down that information. You can check one of the areas on the form or write down what happened before the behavior began if it is not listed. Then observe what happens **after** the behavior stops. Again, you can check one of the areas on the form or write down what happens after the behavior stops if it is not listed. You will also try to determine what you think your child is trying to communicate. Remember, there are two functions you will be looking for, to get or obtain and to escape or avoid.

Using this form might help you begin to look at your child's behavior in a new way. You might notice that by using the process you will begin to understand your child's behavior better and think of ways to help your child. You will notice that you have several copies of this form so you can practice observing your child on several different occasions.

## Time-Out



### Show Slide 14: Time-Out

For many of us, children's challenging behaviors can affect our emotions and patience. Dealing with challenging behavior can be worrisome and frustrating. When behaviors happen...we might need a time-out. This is a strategy that most families have heard of and often use. I want to spend a little bit of time discussing time-out. Time-out can be helpful in some circumstances, but it must be used carefully and correctly. In addition, time-out can help with some behaviors immediately...but does not teach a child a new skill. As we work together, we will be focusing on how to respond to the behavior AND how to teach your child new skills and ways to cope.

A time-out might be necessary for some behaviors and for some children. Time-out is effective when the behaviors are done to get the attention. Time-out might also be used when a child is so angry or destructive that they must be removed from a situation to calm themselves. Also, when children engage in these types of behaviors, we might be angry and need a chance to cool down before we address the behavior with the child.



If you use time-out with your child, it should be implemented in the following way. You have a resource, *Time-Out Tips*, that can help guide you through these steps:

*Note to facilitator: Make sure participants have a copy of the handout, Time-Out Tips.*

**Step 1:** When the challenging behavior occurs, provide a very brief explanation (such as, “You cannot hit me to get my attention, so you need to sit in time-out until you’re calm.”) and immediately guide the child to sit in a chair. Do not interact with the child, either positively or negatively, while the child is in time-out.

**Step 2:** Time-out is brief, usually 3-4 minutes. Set a timer for your child or let them know you will watch the clock or your watch. Only end time-out if your child is calm. If they continue to be upset, state calmly “When you are calm, you can leave the chair.”

If your child gets up from the chair before the time-out is over, calmly guide the child back, and tell them “You must sit in time-out until you are calm, and the time is up.” It is very, very important that you do this calmly and with a minimum of talking to your child. Time-out works because the child can’t get your attention by using the challenging behavior. If you talk to your child (either explaining calmly or being angry), your child gets your attention.

**Step 3:** Once the time-out is over, the child can return to an acceptable activity. You can calmly remind the child to behave appropriately by saying “I’m glad you are calm, you can go play; remember to ... (e.g., use your words, solve problems with words, share your toys, etc.)” This statement should be brief (not a time for a lecture) and positive. As soon as possible, provide encouragement and positive feedback to your child for appropriate behavior in that activity.

#### Common Time-Out Mistakes

- Angrily threatening child with time-out
- Allowing other children to tease the child in time-out
- Talking to your child during time-out
- Applying time-out long after behavior occurred
- Scolding or shaming when putting child in time out.
- Using it as the only approach

### Show Slide 15: Common Time-Out Mistakes

Be careful about using this technique correctly. You should never:

- ▶ Angrily threaten your child with “time-out” if they do not behave. You must calmly state to the child the behavior you expect, and then state (calmly), “If you can’t (positively stated direction), you will go to time-out.”
- ▶ Allow your other children to tease the child in time-out.
- ▶ Talk to your child during the time-out.
- ▶ Use time-out after the episode has occurred as a delayed punishment (for example, giving a time-out after you arrive home after your child has misbehaved at the store will NOT be effective).
- ▶ Use it as your only approach. We will review many other approaches during our time together; they should be used to teach your child new skills.
- ▶ Scold or berate your child when putting them in time-out. You must be calm.

While time-out can give you and your child time to calm down, it does not teach your child a new skill. Remember that you must teach your child new ways to behave, express emotions, and solve problems. We will be discussing what those skills are and how to teach them in future sessions.



Before we move on, I want to give you time to ask any questions you might have about time-out. Does anyone use it with their child? Do you have questions about it or how you are using it?

## Developing Rules



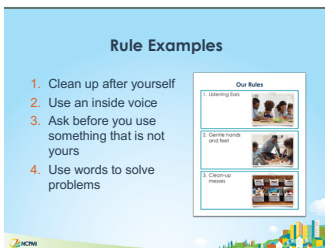
### Show Slide 16: Household Rules

One of the ways you can support your child at home is by helping your child understand what your expectations are. Think back to Angelo and his mother. I wonder what her expectations were for dinner time. Do we know if Angelo knew what he was supposed to do? Household rules can be used to help children know what your expectations are. Developing rules for your household is going to be your *Apply It, Try It* this week.

We all probably have rules that we want our children to follow – but do we write them down and teach them to our children? We are going to talk about ways to write your household rules with your child, teach them to your child, and then use encouragement and positive feedback to help them learn and practice the rules.

In terms of rules, for young children, it is best to:

- ▶ Keep it simple. Pick only 3 to 5 rules. Young children will not be able to remember more than a few rules at a time.
- ▶ State the behavior you want to see (as opposed to what you do not want to see). Be descriptive. What does the behavior look like?
- ▶ Pick rules that can be applied in a lot of situations and routines.
- ▶ Using visuals to explain the rule. Using visuals can be helpful for young children to understand what you want to see and what the behavior looks like. Combining a visual picture with a written statement can help your child know what the rule means. Visuals do not have to be fancy. You can draw a picture, use a real photograph, or develop something on your computer. Here is a sample rules poster that shows how visuals can be used (*pass round the sample rules poster*). *If participants have questions about visuals, it might be helpful to let them know that more information on using visuals will be discussed in Session 4.*

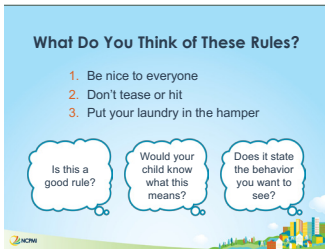


### Show Slide 17: Rule Examples

Here are some examples of rules that could be used at home.

1. Clean up after yourself.
2. Use an inside voice.
3. Ask before you use something that is not yours.
4. Use words to solve problems.

As a family you can talk about what each rule “looks like” at different times of the day or in different rooms of your home. For example, what does “Clean up after yourself” look like at dinnertime and in the bedroom?



## Show Slide 18: What Do You Think About These Rules?

Let me show you some examples of rules, and you tell me if they meet our “rules” for rules.

### 1. Be nice to everyone.

- Is this a good rule? *(wait for response)*
- What is it lacking or how could it be improved? *(wait for response)*
  - » Would your child know what this means?
  - » Would they know what you expect of them?
  - » Does it state the behavior you want to see?

*(Allow time for responses and discussion. Only ask the follow-up questions that are not addressed by participants in the discussion.)*

### 2. Don't tease or hit.

- Is this a good rule? *(wait for response)*
- What is it lacking or how could it be improved? *(wait for response)*
  - » Would your child know what this means?
  - » Would they know what you expect of them?
  - » Does it state the behavior you want to see?
  - » What does it mean to tease?

*(Allow time for responses and discussion)*

### 3. Put your laundry in the hamper.

- Is this a good rule?
- Can it be used in multiple routines?
  - » Would your child know what this means?
  - » Would they know what you expect of them?
  - » Does it state the behavior you want to see?

*(Allow time for responses and discussion)*

## Activity 3



## Show Slide 19: Family Rules

One of your Apply It and Try It, will be to develop your rules. You can do this using the activity page in the Family Handbook for **Activity 3**. Once you have brainstormed ideas for family rules, you have a resource in your materials called *Teaching Rules at Home*. This tip sheet is full of information about family rules and has a template for you to develop your own family rules poster. Depending on your child's age, unique development, and abilities, it could be a great idea to include your child in developing the rules and in talking about what they look like when they are being followed. You know your child best, so you know best how to involve them. Just remember, when children are included in the



process of developing rules, they may be more likely to follow the rules because they have ownership of them too.

During the next week, you can write your household rules on the form. After you write them on the form, you can put them where everyone in your home can see the rules. Remember there is a tip sheet and a poster template for you to use if needed. *Ask if participants have any questions.*

## Teaching Rules



### Show Slide 20: Teachable Moments

Teaching your child the rules is an important way to help them be successful at following the rules. Remember, we want to make sure they understand what we expect them to do.

Think about how you will talk to your child or children and explain the rules. Often parents only teach the rule when the child has violated it. For example, after Joey has hit and punched his sister to get a toy, his mother says, “Joey, you need to go to your room and no screen time for the rest today. You know the rule. You need to ask first.”

Think about how Joey was feeling at that moment.

- ▶ Is he relaxed?
- ▶ Is he listening carefully?
- ▶ Is this a “teachable moment”?
- ▶ What if that was the first time anyone told Joey the rule?
- ▶ Do you think he is going to learn it when he is upset?

*(Allow time for responses and discussion)*

Think about the last time you were very upset. Perhaps your spouse or partner was 1 hour late meeting you for dinner. You were angry and told them how much it hurt your feelings and ask why they didn’t call you. Let’s say your partner responded with “If you talk to me calmly and nicely, I’ll listen to you.” How would you react?

*Allow time for participants to respond and discuss.*

Teachable moments occur when everyone is calm and listening. To talk to your children about the rules, you might turn off the TV or put down the device and ask them to join you on the sofa. Show your child the rules poster; read the rules to them. After reading a rule, ask your child what that rule means, or show them what it might look like at a particular time of day. Give them an example of a situation and say: “Is that following the rule?” Show your child where you will post the rules. Use encouragement and positive comments when your child successfully follows the rules (e.g., “catch them being good”).

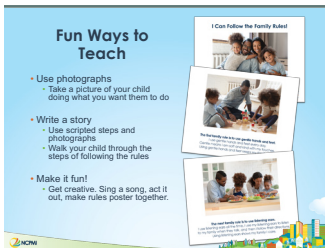


## Show Slide 21: More on Teaching the Rules

Do you think your child will follow the household rules? As we have noted, one way to get them more involved is to let them help you develop the rules. They can be a part of the process. Then you can practice, practice, practice. If you show your child the rules poster only one time and then forget to review it again, and again, and again - they are likely going to forget what is on it.

To really make it clear to your child that you want them to do something – you need to teach them how to do it.

1. Show and Tell: Show and tell your child how to follow the rules.
2. Practice Makes Perfect: Allow opportunities throughout the day for your child to practice.
3. You Got It! Notice when your child follows the rule and celebrate.



## Show Slide 22: Fun Ways to Teach

Lastly, have fun. Your child will be more interested in learning the rules if you have fun teaching them.

A fun way to teach rules is to use photographs. You can take a picture of what you would expect your child to do (this is particularly good if you can get a picture of your child or a sibling doing it) and then model, teach, and practice with your child how to do the expected rule. For example, one rule might be to clean up after yourself. This might mean that your child needs to clean their hands after going to the bathroom or after being outside playing with the dog. Clean up can also mean that your child needs to clean up their toys. You will need to model how to clean hands (e.g., washing at the sink) and how to clean up toys (e.g., putting toys in a cabinet or bin). By using a photo while teaching your child, it will help them recall the rule. It is also a useful practice to use when you tell your child to remember the rule because the photograph will help them recall and do the expectation with more success.

Another way you might consider teaching your child how to follow the rules is to write a story about the rules. We call these stories that help children know what to do – scripted stories. *Refer participants to an example of a scripted story. Have enough copies to pass around and have participants review.* Children learn expectations by our teaching them to them and by example. Children with communication difficulties or behavior challenges often need more detailed instructions through scripted steps of the situation. Scripted stories help children understand the expectations of the adult or situation. A story that walks your child through the rules and how to follow the rules, might be a fun way for your child to learn the rules. *Inform participants that they have the resource, **Making a Scripted Story**, that describes the steps to create a scripted story for their child. If time permits you might review the information. Let participants know that you are happy to review any scripted stories they develop for their child.*

Make teaching and learning the rules fun. Teaching your child how to follow rules and expectations should not feel difficult, long, or boring for your child. Get as creative as you can to teach and review your family's rules. For example, maybe your

child's favorite stuffed animals could act out what following the rules looks like. You could model the right and then wrong way to follow the rule once your child understands, generally, what the rule is, and your child can correct you to help you follow the rule the correct way. There are plenty of ideas for making teaching and practicing what rules and expectations look like, and I encourage you to get as creative and fun as possible. *Ask participants if they have any ideas that might work for their children to make learning rules fun.*

## Closing



### Show Slide 23: Apply It and Try It Review

As a reminder, you have two activities to try at home this week. First, you will use the Why Children Do What They Do form to practice observing your child and to help you determine what your child is communicating through behavior. Second, with the help of your family and child (if possible), you will create a rules chart or poster that you will hang somewhere in your house (with visuals if possible because that will be very helpful). Take a moment to review these activities to make sure that you don't have any questions for me before we end our session.

*Review the Developing Rules Apply It and Try It handout with participants.  
Answer any questions.*

Please don't get discouraged if using these new strategies feels hard, weird or different, especially in the beginning. Just keep practicing. We can talk about any questions or concerns that might come up as you try to use these strategies at home. I am looking forward to seeing you at our next *Positive Solutions for Families* session. We are going to be talking about routines and you will be learning some more helpful strategies. Thanks for coming.