


Session **2**

Making it Happen!



Positive Solutions for Families



The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

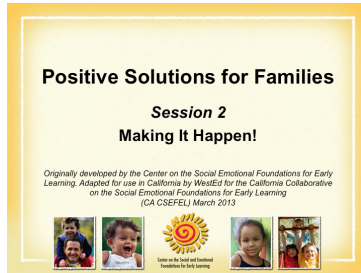
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Positive Solutions for Families: Making It Happen!

Learner Objectives: Discuss <i>Things to Try at Home</i> from previous session and link to the importance of supporting social-emotional development. Understand how play can be a powerful parenting practice. Learn ways to help children develop friendship skills. Link building relationships, using positive comments/encouragement, and play to children's behavior.	Suggested Agenda: 1. Review <i>Things to Try at Home Activities</i> . 2. Discuss the use of play as a powerful parenting practice. 3. Discuss ideas for helping children develop friendship skills. 4. Link positive comments, encouragement, and play to children's behavior. 5. Discuss <i>Things to Try at Home Activities</i> .
Materials Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PowerPoint™ or Overheads• Chart Paper, Markers, Tape• Role Play Cards• Ground Rules from Session 1	Handouts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Positive Solutions for Families</i> Workbook Activities 5 – 8• Role Play Cards

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Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3



Positive Solutions for Families

Post "Expectations" that were developed in the first session.

Show **Slide 1: Session 2: Positive Solutions for Families – Making It Happen!** Welcome Back! I am glad to see you at our second *Positive Solutions for Families Session: Making It Happen!*

If you have a chart of the group expectations, you can display it. Otherwise, this slide can remind the group of what they discussed last time.

Show **Slide 3: What's Happening Today** to review the main topics for today's group.

We are going to start off by sharing some of the things you tried with your child since our last session. In addition, we are going to talk about the importance of play as a very powerful parenting practice and share some ideas that you can use to help your child build friendship skills. Think back to the first session when we talked about the importance of supporting the development of social emotional skills. Helping your child learn how to play and interact with other children and adults is a great example of supporting your child's social emotional development!

You may be surprised that we are spending so much time working on how to connect with your child in positive ways through building relationships, being more intentional about using positive comments and encouragement, and playing. You might even be wondering when we are going to talk about those challenging behaviors that you might be seeing! Remember, making positive connections with your child creates a very important foundation for helping him/her learn new ways to interact and to behave. We will talk a little more about this connection at the end of this session. So, hang in there and we will show you how all of this ties together!

Now let's talk about the activities that you tried last week. You had two *Things to Try at Home Activities*. The first activity was to try to "fill/refill" your child's relationship bank. How many of you were successful in finding ways to "fill/refill" your child's bank? Would anyone like to share some of the things you tried and how it went? How did your child react? How did it make you feel?

The second *Things to Try at Home Activity* was to try to increase the use of positive comments and encouragement as a parenting tool. You were going to try to find at least 5 times when you could use positive comments and encouragement with your child. How many of you were able to do that? Who wants to share how that went? What kind of things was your child doing when you used encouragement or positive comments? How did your child react? What happened? How did it make you feel? (*Allow time for*

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Workbook – Activities 2 and 4
Review: *Things to Try at Home!*
Making Deposits
Encouragement Log

responses.)

Remind parents when they were using positive comments and encouragement, they were “filling” their child’s relationship bank!

Note to Facilitator: Some participants may remark that directly after encouraging their child, the child was silly or even engaged in challenging behavior. If that occurred, ask them to reflect on why that might have happened? For example, their child might have been trying to get more attention or their child might have been uncomfortable hearing encouragement. Encourage participants to continue to use the positive and encouraging comments with their child and see what happens. You can also use this analogy - “What happens when it first rains after being very dry? The water runs off the soil. That is like the child who is not use to hearing many positive comments. You have to let it soak in. Just like the dry earth!”

Slide 4



Positive Solutions for Families
Workbook – Activity 5
Parent Encouragement and Positive Comments

Slide 4: Before we move on, turn to Activity 5 in your workbook – the *Parent Encouragement and Positive Comments* form. You all did such a great job with your *Things to Try at Home Activities*. This form is for you! We all need a little encouragement every now and then! So, write a note of encouragement to yourself, to give yourself a pat on the back for something you did with your child last week! Even if you did not have a chance to complete the *Things to Try at Home Activities*, I bet there are still things that you did with your child that you can write down. Some of you might find this activity a bit awkward or uncomfortable because we don’t often write encouraging statements about ourselves. One example you could write would be something like: “When Bobbie wanted me to look at his drawing, I did a really good thing when I stopped what I was doing to take a look. I could tell it made him feel really special and I felt great when he said he made the drawing just for me!” *Allow time for completion of form.*

You saw how your children responded to you this past week when you used positive comments and encouragement. Today, we are going to continue to focus on ways to build positive connections with your children by talking about the power of play. I know that all of you play with your children, but did you ever realize how “powerful” that time can be for your child? We will talk about ways to play with your child that will capture his/her engagement and be enjoyable for both of you. If you can increase the positive times you have with your child, you can continue to strengthen your relationship, which will make it easier to teach your child new skills and behaviors.

Let’s brainstorm advantages of and obstacles to playing with your children. *Ask parents to brainstorm what they think the benefits and barriers to playing with their children might be. Parents’ responses can be written on chart paper.*

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Chart paper

Advantages might include (examples):

- child enjoys it, makes him happy
- increases creativity
- builds positive relationships
- teaches new skills
- shows child how to use social skills and interact with others
- child learns how to problem solve
- parents enjoy it!

Obstacles might include (examples):

- not enough time
- more than one child, sibling gets jealous
- no space to play
- parent is too tired after work to play
- parent finds child's play boring
- playtime with their child has been more of a struggle than fun
- don't know how to play

Explain to parents that while these obstacles are very real, we need to problem solve together and figure out how we can make playing with their child a priority. The benefits of play far outweigh the barriers!

To demonstrate how the benefits outweigh the barriers, let's talk about the power of play! Play can benefit your child in so many ways! Play provides multiple opportunities for children to learn social, communication, and academic skills. We may think that play is something that all children do instinctively and that we really don't need to spend time playing with our children. But...it is so important for you to find time to play with your children!

Play helps build a positive relationship with your child (another example of "filling/refilling" your child's relationship bank!). Through play, you can help your children learn to solve problems, try new ideas, and explore their creativity. In addition, playtime with adults can build a child's vocabulary so that children can learn to communicate more effectively, which may reduce challenging behaviors. Children also learn social skills, such as turn-taking, sharing, and being empathetic.

*Use **Slide 5** to discuss how the type of play that we want to talk about today may look a little different from what you think of as typical play. We want to think about play situations where the child is in control and the adult follows the child's lead. The adult allows the child to organize the play situation! The adult imitates the child's play and uses "talk" (or play narration) to facilitate attachment, language, engagement, and fun!! Talking or play*

Slide 5



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Slide 6



narration is a little like being a sports announcer. When you watch (or listen to) sports, the announcer usually gives a play-by-play account of what is happening. That is the same thing that you would do when you are playing with your child. You would give a play-by-play account of what your child is doing. This helps your child stay engaged in the play situation, builds vocabulary, and makes your child feel pretty special because you are interested in what he/she is playing! All of this helps to build positive relationships and provides lots of opportunities for positive comments and encouragement!

This type of play provides opportunities for you to model positive social skills such as sharing, turn-taking, helping others, and giving compliments. Providing opportunities for your children to practice these skills will help them learn the skills they will need when they are playing with other children. It would be great if you could find at least 10-15 minutes a day that you can use this type of play with your child!

Have parents brainstorm ideas of times when they might have 10-15 minutes to play with their child and try out some of these powerful parenting tips.

Summarize by discussing Slide 6: Powerful Parenting Practice Tips for Playing with Your Child:

- Tip1: Follow your child's lead (wait to see what they are interested in, watch to see what they do with the object/person, and then join your child's play).
- Tip 2:Talk, talk, talk about what your child is doing!
- Tip 3: Encourage your child's creativity and imagination.
- Tip 4: Watch for cues that your child might be losing interest in the play situation.
- Tip 5: Avoid power struggles.
- Tip 6: Have fun together!

(If you are not using PowerPoint™ or overheads, you might want to have these on chart paper so you can refer to them as you discuss them.)

Because it is often hard to find time to play with your child, we want to make the most of our playtime! Lets' practice putting the powerful parenting practices of play into action! We are going to role-play some typical play situations and think about how we might improve or make them better. *Ask for volunteers to role-play some of the "play situations."* *If one person volunteers to play a part (e.g., child), then let them pick their "parent" or vice-versa. Remember that parents have the right to pass if they do not want to participate in the role-play. The facilitator should participate in the first few role-plays so that parents are comfortable doing this.*

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Role Play

Use the role-play cards included with the session or make up your own! Give the volunteer “actors” a chance to look over their roles. Let them know they do not need to read the script word for word, but instead can just use it as a “guide” to act out their part.

Ask the group to watch the role-play and think about how the child might feel about the play situation and how the parent might improve the play situation. After each role-play, use the questions listed below to facilitate a discussion about the Powerful Parenting Practices of Play. If the group does not want to participate in acting out the role-plays, give everyone copies of the role-plays to read and discuss.

Example #1A: Max and Dad.

Scene:

Dad is sitting on the couch watching television. He told Max that he would play with him, but started watching television instead.

Max is sitting in front of him playing with Legos®.

Max: Makes a Lego structure and holds it up to his Dad. “Look!”

Dad: Not looking at Max but instead looking around Max to see the television says, “That’s nice.”

Max: Puts the structure closer in front of Dad’s face. “Dad, you didn’t see it. Look this part moves fast; see...vroom, vroom.”

Dad: Looking at Max briefly. “I see it; now let Dad finish watching his show. Why don’t you play over by the table?”

Max: Looks sad and moves his things over to the table.

Discussion Questions:

What happened?

Was this a positive play situation? Why or why not?

How do you think Max felt?

What was Dad doing?

Was Max’s creative play reinforced?

Did this situation help build a positive relationship?

What could Dad do differently?

*Refer back to the **Powerful Parenting Practice Tips** and have participants think about:*

Tip 1: Follow Your Child’s Lead (wait, watch and join your child’s play). Dad told Max he would play with him, but when Max tried to get Dad’s attention, Dad did not follow Max’s lead.

Tip 4: Watch your child’s cues to see if your child is becoming

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	<p>disinterested in the play situation. Dad was involved in the television show and missed Max's cues.</p> <p>What do you think might have happened if Dad had followed Max's lead and paid attention to his cues? Let's find out as we watch a replay of the play situation with Max and Dad! Have parents role-play Example 1B.</p> <p>Scene: Dad turns off the TV and moves over to Max joining him on the floor. He watches Max.</p> <p>Dad: "Max, that is really cool. What is it going to be?" Dad looks at Max and waits for a response.</p> <p>Max: "It is a super fast airplane. It can go faster than Superman!"</p> <p>Dad: "Faster than Superman? I'd say that is pretty fast. I like the colors, too. Blue is my favorite color. "</p> <p>Max: "Mine too. But I also like red, yellow and white."</p> <p>Dad: "Can I build something too?"</p> <p>Max: "Yes. You can build an airport."</p> <p>Dad: "An airport! Well, I think I need some help. Where should I put it?"</p> <p>Max: "Ummm...over there. And you can use these blue blocks."</p> <p>Dad: Smiles and says, "Thank you. That is very nice of you to share your blocks with me."</p> <p>Discussion Questions: What happened? How is this different from the first role-play? Was this a positive play situation? Why or why not? How do you think Max felt? What was Dad doing? Was Max's creative play reinforced? Did this situation help build a positive relationship? What could Dad do differently?</p> <p>Now try another role-play! Role Play # 2A: Kenny and his Mom.</p> <p>Scene: Kenny and his Mom are playing with blocks and wild animals on the floor.</p> <p>Kenny: Picks up a snake and says, "ROAR!"</p>
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	<p>Mom: “That is a snake not a lion. What does a snake say?”</p> <p>Kenny: “My snake roars. See, ROAR.”</p> <p>Mom: “No, that isn’t right. A snake says hisssssss not roar. A lion roars. Here is a lion for you to play with.” She picks up a lion and places it in Kenny’s hand taking his snake.</p> <p>Kenny: Makes the lion walk and says “roar.” This time with less enthusiasm.</p> <p>Mom: “That’s right son. You got it. Do you know what a lion’s baby is called?”</p> <p>Kenny: “Baby?”</p> <p>Mom: “No, they are called cubs. Lion cubs. How many lions do you have?”</p> <p>Kenny: He has four. He counts, “1, 2, 3.”</p> <p>Mom: “No, you missed one; let’s count them again.” She takes Kenny’s hand and touches each lion with it, “1, 2, 3, 4. How many lions are there?”</p> <p>Kenny: “Four. Mom, you be the lion’s daddy.” Kenny hands her a large tiger.</p> <p>Mom: “This isn’t a lion, Kenny. What is this?”</p> <p>Kenny: “It is the lion’s daddy.”</p> <p>Mom: “No, this is a tiger. What color is the tiger?”</p> <p>Kenny: Keeps playing and doesn’t answer. He turns away from his Mom and keeps playing on his own.</p> <p>Mom: “What color is it?”</p> <p>Kenny: “Black and yellow.”</p> <p>Mom: “No, Kenny, it is ORANGE and black. See.” She holds the tiger up to Kenny.</p> <p>Kenny: Puts down the toys he was playing with and begins kicking and throwing toys.</p> <p>Mom: “Alright young man, you are done playing!”</p> <p>Discussion Questions: What happened?</p>
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	<p>Was this a positive play situation? Why or why not? What was Mom doing? Why do you think she was asking so many questions? How do you think Kenny felt? Why do you think Kenny started throwing his toys at the end? Did this situation help foster creative play or build a positive relationship? What could Mom do differently?</p> <p><i>Refer back to the Powerful Parenting Practice Tips and have participants think about:</i></p> <p>Tip 2: Talk, talk, talk about what your child is doing! Remember how we talked about narrating your child's play like a sportscaster doing play-by-play? That means describing, commenting and expanding on what your child is doing. When you ask a lot of questions, it often stops the play and then the child loses interest or becomes frustrated. Try to limit the number of questions you ask.</p> <p>Next, discuss several of the tips together: Tip 3: Encourage your child's creativity and imagination. Tip 5: Avoid power struggles. Tip 6: Have fun together!</p> <p><i>Discuss how it is sometimes really hard to let our child be creative when we are trying to teach them names of animals, colors, sounds, etc. We want them to learn! But, it is also important for us to sometimes "go with the flow," follow our child's lead and see where he/she goes with the play situation! There will be other opportunities and times to teach your child labels, colors, and sounds. Remember that this is a time for you to have fun with your child, strengthen your relationship, and use positive comments and encouragement (to "refill" their relationship bank!). This also helps to avoid power struggles!</i></p> <p>Now let's try the role-play again and see what happens!</p> <p>Role Play #2B: Kenny and his Mom</p> <p>Scene: Kenny and his Mom are playing on the floor with wild animals and blocks.</p> <p>Kenny: Picks up a lion and makes it walk on the blocks.</p> <p>Mom: "Oh, you have lion. That is a big lion. It is a daddy lion because it has a mane."</p> <p>Kenny: Picks up the lion to look at it. "A mane." He points to the lion's mane. "That makes the lion go fast."</p>
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	<p>Mom: “Oh, that lion is moving really fast. He is running. I wonder why he is moving so fast?”</p> <p>Kenny: “He is trying to get to his friends house.” Kenny moves the lion next to the polar bear.</p> <p>Mom: “Oh, is the polar bear the lion’s friend?”</p> <p>Kenny: “Yes! The snake is his friend too. Remember the snake that roars? ROAR!”</p> <p>Mom: “Yes, I do remember the snake that roars.”</p> <p>Kenny: “His friend the lion taught him how to roar.”</p> <p>Mom: “Wow! He must be a pretty special friend for the lion to teach him how to roar! Look I see 1, 2, 3, snakes. Did the lion teach them to roar too?”</p> <p>Kenny: “Yes, 1, 2, 3 (Kenny counts the snakes). He teaches all of his friends how to roar! He taught me how to roar too – listen – ROAR! Do you want him to teach you how to roar?”</p> <p>Mom: “Oh yes! I would love to learn how to roar!”</p> <p>Discussion Questions: What happened? How is this scene different than the last one? What was mom doing this time? How did Kenny respond? Did you see her using descriptive commenting? Did this situation help foster creative play and build a positive relationship? What else was Kenny learning?</p> <p><i>Discuss how this is a great example of following the child’s lead, encouraging creativity, and having fun playing together!</i></p> <p><i>Remind parents that they can also play with their child using the same parenting tips when they are in the car, at the grocery store, or when they are bathing their child (just to name a few routines!). For example, your child may pretend that a bath cloth is a fish and make it jump in the water and swim under the water. Soap might be fish food! When we take advantage of playing with our child during daily routines, it makes it easier to find time to play! You don’t need expensive toys to “play!” Think of play as interactions between your child and something else – you! Ask parents if they have other ideas for playing with their child during routines.</i></p>
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Slide 7

Play as a Powerful Parenting Practice
Things to Try at Home – Activity #5



- Play goal for the week
- What you did together
- How your child reacted



Positive Solutions for Families workbook – Activity 5
Play as a Powerful Parenting Practice


Show **Slide 7** and have everyone turn to Activity 6 in their workbook. For one of their Things to Try at Home this week, they will complete **Play as a Powerful Parenting Practice - Activity 6**. They will develop a play goal for the week and then record when they played with their child, what they did together, and how their child reacted. Remind parents that the main focus is to just have fun playing with their child!

In order to help parents develop a play goal for the week, display **Slide 8**, which shows examples of goals. Discuss possibilities for goals. Their goals can be written on flip chart paper next to their names and used the next week to discuss how things went.

Slide 8

Examples of Play Goals

- I am going to try to turn off the television for 10-15 minutes and play with Juan.
- I am going to try to stop what I am doing and focus on Savannah while we are playing.
- I am going to try to follow Jamar's lead!
- I am going to play with each boy one-on-one while my husband gives the other a bath.
- I am going to try to stop being so bossy and let Crystal decide what she wants to play with.



Discuss how we have been talking about the importance of playing with our children and that one of the many benefits is that our children begin to learn social and communication skills (sharing, turn taking, problem solving, etc.) that will help them be more successful when playing with other children. When children have these skills it often makes it easier for them to make friends!

Slide 9

Basic Friendship Skills (3 yrs. +)

1. Sharing
 - Taking turns
 - Sharing space
 - Dividing up materials
 - Bestowing materials (giving from what you have, like part of a play-doh ball)
2. Helping
 - Showing concern
 - Removing distress
 - Caring about others
 - Acts of kindness
3. Cooperating/Socializing
 - Making play requests
 - Providing play ideas
 - Positive verbal and physical contact
 - Being flexible



Martin, M. (2003). Guidance of young children. Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.



Show **Slide 9: Friendship Skills**. When we observe young children who have lots of friends and are well liked by other children, these are some of the skills that they have. Review the list. Discuss how it is important to not only “teach” our children these skills, but to also provide them with opportunities to practice these skills so they will be more successful when interacting with other children.

Show **Slide 10: Helping Your Child Learn to Make Friends**. Discuss how parents can help their children develop friendship skills. Ask them to look at **Handout 7, Supporting Development of Friendship Skills** in their workbook.

Slide 10

Helping Your Child Learn to Play and Make Friends
Workbook Handout #7



- What you can do before your child plays with another child
- What you can do during play
- What you can do after your child plays with other children

Positive Solutions for Families Workbook – Handout 7
Supporting Development of Friendship Skills

Point out that it is very important to plan ahead when arranging “playtime” between their child and a friend. Some things to think about are:

- Is it best to have one or more friends?
- Who can my child play with who already has good play skills?
- Do I have enough toys and materials to prevent sharing problems?
- Have I taught my child what it means to be a good friend? (You may want to review what this means with the participants by asking them to think about what they consider to be important friendship skills.)

It is also important to think about what you are going to do during play to help your child be more successful in play situations:

- Stay nearby to help.
- Keep playtimes short.

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- Remind the children to “use their words.”
- Help your child begin to understand the other child’s perspective.

After playtime is done, you can promote the skills that your child used by:

- Making sure your child knows what went well. Be specific. This is a great time to use positive comments and encouragement as well as “refilling” your child’s relationship bank!
- Ask your child if he/she enjoyed playing, and follow his/her lead in describing the activity.
- If all went well, set another playtime!

Ask parents if they have any questions or comments about ideas for helping their child develop friendship skills? What kinds of things have they tried? Encourage them to try some of the strategies on the handout before, during, and after their child’s next playtime with a friend and see what happens. It will be really important to continue to use positive comments and encouragement as your child plays with you and other children. It will help them feel competent and confident as a play partner!

Speaking of positive comments and encouragement, let’s go back to the power of encouragement and positive comments in relation to your child’s behavior. This will help explain one of your *Things to Try at Home Activities* and help us prepare for our next session.

Slide 11


Catch Me Being Good!		
Challenging Behavior	The Behavior You Want	What to Say when you See the Desired Behavior: Positive Descriptive Acknowledgment
Hitting sister	Playing cooperatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are playing so nicely with your sister. You gave her a turn with your car. • It looks like you two have found a way to both fit on the tricycle. That is cooperating.
Running in the house with food	Walking or sitting while eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at you sitting while you eat. You look so safe and comfortable. • You carried that plate of food so carefully from the kitchen to the table. You stayed clean!
Screaming to get what she wants	Showing you what she wants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wow! You pointed at the refrigerator. You must want something inside. Let’s go look together. • When you raise your arms up, I know that you want me to pick you up. That is wonderful.

Slide 11 Catching Your Child Being Good.

By using positive comments and encouragement in relation to child behaviors, you give attention to what you want to see. In the first column is a challenging behavior. In the second column is the behavior that the parent would like to see instead of that challenging behavior. So, this is what the parent will be looking for. In the third column is the positive comment/encouragement that the parent could use. When children hear positive comments, it leaves a big impression! It makes children feel competent and confident! It is also a good strategy to use to acknowledge and reinforce good behavior!

Slide 12

Tell Me What To Do



- One way to support appropriate behavior is to tell your child what you want him or her to do
- Look at Handout 8
- Can you hear yourself and all of the *don’t*s?

Show Slide 12 Tell Me What To Do.

It may help to also think about how you provide corrections and directions to children. We can keep our focus on the appropriate behavior by avoiding phrases that tell our child what NOT to do. Children tend to focus on the active word in the sentence, so we say “*Don’t run*” and they hear “*Run!*” This is why you may hear the teachers saying things like “Use walking feet” or “Walk in the classroom,” which puts the focus on desired behavior.

Handout 8 has a helpful list of frequently heard phrases and

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Slide 13

Examples Workbook Activity #9	
Challenging Behavior (Would like to see less of...)	Positive Behavior (Would like to see more of...)
Ignoring me	Listening to me
Hitting	Using words
Screaming	Using an inside voice
Making messes	Cleaning up
Refusing to get dressed	Getting dressed when asked
Using bad words	Using polite words

Positive Solutions for Families
Workbook – Activity 7
Encouraging Positive Behavior

Slide 14

**Things to Try at Home
Making It Happen!**

- Play time with your child—remember to follow your child's lead! (Activity #6)
- Encouraging Positive Behavior Form (Activity #9)
- Have fun with your child!



ideas for what to say instead

Show **Slide 13** and ask everyone to turn to Activity 9 in their workbook. For next week, start to think about some behaviors that you would like to see less of and more of and ways you can encourage your child to use those behaviors! Slide 11 shows some examples. *Discuss these examples and ask participants if they have additional ideas.*

Show **Slide 14** as a reminder of the *Things to Try at Home Activities*. They will have a play goal for the week and try to find time to play with their child (don't forget to follow your child's lead!!) and write down at least one behavior that they would like to see less of.

Remember that the focus of this week's session was – Making It Happen! Last week's focus was Making a Connection! We have discussed many ways for you to make connections with your children. Through these positive connections, we can help our children feel more competent and confident, learn interaction skills, and develop friendship skills. We need to “teach” our children these skills and provide opportunities for them to practice their new skills. These are all really important skills for your children! When they have these types of skills, they are less likely to use challenging behavior! So...let's go make it happen!

I hope that as we work together in the “Solutions for Families” sessions you will continue to gain useful information and practical tools.

Please remember that you will need to bring your workbook and completed activities to our next session. If you don't like to write, see if you can get a family member or friend to help you with the activity.

I look forward to seeing you at our next *Positive Solutions for Families* session. We are going to be considering the question “Why Do Children Do What They Do?” Thank you for coming! Have fun playing with your child this week!