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Take your time and enjoy the process of learning.

The side bar information is used by many therapists to add "color" and warmth to their therapy sessions. You will not be tested on the side bar information unless it is a highlight of information from the text.

When you are done with the course, take the posttest. When you pass the posttest (70% or higher) and pay the course fee (\$10 per unit), you will be issued a CEU Certificate of Completion.

Enjoy!

<b>Course Name:</b>	Teaching Parents How To Teach Responsibility
<b>Course Number:</b>	B6C5-R
<b>CEU:</b>	1.0
<b>Instructor:</b>	Philip Copitch, Ph.D.

### Course material based on:

## Basic Parenting 101: THE MANUAL YOUR CHILD SHOULD HAVE BEEN BORN WITH

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*How-2 Parenting Series*

This book is available to therapists from CEUforTherapists.com at wholesale pricing.

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## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. You will study a process of educating parents how to teach their children to be responsible individuals.
2. You will read real life examples of how children learn.
3. You will study ways to teach a complicated subject to parents who are coming to you for help with their children.
4. You will experience the power of story as a cognitive-behavioral therapeutic tool.
5. You will see ways to demystify psychotherapy for your patients.

**Tell me, I forget.**

**Show me, I remember.**

**Involve me, I understand.**

## SUGGESTED PREREQUISITE COURSES

I am assuming that the student has a solid understanding of learning theory and cognitive behavioral techniques. This course is based on and refers back to:

- B6C1 Teaching Parents About How Their Children Learn
- B6C2 Teaching Parents How To Build Their Child's Self Esteem
- B6C3 Teaching Parents About How To Use Time Out Effectively
- B6C4 Teaching Parents About Family Rules

In this course we will look at how a therapist teaches parents how to deal with a complex family problem. The above course materials are available, free of charge, from CEUforTherapists.com.

The sections in red are for your information. The sections in black are how I explain the process to the parent. Please note that I use a cognitive behavioral approach.

## INTRODUCTION

Parents often seek help in dealing with getting their children to cooperate. Seldom parents see that lack of cooperation in their children tends to be a sign that their children are *irresponsible*. Many parents will take exception to the word "irresponsible" as it leads them to have to look at their own parenting skills. Once parents see that teaching responsibility is an important part of parenting, many parents are very happy to help their children (and themselves) grow up to be responsible members of our society.

I recommend a hands on approach to teaching parents about this complicated subject. By helping parents solve real family issues (chores, homework) parents learn the important process of teaching responsibility.

## TEACHING PARENTS HOW TO TEACH RESPONSIBILITY

### TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY

There are three major sore points with parents in regards to responsibility. These are:

- a. My children procrastinate.
- b. My children won't pick up after themselves.
- c. My children are late with homework, chores, or curfew.

The above are major irritants that, in most cases, are a sign of normal or abnormal maturity. This may sound contradictory at first read, but it is not. Some parents have unrealistic ideas of what they can expect from a child at any particular age. This can be a real problem. If the parents' expectations are unrealistic it will fuel great conflicts within the home.

One father was adamant that when he was a child he had to do his homework as soon as he got home or he would get a beating. Between the first and second session I asked him to call his

mother and ask if her memory was the same. He started out the second session by explaining,

I called my mother and she said that I fought doing my homework until high school. She told me a few stories of how hard I was to live with because of my dislike of homework. I just remember being stuck at the kitchen table.

For most fathers, memories of their behavior and their athletic ability improve as they become older memories. For most mothers, memories of their behavior and their ability to deal with boys improve as they become older memories. I am always amazed at how many star little league ball players I meet in their thirties and forties.

Unless you're around many children it is hard to know what is "average" skill level for them. Most of the time, parents I work with learn that their child's responsibility level is relatively average. This is in no way an excuse for messy or late homework assignments. But it is simply a reminder that responsibility is a learned behavior.

Parents should use the techniques discussed in the first four CEU courses: B6C1, B6C2, B6C3, B6C4 to teach responsibility. In addition, in this section we will look at some tricks of the trade that will help prod your future adults along.

## **MY CHILDREN PROCRASTINATE**

Many parents complain that their children do not use time wisely. They call it dawdling, laziness, or procrastination. Most families feel frustration during the transition times of the day—mornings, meals, homework, and bedtime. It is at these times of the day parents need the cooperation of their children to accomplish the task at hand. Many parents consult me with the same problem, "I can't get my child to ..." Their frustration leads to nagging, arguing, and punishment—which produced no real change in their child's behavior.

Time management is a learned behavior. Most children do not understand the concept of time until about age ten. A four year old is starting to understand the concept of annual, such as their birthday, Christmas, or summer. By age five, children are starting to understand days, months, and a year. These are very generalized concepts until around age eight. Between eight and ten children start to grasp the accumulation of a minute and what it feels like to wait five minutes. They are starting to develop their *internal* clock. At the same time their internal clock is influenced by their moods and expectations. Until age eight, parents need to help children compartmentalize their time. "You have six minutes to pick up your toys, I'll set the timer," is very helpful to a six year old. "I'll help you pick up the toys, I wonder how long it will take?" clues four year olds into the ticking of the clock.

It is easier to pull down  
than to build up.

Latin proverb

The concept of understanding the passage of time is a developmental milestone. Which means, it cannot be taught until your child is mentally developed enough to accept the new information. At the same time, time comprehension is not simply turned on in your child's brain. It takes external stimulation to trigger the nerves to develop. What this means for us parents is that we have to spend a lot of time talking about time with our children. Calm and supportive supervision of time management is an important parental task. All things being equal, be patient. (It is interesting to note that the lack of employee time management skills is a leading concern of corporate business management.)

Parents need to be careful that time does not become a battle ground between themselves

and their child. The following are some parenting land mines to avoid:

## **THE POWER STRUGGLE**

As we have discussed before, life is a process of cause and effect. Often the parent that pushes her child finds her child moving at a snail's pace in freezing January. The harder you push, the more your child resists. In parent/child power struggles everyone loses. Power struggles should be avoided by the parent. A power struggle is a spiral of emotion that pulls the parent and the child into the black hole of emotional conflict. The process is quite simple. The child feels pushed into doing something that they do not wish to do. They resent being told what to do, so they slow down. This is their behavioral way of saying, "You can't control me." This slow down gets them nagged at which feels like attention and is rewarding to the child. In the end everyone is angry with each other and you're still late. (See B6C1 Teaching Parents About How Their Children Learn)

I advocate that parents write Must Rules based on behaviors to be accomplished by a particular time. The older the child gets, the less support the child will need to accomplish the behavioral task. For example, do not focus on getting out of the house, focus on your child putting on his seat belt by a particular time.

Must Rule: You will have your seat belt on by 7:42 so we can start the car and drive safely to school.

Consequence: For every minute late, five minutes of early bed.

Parents need to resist telling their school age children and teenagers how to get to the car by 7:42. This is your child's responsibility. Respect their ability to learn and grow. (See B6C2 Teaching Parents How To Build Their Child's Self Esteem)

## **CHILDREN MISUSE TIME TO AVOID STRESS**

Many children act lazy or procrastinate to avoid personal stress. They find it is easier to try to miss the perceived stress than it is to deal with it head on. A child that hates school just can't seem to get started on school mornings. But they are bright eyed and bushy tailed on the weekends. Some kids that hate school just can't figure out how to sit down and start their homework. Homework will be discussed later in this section.

Some children fall into daydreaming to avoid stress throughout their day. The daydreamer avoids conflict by enjoying fanciful misdirection. My experience with daydreamers is that as you help them raise their self esteem the time they spend daydreaming will be used to get things done. (See B6C2 Teaching Parents How To Build Their Child's Self Esteem)

I do not see it as often, but some children become perfectionists to deal with their interpersonal stress. The perfectionistic child is able to look busy but accomplish very little. She may take twenty-two minutes to put her socks on, while being able to honestly say, "Mom, I'm putting my shoes and socks on." The perfectionistic child is trying to avoid conflict by accomplishing perfection but finds constant conflict because of time management. It is important to deal with the underlying fear in order to

People who try to command respect are wasting their time. Respect can't be commanded, it has to be earned.

help the child proceed at a reasonable level of proficiency. (See B6C2 Teaching Parents How To Build Their Child's Self Esteem)

## **MY CHILDREN DON'T PICK UP AFTER THEMSELVES**

Please allow me to semi brag for a moment. The following parental advice by far generates the most positive mail.

We have all stepped on those parent land mines called Legos. As much as I love the creativity Legos encourage in children, and I do highly recommend them as one of the best educational toys for children, I surely hate stepping on them. One night I stepped on one and its "sharp" little self impaled my heel. I walked crooked for two days. People asked, "Are you OK?" and I would grunt in pain, "No, my children are trying to maim me!"

Picking up after their children is probably the main reason why parents have lower back pain. I have no scientific proof, but I think Chiropractors give children a commission for every parent who walks into their office stooped over in agony.

Picking up after oneself is a learned behavior. As a learning tool I advocate the use of the Ching Ching Box. The Ching Ching Box has its own partially accurate story:

Many years ago, back in B.C. (Before Children), when Dr. Phil could see his toes, he would walk around the office picking up toys that were left around. Back then the goal was to keep the office picked up. Those were the good old days, when Dr. Phil only bent over four or five times each day, and never on weekends. Many years went by with no lower back pain.

We entered A.D. (After Diapers) when little ones roamed around the house spilling things and saying "No!" As the little ones went from diaper to demolition, Daddy Phil started to think about the good old days, when it was safe to walk around the house barefoot.

One day, Daddy Phil was walking through the living-room picking up lots of colorful toys when he felt his eyes start to spin inside his head. As he stood erect, his eyes kept spinning and then came to a sudden noisy stop, "Ching Ching!" "I have an idea," he exclaimed to the large purple dinosaur he was holding. "I should get paid for being the maid!"

"If I'm enslaved to pick up after my kids, they should have to earn their toys back!" The dinosaur voiced no dissent. An idea was hatched— The Ching Ching Box.

The Ching Ching Box procedure is quite simple. Anything unattended can and may be picked up by a parent and placed in the Ching Ching Box. Once it is imprisoned in the Ching Ching Box the owner must negotiate with the parent or teacher for its return. It is only fair. We caring parents protected our children's stuff for them, now they have to earn it back.

Things are earned back at the level of the owner. A five year old may have to do two jumping jacks to earn back a sneaker. While a ten year old may have to do a load of laundry or sweep the kitchen floor. The process is a negotiation. Both parent and child need to agree on the "repurchase price." Big ticket items are baseball gloves, homework assignments, or favorite articles of clothing.

The Ching Ching Box is a teaching tool. My goal isn't to fill it up. My aim is to focus my

children on taking responsibility for their belongings. On a regular basis one of us will say to the other, “Are you planning to Ching Ching before dinner?” “Oh yes,” the other one plays along, “I’m really looking forward to getting the stuff over by the ...” This leads to a scurry of little feet and victorious faces grinning, “You didn’t get my ...”

In the Copitch house we use a box that held ten reams of copy paper. It was “decorated” by *the boys* many moons ago. When it starts to get full, we pull it out and hold a Ching Ching auction. Whoever owns the item gets to discuss how to get it returned to them. Any item that is not worth earning back is auctioned off to another family member, usually at a very reasonable price. Mind you, we are not talking about money. Children earn their stuff back through chores. Our family is highly involved in Martial Arts so we do *sell* back items *paid* for with push-ups, sit-ups, or jumping jacks. Similar to the “punishments” given out by coaches in sports. Everything is negotiable. An ability that will greatly assist your children down the road in the adult business world.

If a child gets upset because his brother left out his property, I advocate for the situation. “It is sad that your brother is not taking responsibility for his behavior, but the property is yours, how would you like to earn it back?” Often one of my children will earn back another’s belongings because they caused the item to end up in the Ching Ching Box. But I never get involved in that negotiation. It is important that our children learn to pick their friends by judging the other’s level of responsibility. This is a wonderful practice for our children to learn about borrowing and personal responsibility to another.

I am regularly asked by one of my boys, “Dad, are you planning to Ching Ching?” to which I advocate, “Not right now, but in a little while, how come you’re asking?”

Many parents find that one child accuses another of using their belongings without permission, then getting it Ching Chinged. It is tempting for parents to play police officer and try to solve the problem. I advise that you do not. Negotiate the item as discussed above and table the issue of stealing until an appropriate time. (Usually the next meal or house meeting.)

It is important that the Ching Ching Box be seen by the parents as a learning tool not a form of delayed punishment. Keep it light hearted and humorous. Oh, just so you know, some families allow Ching Chings by one parent of the other parent’s stuff. I hear the repayment negotiations get quite interesting.

Finally, only parents can Ching Ching! Only parents can take an item out of the Ching Ching Box. A child who removes an item from the box is stealing!

## **MY CHILDREN ARE LATE WITH HOMEWORK, CHORES, OR CURFEW.**

This is simply an issue of your children doing what they want to do versus what they *must* do. Let me make this point bluntly,

Why doesn’t your teen poop in the living room?

Why doesn’t your eight year old potty on the couch?

Why doesn’t your eleven year old make *dodo* at the dining room table during Sunday dinner?

The answer is: they have internalized the Must Rule about toileting that you taught them

One family I worked with believed that clutter was their number one family conflict. To make sure that they were ready to Ching Ching they obtained a refrigerator box from an appliance store, decorated it, and set out to, as dad put it with clenched fist held aloft, “Ching Ching the world!”

during the potty training phase of their younger life. I point this out because, unless your children “believe” that they must do their homework, they will do what they want to do. Unless your child believes that they must be home by curfew, they will do what they want to do. Unless your child believes that they must do their chore at a particular level, they will do what they want to do.

You can lead a boy to college, but you cannot make him think.

Elbert Hubbard

Central to most task completion issues is that the child does not believe her adults.

You need to honestly question yourself. Is homework a *Maybe* (a preference) in your family or a Must Rule? (See B6C4 Teaching Parents About Family Rules.) If you are teaching your children that homework is a preference, then your child will play before she does her work. If your child believes that cleaning her room is a parental preference (Maybe Rule), then riding her bike is more likely to be her choice.

The following are actual Must Rules that families have found usable: (See B6C4 Teaching Parents About Family Rules.)

#### Homework:

Education is a social process ... Education is growth.... Education is, not a preparation for life; education is life itself.

John Dewey

**Must Rule:** Homework must be done as soon as you come home. Nothing else is allowed until homework is done. (Go to the bathroom first, then go to your homework area.)

**Consequence:** For every minute you procrastinate you earn four minutes of room restrictions.

**Must Rule:** Homework must be completed and placed on the front hall table by 6 PM. Mom or Dad will check all homework during dinner. Homework corrections (after dinner) will be done before any TV.

**Consequence:** If homework is not on table by 6 PM, you have earned room restrictions that evening.

**Must Rule:** Mom will be available to help with homework from 7-8 PM Monday through Friday, and Saturday morning from 9 AM to noon.

**Consequence:** School is your job. I am here to help, but I am not willing to nag. Any midterm or final grade below a “C” earns house restrictions until it is raised to a “B.”

#### Chores:

Single father with three children ranging in age from eight to sixteen.

**Must Rule:** Chore list is posted on Sunday morning. You must do your chore as listed on the chore list.

**Consequence:** If your chore is not done correctly, as defined by the chore list, you are grounded for the rest of the day and earn an extra chore.

**Note:** The chore list had specific expectations, clearly spelled out, for each household chore.

**A blended family with 4 teenagers:**

**Must Rule:** There are four family chores that must be done every day. Morning Dishes, Upstairs Bathroom, Living-Room Pick-Up, and Dinner Dishes. It is the responsibility for our four children to work out a procedure to get the chores done, as needed, throughout the day.

**Consequence:** If any chore is undone, your beloved parents go on strike until the chores are done. (On strike means that (step) mom or (step) dad will not help any of their teenagers to do anything, i.e., lend car, take phone messages, cook.)

**Single mother with young children:**

**Must Rule:** Bobby must set the table for breakfast.

Sally must set the table for lunch.

Mary must help mommy set the table for dinner.

**Consequence:** If table is not set on time, responsible person loses his or her dinner dessert.

### Curfew:

**Must Rule:** You must be home at or before 9 PM.

**Consequence:** If you are late, you have chosen to be grounded for one week.

**Must Rule:** Before you get to leave, you must write the agreed upon curfew on the refrigerator white board.

**Consequence:** For every minute you are late, you are grounded for one day.

**Must Rule:** Randy's curfew is exactly 11 PM.

Sue's curfew is exactly 10 PM.

"You have chosen" puts the responsibility where it needs to be, with the child.

Robert is too young for a curfew.

Consequence: If you are late, even by a second, you lose your license for three days. Three curfew infractions in any thirty day period, you are grounded for one month.

Each of the above rules are from different families. All of the families were having problems getting their children to follow the family rules. When the rules moved from the Maybe Rule column to the Must Rules column the children started to let their parents parent. Please note that each family wrote the rule specifically for their family and situation. (See B6C4 Teaching Parents About Family Rules.) Must Rules with clearly defined consequences are essential for teaching your child responsibility and, in the long run, relieving your personal frustrations.

## POSTTEST

When you're ready, take the posttest to obtain your CEU certificate. Your test consists of 5 multiple choice or true/false questions per Continuing Education Unit (3 CEU = 15 questions).



Make your books your  
companions.

The Talmud

Revenge is sweet,  
sweeter than life itself— so  
say fools.

Juvenal

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There are no excuses for being late, even alien abduction is not a good reason.