

Parents Taking Action

Group for parents whose child challenges parental authority



Parent Exercise Book

Under the direction of :
Charlaine Bisailon
Ginette D'Auray

Written by :
Charlaine Bisailon

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Charlaine Bisailon, Planning, Programming and Research Officer, DSPQ.

Coordination

CHARLAINE BISAILLON, Planning, Programming and Research Officer, DSPQ

GINETTE D'AURAY, Planning, Programming and Research Officer, DSPQ

SYLVIE GIRARD, Senior advisor

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In this text, use of the masculine is generic and applies to both men and woman.

Parts of this document are from various authors. We use extracts to draw inspiration to devise our activities and create appendices. We quote the author in a footnote, and at the end in the bibliography in order to respect copyright. These extracts are used to complement this facilitator's guide.

Introduction

Hello everyone!

Welcome to the *Parents Taking Action* group.

Parents Taking Action is a group for parents like you who have children between the ages of 6 and 12 who challenge parental authority. The aim of this group is to help a parent exercise his authority when he has to cope with children who refuse to obey and, consequently, suffer from behavior disorders. In doing so, this group seeks to make you aware of theoretical concepts related to discipline and guidance, particularly with regard to child behavior disorders. You will apply methods conducive to a harmonious family environment. In addition, you will develop abilities and skills to improve your child's obedience.

During our meetings, a number of themes will be addressed, including situation analysis, parent-child relationship and guidance. You will have the opportunity to familiarize yourself with these themes through different activities, namely illustrations, situation simulation exercises, quizzes, screening of a film, etc. You will also have the opportunity to meet parents who have experienced situations like yours and with whom you will be able to share your concerns and your successes.

Enjoy your group!

MEETING CALENDER

PLACE:**TIME:**

	MEETING DATES	SUBJECTS
MEETING 1		Presentation of the content of group Objectives Definition of disobedience «Surprise them» technique
MEETING 2		Risk factors in child disobedience «Do me a favour» technique
MEETING 3		Making an appropriate request «Positive attention» technique
MEETING 4		Parental discipline styles «Structuring for preventing» technique
MEETING 5		Parents-child meeting 18h00 à 19h15
MEETING 6		Positive attention is not enough! Time-out!
MEETING 7		Positive attention is not enough! The token systems!
MEETING 8		Taking care of yourself! Synthesis of the progress and the exchanges Assessment of the group

Theme 1: Analysis of the situation

Overall objective

Parents are made aware of theoretical concepts related to discipline and guidance, particularly with regard to child behavior disorders.

Specific objectives



The parent knows the definition of disobedience.



The parent identifies his child's disobedient behaviors.



The parent identifies the factors (child's and parent's characteristics, family and environmental stressors) which can lead to their child's disobedience.



The parent identifies solutions to minimize the impact of family and environmental factors and consequently, on disobedient behaviors.



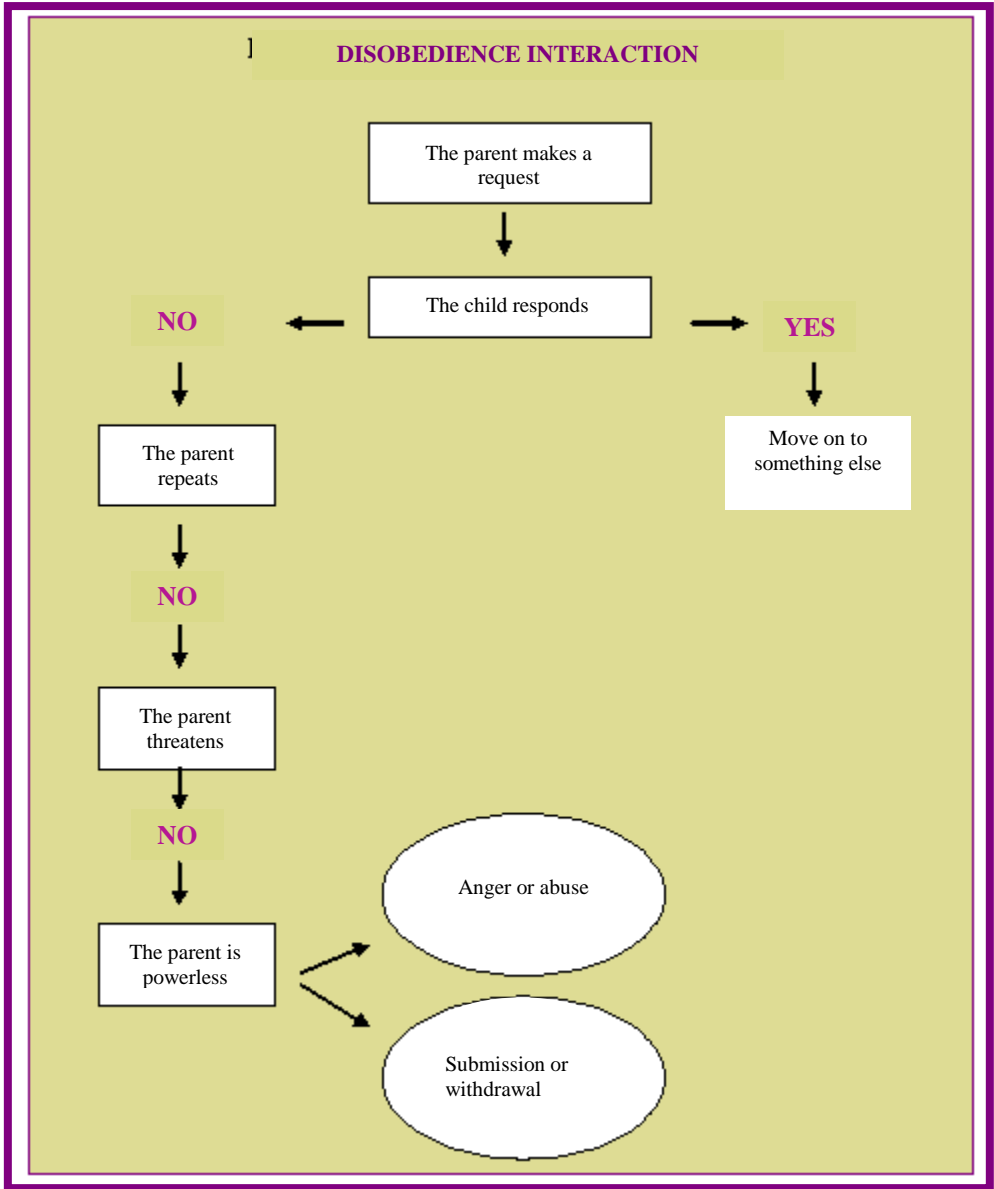
DEFINITION OF DISOBEDIENCE
(three typical situations)

The child takes too long to respond when asked to do something. It is considered that appropriate response time is between 10 seconds and 1 minute.

The child stops doing what he was asked without completing the task.

The child refuses to comply with established rules in different situations; e.g., he gets away from his parents in a public place, he lies, hits other children, takes food in the refrigerator without asking permission, insults his parents, etc.

Taken and adapted from the *manuel PEDAP*. (1997). (p.8)



Taken and adapted from the *manuel PEDAP*. (1997). (p.15)

"Surprise them" technique

To build a positive parent-child relationship, it is important to emphasize your child's good behaviors.



When your child does something, he is supposed to do, you must provide positive feedback like: "Thank you for doing what I asked" – "Good work!" – "I am proud of you" or simply hug him or give him a wink: "Thank you for doing what I asked."



As soon as you see your child obeying (a rule, instructions, a task, etc.), congratulate him. Be generous in giving positive feedback.



Do not ask for anything, the behavior observed must be spontaneous and at the child's initiative.



Caution! Certain children can react negatively to this type of comments. Don't worry, you should continue and keep trying.



"Surprise" your child every day, at least three times a day.

Words and actions to "Surprise" your child . . .

- ❖ I love it when . . .!
- ❖ It's nice, wonderful, wow!
- ❖ You really are a big boy (a big girl)
- ❖ What you did was terrific!
- ❖ You are improving!
- ❖ I am proud of you!
- ❖ A wink
- ❖ A touch on the shoulder
- ❖ A pat on the back
- ❖ A hug
- ❖ A kiss
- ❖ A high five

Risk factors - Child disobedience

Child characteristics

- Health problems
- Biological components (hormones)
- Intellectual or physical disability
- Daily routine
- Attention problem – hyperactivity
- Inappropriate responses to stimulations
- Delays in development (maturation)
- Social integration difficulties (attitude toward their peers)

Parent characteristics

- Health problems
- Biological components (hormones)
- Intellectual or physical disability
- Daily routine
- Attention problem – hyperactivity
- Impulsiveness
- Emotional problem
- Parenting style



Situational events – Stressors

- Suffer from a sudden illness
- Financial problems
- Family problems
- Job loss
- Separation – Divorce
- Various losses (e.g., death of a loved one)
- Etc.

Environment

- Consecutive moves
- Change of school
- Housing
- Social support
- Accessibility and availability of services.
- Etc.

Child's personal characteristics

1. Does your child have health problems? If so, which ones?

2. Does your child have a physical disability? If so, which one and since when?

3. Was your child's development considered normal? If your child experienced developmental delays, please indicate in which areas.

4. Is your child slow or fast when performing his activities? How do you feel about his attention span?

5. Does he have a tendency to act impulsively without thinking? Give an example.

6. How does your child express his feelings? Is he too emotional or not enough?

7. Does he have difficulty making friends? Why?

8. Does your child have a tendency to withdraw to a corner or is he constantly looking for new sources of excitement?

9. How does your child manage his biological patterns (sleeping, eating, etc.)?

Taken and adapted from: Cloutier, G. (2012). *Vivre en harmonie avec un enfant qui s'oppose*. (p.49-50)

Routine example for a child or pre-teenager

Routine for a child

Am :

- Wake up
- Breakfast
- Brush teeth
- Get dressed
- Put lunch in back pack
- Departure for school

Pm :

- Snack and homework
- Free play
- Choir : Lay the table
- Supper
- Free Time
- Bath (put dirty cloths in laundry basket)
- Brush teeth
- Bed time story

Routine for a pre-teenager

Am :

- Wake up
- Breakfast
- Get ready
- Make lunch
- Departure for school

Pm :

- Sport practice
- Snack
- Free time
- Supper
- Homework
- Shower
- Bed time

Your routine

Am : _____

Pm : _____

"Do me a favour" technique

The more you make positive comments on a child's behavior, the more likely he is to perform this behavior spontaneously.



Choose moments where your child has nothing special to do to ask him for small favours, e.g., "Could you please give me a tissue?" – "Could you please get my slippers?" These are favours that can be done within 30 seconds.



If your child complies with your request, compliment him on his behavior. If your child refuses to do the favour you asked for, do not reprimand him, say nothing.



It is important that when you ask for a favour, it sounds like a request not an order; e.g., "Could you please bring me a glass of water?" not "Give me a glass of water!"

Theme 2: Parent-child relationship

Overall objective

The parent applies methods conducive to a harmonious family environment.

Specific objectives



The parent learns to make a clear and concise request to his child.



The parent learns five styles of parental discipline.



The parent identifies the style of discipline he uses most frequently.



The parent applies the positive attention technique in the presence of the facilitators.



The parent shares a special moment with his child.



Making an appropriate request

HOW TO MAKE AN APPROPRIATE REQUEST

- Be brief (no unnecessary explanations)
- Be clear and concise (like in a good recipe)
- Be positive (describe the behavior to perform not the one to eliminate)
- Be assertive (its compulsory nature is obvious)
- Point out to the child when and how much time he has to comply (immediately or at a particular time)
- Use a respectful tone when speaking to children (no signs of criticism or impatience)
- Ensure that other family members support the request

Pssst . . . Some tips for having a better chance of getting obeyed

- Establish eye contact with the child. Ensure that your child is listening when you are talking to him. Eliminate all distractions.
- Divide the task to be carried out into steps (do not make several requests at once, but establish a sequence, if required).
- Ask your child to repeat the instructions.
- Stay in the room. Supervise your child's activity by checking on him now and again.
- Positively reinforce good behaviors. Compliment your child when he behaves properly.

Pitfalls to be avoided

- ❖ **Criticisms:** In words (avoid the "you should have") or in actions (avoid redoing what your child has done; e.g., asking him to set the table and then setting it your way.)
- ❖ **Bad teasing:** This can create uncertainty in your child because he does not know if you are serious, or if you are joking.
- ❖ **Denial:** Be careful with magic words like "It doesn't matter; it will go away." Using them occasionally may be a good thing, but you have to be able to "tell it like it is."
- ❖ **Exaggeration:** The child may be suspicious of compliments that do not sound right (You are the most good-looking boy in the world.), be honest.
- ❖ **Label:** It is important to focus on the child's actions rather than on his personality (your room is a real pigsty rather than what a mess, tidy your room.)
- ❖ **Threats:** Avoid threats, they may hurt and scare your child (You'd better be quiet or the police will come and get you.) It is better to negotiate with the child and propose something interesting to get him to obey (If we hurry home, you will have more time to go sliding.)
- ❖ **Lack of time:** It is obvious that you cannot comply with all of your child's requests immediately. However, avoid making him feel like he is constantly bothering you. He may think that he is "not important enough" or "not loved."

Taken from Cloutier, G. (2012). *Vivre en harmonie avec un enfant qui s'oppose*. Montréal: Éditions Gily. (p. 73-74)

THE FIVE Cs OF A GOOD RULE

To be followed, your rule must be:

CLEAR

Use simple words suited to the child's age. Your child must be able to understand your rule. It will make it easier for him to follow it!

CONCRETE

The child must understand what is expected of him. The rule must be doable!

CONSTANT

Application of the rule must not be dependent on a given situation or the parent's mood. The rule must be the same everywhere and in all situations. Always the same!

COHERENT

Avoid imposing rules to your child, that you don't follow. A rule must be related to the values a parent wants to teach his child. I do what I say!

CONSISTENT

A rule allows a child to learn new behaviors that he will use in other situations. Moreover, if the child breaks a rule, it carries a consequence. Apply the consequence!

"Positive attention" technique

What is positive attention?

The quality of attention we get from a person determines our interest in doing things with him or her. For example, when we enjoy spending time with someone, we want to be with this person. On the other hand, when we don't enjoy spending time with a person, we try to avoid being with him or her.

How it works

Play with your child every day	Give attention to the good behaviors and ignore the bad ones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a time: set a fixed time or when your child is playing. Allow at least 15 minutes to the positive attention technique. • Choose a two-player game: the other children cannot play. • The child chooses the activity, one allowing interaction. No television. • Show your interest and forget criticism. Enjoy watching and commenting his achievements. • Encourage your child. • If your child misbehaves, focus your attention elsewhere. If he continues, stop the activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly encourage your child's efforts. DON'T WAIT! • Say what you like about your child's action (I like it when you speak quietly.) • Do not mix praise and criticism (You finally cleaned your room, it's about time.)

Don't forget!

Ideally, you should apply the *positive attention* technique every day, a minimum of 3 to 4 times a week, or according to your child's life situation (at every possible opportunity, when visiting, etc.). All you have to do is play with your child and pay attention to good behaviors while ignoring bad ones.

Suggestions of games to put positive attention into practice

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Building sets (LEGO, K'Nex) ❖ Handicraft, coloring, drawing, painting ❖ Puzzle ❖ Scale models ❖ Card castle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Writing a poem or a letter ❖ Memory games ❖ Play a sport (soccer, baseball, etc.) ❖ Play a musical instrument ❖ Board games (Guess Who?, Risk, Trouble, Monopoly, Uno, etc.) |
|---|--|

These games allow your child to be creative, while letting you pay attention to his positive behaviors when he plays.

Taken and adapted from Cloutier, G. (2012). *Vivre en harmonie avec un enfant qui s'oppose*. Montréal: Éditions Gily. (p. 64-67)

My style of parental discipline

This questionnaire will allow you to identify your parental style. Circle **only one answer** per question. Answer spontaneously and honestly so that you can recognize yourself.

1. You are getting ready to go to the movies (first time in months), but your 6-year-old son makes a scene when you are about to leave.
 - A. You reprimand him before you leave.
 - B. You cancel your evening out.
 - C. You explain the situation to him, show him to wave good-bye in the window, hand him over to the babysitter and leave.
 - D. You leave later and do a last activity with him, hoping he will agree to you leaving so you won't feel as guilty.
 - E. You slip out thinking that it's up to the babysitter to take care of him.

2. Bed time is:
 - A. Quick as a flash
 - B. Time for pampering
 - C. A well-organized little ritual
 - D. Time for negotiations
 - E. Hell

3. Your child jumps on the couch:
 - A. You reprimand or punish him.
 - B. You say to yourself that he is too young to understand and do nothing.
 - C. You firmly repeat the rule and intervene if he doesn't react.
 - D. You start a discussion with him.
 - E. You mildly disapprove, but do nothing if he continues.

4. Your 7-year-old child throws a tantrum in a store because he wants a gadget or sweets.
 - A. You punish him immediately.
 - B. You buy what he wants because you feel sorry for him.
 - C. You take him aside and make him understand that if he wants to continue shopping, he has to learn to behave properly.
 - D. You start negotiations to try to reason with him.
 - E. You keep on shopping as if nothing is happening.

5. Your two children are fighting over a game:
 - A. You immediately take away the game.
 - B. You give the game to the youngest child.
 - C. You organize a rotation of the games.
 - D. You tell them to share.
 - E. You let them sort it out.

6. You are divorced, when your children visit the other parent, they only take a quick bath every three days. At your place, they take a bath every day without exception.
 - A. You nag your ex-spouse and the children about it after each visit. You tell them that if they come home again without having taken a bath, they won't get their allowance.
 - B. You call each night to remind them to take a bath because you know your ex-spouse is irresponsible, and your children are not in good hands at his place.
 - C. You clearly explain to your ex-spouse and your children the importance of taking a bath every day and play a game with the children to get them in the tub when they come home.
 - D. You tell yourself that everyone is entitled to their own idea of hygiene and let the children decide to take a bath or not.
 - E. You give up telling yourself there is no point in insisting.

7. Your 7-year-old son has been labelled hyperactive by teachers and school professionals. The latter are asking that the pediatrician prescribes some medication, otherwise he will be placed in a special class.
 - A. You trust school personnel and the pediatrician: you give the medication to the child and insist that he be more obedient at school and at home.
 - B. You think that the teaching staff is so overloaded with work that it labelled your child as hyperactive for no reason.
 - C. You eliminate white sugar, which has a tendency to excite him, and consult a professional for an assessment of the situation.
 - D. You think that the regular program is too demanding. You request a transfer to the alternative school where your child will have freedom of choice.
 - E. This problem is beyond you so you decide to send your child to boarding school.

8. For you, your child is primarily:
 - A. A primitive being that must be tamed.
 - B. A fragile being that must be protected.
 - C. A developing person.
 - D. A tiny adult.
 - E. A whole lot of trouble!

9. Your child interrupts for nothing while you are discussing something important with another adult:
 - A. You tell him to go away.
 - B. You cuddle him while continuing your conversation with the other adult.
 - C. You ask him to come back in a few minutes.
 - D. You stop talking to the adult and give all your attention to your child for as long as it takes.
 - E. You ignore him.

10. When you assign a chore to your youngster:
- A. He always does it, if not, beware of consequences!
 - B. Half the time, he complains and gets away with not doing it.
 - C. Most of the time he happily does it.
 - D. He complains, makes demands and negotiates before doing it.
 - E. He does it sometimes when it suits him.
11. Your daughter is impolite with you:
- A. You give her a lecture or you withdraw permission to go to her friend's house.
 - B. You excuse her by telling yourself that she is tired.
 - C. You ask her to repeat her sentence more politely or to go to her room and cool down before continuing her discussion.
 - D. You reply in the same tone.
 - E. You put up with the impoliteness without saying a word.
12. Your son comes home with a few scratches and a torn sweater, your first reaction is to:
- A. Scold him.
 - B. Run to the hospital.
 - C. Ask "What happened?"
 - D. Find who did this.
 - E. Say "It's no big deal".
13. Your child doesn't want to wear clothing that is appropriate for the season:
- A. You dress him, by force if necessary.
 - B. You appeal to his emotions "Just to make me happy . . . "
 - C. You ask he wears a minimum and let him decide the rest.
 - D. You let him experiment.
 - E. Sometimes you insist, sometimes you give up.
14. You come home from work exhausted. Despite repeated requests, your children (7 and 8 years old) have not put away their coats and their boots, as agreed.
- A. You turn off the television and force them to do this task immediately without grumbling.
 - B. You tell yourself that they probably had a full day too and pick-up their things.
 - C. You take a deep breath to calm yourself, ask how they are doing and insist that they do their chores as soon as possible.
 - D. You don't bother them, finding that life will bring them enough difficulties and respect their choice.
 - E. You complain to your spouse or a friend, without doing anything.

Analysis and interpretation

Which letter did you circle most often?

The "A" = _____

The "B" = _____

The "C" = _____

The "D" = _____

The "E" = _____

The letter that appears most often corresponds to your main style of discipline, the one you use most often.

The letter that is second, in terms of frequency, corresponds to your associated style of discipline; i.e., the one you use once in a while or when your main type is not effective.

A Controlling	B Overprotective	C Assertive	D Permissive	E Uninvolved
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These styles are not independent, there is a continuum, with every gradation it involves.

Are you considering making changes to your style of discipline?
Here are some questions to ask yourself . . .

1. Do you recognize yourself in the style of discipline indicated by the questionnaire results?
2. Do you recognize your spouse? Your parents?
3. Did you choose the same parental style as your parents? Why?
4. Are you seeing positive and lasting changes (medium and long term and not just short term) in your child's behavior?
5. Are the emotional ties between you and your child as satisfying as they were a few years ago or as harmonious as you would like?

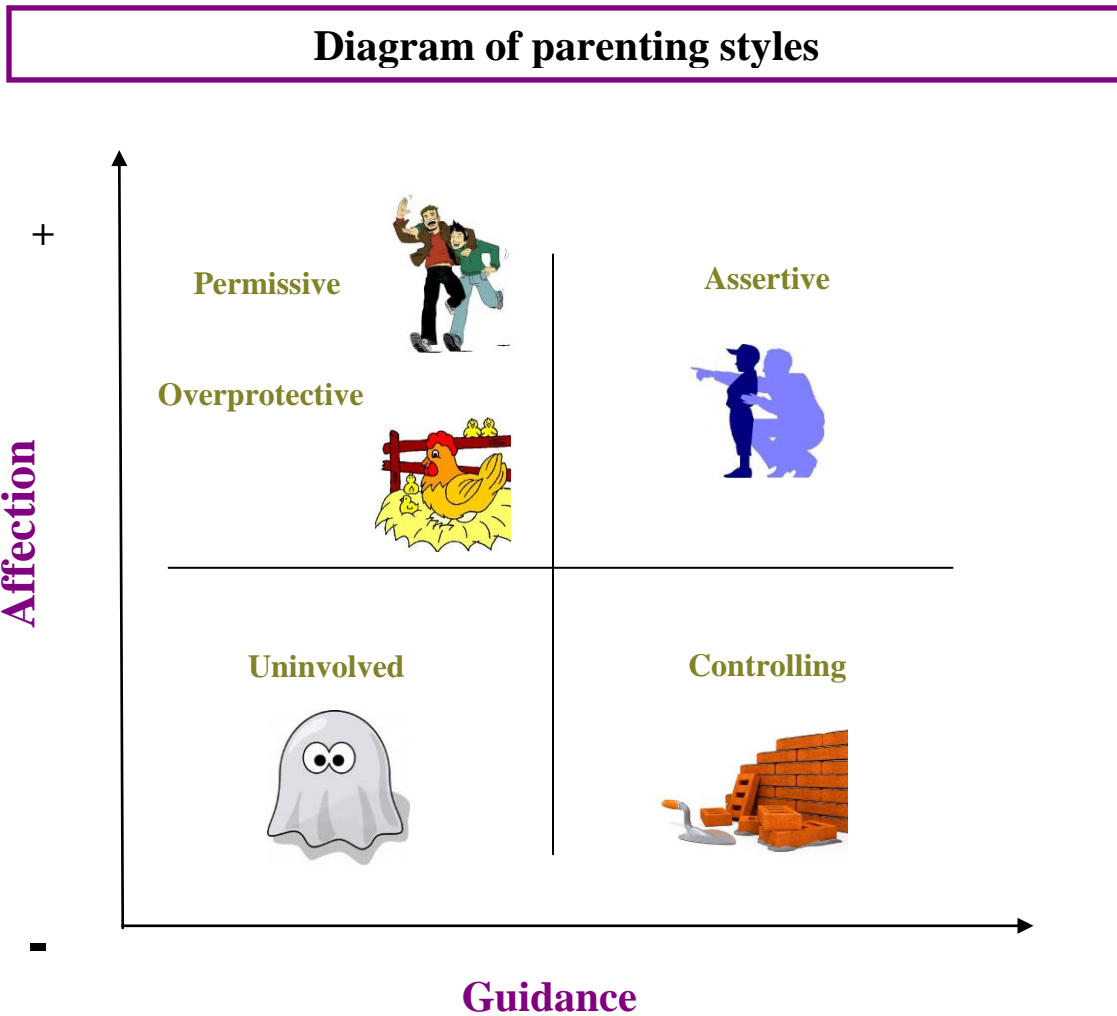
Questionnaire taken and adapted from:

Benoît, J.-A. (1997). *Le défi de la discipline familiale*. Montréal: Éditions Québecor.

Parental discipline styles

	Controlling	Overprotective	Assertive	Permissive	Uninvolved
Key words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control - Obedience - Self-control - Directive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overprotection - Excessive worry - Pity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance between guidance and flexibility - Support - Respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be friends with and be loved - Indulgent - Hates and avoid conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discouragement - Gradual disengagement - Little assertion - Weakness, wait-and-see approach
Techniques used by the parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interventions +++ - Screams, orders, commands - Sometimes fear caused by threats - Scary stories - Pressure - Constraints - Punishments – Rewards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does everything for the child - Permissiveness - Infantilization - Excuses the child's behaviors - Emotional blackmail to get obeyed - Sabotages the other spouse's discipline techniques by siding with the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logical consequences - Appropriate routine - Ensures family rules are followed - Guides his child's reflections to teach him to make the right choices - Provides supervision - Positive reinforcement - Relaxes and adapts limits as the child gets older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal relationship (friends) - Prevents the child from experiencing frustrations - The parents tolerates a lot but eventually explodes - No limit, everything is negotiable - Shared power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No longer intervenes, the parent is in "survival" mode - Limits interactions with his children to a minimum - Buys peace - Rules are presented as suggestions and abandoned when the child indicates opposition - This parent may have tried a number of things without success, which has caused him to feel incompetent
Adverse effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduces: intellectual curiosity, self-esteem and creativity - The parent-child relationship is distant, cold and not very loving - "The child learns to obey not to think." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parent becomes the child's servant - The child's demands keep growing - Conflict between the two parents - The parent sacrifices his needs and puts the children first and his couple relationship second 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An over-organization of family life - Requires a great deal of rigour and patience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Untimely anger - Incomplete sense of responsibility of the parents' part - Does not prepare his child to cope with life's difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of structure and supervision may make the child anxious and depressed - As a teenager, the child may turn to a 'gang' in a quest for structure
Challenges of this style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop more flexibility - Learn to communicate while considering the child's point of view - Try to restore balance in your emotional relationship with the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give the child more autonomy - Manage your worries - Encourage the child to express himself rather than answering for him 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find the energy and patience each day to apply this style of discipline - Team up with the other parent, never boycott the other parent's discipline (especially not in front of the child) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give the child the benefit of his experience - Establishing limits while maintaining good communication - Realize that providing guidance is in the best interest of the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask for help - Restore mutual respect and regain your credibility as a parent





When there is little affection and little guidance, we have an **uninvolved** style.

When there is little affection and a lot of guidance, we have a **controlling** style.

When there is a lot of affection and little guidance, we have an **overprotective** or **permissive** style.

When there is a lot of affection and a lot of guidance, we have an **assertive** style.

It is important to find a balance between these styles, according to the circumstances or the child's age. Like a compass, the parent must adapt to the different situations.



"Structuring for preventing" technique

In keeping with the "positive attention technique," we ask that you structure free time. It is often when you have a task to do and don't want to be disturbed that your child will make frequent interruptions to get your attention.



When you know you will need some time without being disturbed (make a phone call, get dinner ready, etc.) explain the situation to your child.



Together, choose an activity the child can perform by himself, without your help (e.g., draw, build a card castle, play with LEGOs, etc.)



To reassure him, let him know how much time you will need (never longer than 15 minutes).



Accomplish your task!



When you are done, congratulate your child and thank him for not interrupting.



If need be, you can create situations to put this technique into practice. Given time, your child may be able to find something to do by himself when he sees you are busy.

When a child bothers you, it is mainly to get your attention. Few parents will stop what they are doing to pay attention to a child playing by himself, but many parents will stop what they are doing to reprimand a child who interrupts.

Theme 3: Guidance

Overall objective

The parent develops abilities and skills to improve his child's obedience.

Specific objectives



The parent learns the stages of anger in children.



The parent learns to stop his child's unacceptable behaviors.



The parent learns to motivate his child.



The parent identifies ways of taking care of himself.



Stages of anger in children

Phases	Contributing factors	What to do
1. The buildup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child is having difficult experiences - It is not the first time - His self-esteem is low - He thinks it will pass - He cannot regain his emotional well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay attention to the child's personal experiences and be sensitive to his needs - Avoid being impatient or blaming him - Speak calmly - Try to find out what is wrong
2. The spark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child has an impulsive character - He is somewhat negative about the future - He has a "minor" disagreement with the parent - Something hurts him more than usual - Someone raised their voice at him 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try to defuse the crisis - Find the cause of the problem - Stay calm - Listen carefully to your child - Be sensitive to his pain - Propose an alternative
3. The explosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child starts screaming, throwing insults - He cannot control himself - You become tense, stressed, annoyed - He becomes physically threatening - You fear the worst 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Now is the time for damage control - Look carefully at the child - Take time to listen to him - Wait until he calms down - Avoid making threats - Physically control him if there is a risk of someone getting hurt
4. The aftermath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child knows he has gone too far - He feels guilty - He needs to feel understood - He needs to be treated with indulgence - His self-esteem is at its lowest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once the child has calmed down, discuss with him what just happened - Describe what you saw and how you felt - Then, later talk about the causes of the fit of anger - Look for a solution with the child



Time-out: 1-2-3 approach

The aim of the 1-2-3 approach¹ is to end unacceptable behaviors, while ensuring that clear limits are set, without emotions or complicated situations. This approach encourages action rather than reaction.

Advantages of the 1-2-3 approach

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricts the child's and the parent's impulsiveness • Clarifies the role of the parental authority • Uses the child's self-control ability • Sends a clear message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes consequences predictable • Limits hard feelings • Is easy to learn • Provides a balance to permissive and controlling parents |
|--|--|

How it works

Before applying this technique, you must explain the 1-2-3 approach to your child. Be consistent, no matter what happens and who is there.

- When your child acts up, name the behavior that must stop and say out loud "1." Nothing more, nothing less.
- If the behavior does not stop after a few seconds (approximately 10 to 20 seconds), say "2." If the behavior still hasn't stopped, after a few seconds, say "3." This is the signal that your child must take a time-out. This time-out can take place in the child's room, on a chair meant for that purpose. The length of the time-out is proportional to the child's age. For example, for a 5-year-old, the time-out will be 5 minutes.
- When the time-out is over, don't mention the situation. No discussion about what happened, unless it is necessary.

Remember!

The time-out technique must be used at every opportunity, no matter when and where you are.

Three rules to follow in public places²:

1- Give your instructions to the child before going to a public place (store, movie theater, grocery store, park, etc.).

2- Set up a reward system that will help motivate your child to behave properly (e.g., play together, make his favorite dessert, etc.).

3- Plan the corrective measures you will apply if your child misbehaves. You will count to "3" and if the behavior hasn't stopped, you will call a time-out (on a park bench, in the car, etc.).

Please note that it is important to congratulate your child if he behaves properly.

¹ Taken and adapted from: Phelan, Thomas, W. (2003). *1-2-3 Magic : Effective Discipline for children 2-12*. Illinois: Parent Magic Inc.

² Taken and adapted from Cloutier, G. (2012). *Vivre en harmonie avec un enfant qui s'oppose*. Montréal: Éditions Gily.

Some excuses to avoid a time-out

- **Asking to go to the toilet, complaining he is hungry or tired**

Your child must take the time-out asked, before using the bathroom. He will be able to eat or lie down to rest after it is over. If you give in to his demand, he will use this excuse next time.

- **Tells his parent he doesn't love him anymore**

This is a form of manipulation called "emotional blackmail." It is important not to get caught in this trap. Believe in yourself.

- **Claims he is sick and says he is going to throw-up**

This is probably a manipulation strategy. Unless your child does not feel well before the time-out, do not get caught up in this little game.

- **Does not want to go to his room**

If the child is young, you can take him there. If the child is older, give him a choice: take the time-out or lose a privilege.

- **Refuses to leave his room**

If a child refuses to leave his room, it doesn't matter. Inform the child that the time-out is over, and that he can leave his room whenever he wants.

In different situations, the parent often benefits from taking a time-out himself because he needs it to catch his breath, get his patience back or simply relax. This time-out allows the child to understand that his parent has chosen to take a break as a tool to manage his moods and his emotions better.

The token systems

The token system is a rewards technique which motivates a child to adopt good behaviors. This technique is structured and efficient and is not influenced by the parent's mood or the moment of the day. It complements the "positive attention" technique.

Token system A

(with earnings - tasks and privileges)

- A positive token system is a technique that reinforces a child's good behaviors and acknowledges what he does well. For each chore he does or each time he behaves properly, the child gets one or more tokens. He then gets privileges in exchange for these tokens.
- It is strongly recommended that the child spends a minimum of tokens each day (e.g., 6 a day).
- The parent may give extra tokens if the child had a good day or if he has accomplished a task exceptionally well.
- A monetary value may be assigned to the tokens for privileges with a cost (especially for older children).
- Additional tokens may be required for any activity that requires travelling.

Token system B

(with earnings and losses – tasks, privileges and loss)

- It is possible that you may have to use a token system with partial loss, when the child has unacceptable behaviors. Specific behaviors are then targeted and the child, in addition to getting tokens for what he does well, could lose tokens if he misbehaves.
- Establish a daily routine with your child and draw a list of privileges to which he will be entitled with his tokens (similar to token system A).
 - Identify the unacceptable behaviors you would like your child to change. Explain how many tokens he will lose if he has these behaviors.

A few more comments . . .

- Review the tasks and privileges list each month to make the necessary adjustments and corrections.
- Any good behavior is worth a reward. For example, you can use this system to encourage your child to stop interrupting.
- Never give tokens ahead of time. The tasks or the chore must be completed.
- If both parents live together, it is well understood that they must jointly manage this system in order to make it more meaningful.
- Finally, don't forget to smile when giving out rewards and even add a compliment from time to time.

Taken from *PEDAP*(1997). Fact sheet 31.

EXAMPLE OF A TOKEN SYSTEM**List of tasks**

No	TÂCHES	TOKENS
1.	I get up at...o'clock	1
2.	I do my bed.	1
3.	I am ready on time to go to school.	1
4.	I do my homework at... o'clock	2
5.	I clean up my room by...o'clock	1
6.	I go to bed on time without grouching.	2
7.	I get home on time.	1
8.	I take my bath.	1
9.		
10.		

List of privileges

No	PRIVILEGES	TOKENS
1.	Play 30 min longer outside	5
2.	Make him(her) his(her) favorite dessert	6
3.	Allow him(her) to go to bed later (30 minutes)	5
4.	Allow him(her) to go to play at a friend's	5
5.	Go shopping to the dollar store	20 + 3
6.	Rent a movie chosen by the child	30 + 3
7.	Invite a friend over for supper	15
8.	Make a special activity (choice of the child) together	5
9.		
10.		

LIST OF TASKS

No	TASKS	TOKENS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

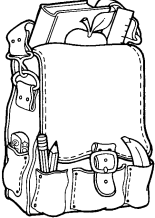
LIST OF PRIVILEGES


No	PRIVILEGES	TOKENS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		


LIST OF TASKS WITH PARTIAL LOSS

DAILY ROUTINE			DESERVED TOKENS OR LOST
GOOD DEEDS	DESERVED TOKENS	UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS	LOSS TOKENS

Solving the Seven Most Common Homework Problems

Problems	Advice
<p>Problem #1 Child does not do his best work</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit down with your child and tell him firmly and assertively, “I expect you to do each of your assignments to the best of your ability. Racing through your homework is not acceptable. Making so many mistakes is not acceptable. Sloppy, careless work is not acceptable.” 2. Take away your child’s incentive to race through his homework. Institute mandatory homework time. 3. Provide praise and positive support for your child each time he makes an effort to do his homework responsibly. 4. You can often motivate children who resist homework with a backup reward system. Each time your child does his homework to the best of his ability (you establish the specific guidelines), let him earn a reward, or earn a point toward a prize. Use this system for at least a month to condition your child to a more positive attitude toward homework. 5. If all else fails, contact the teacher. Work together to come up with a plan to improve his motivation.
<p>Problem #2 Child refuses to do homework assignments</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State clearly that you expect homework to be completed. 2. Follow through on your demands. It may take your child several days of sitting idly in his study area before he realizes you mean business. Be prepared for him to test your resolve through crying, becoming angry, or acting indifferent. 3. Contact the teacher. If appropriate, request the he or she provide additional discipline at school. Your child will quickly learn the school is backing up your efforts. 4. Praise your child each time he does his homework. «I really like the way you’ve been getting your homework done. That’s what I expect from you». 5. Provide additional incentives when appropriate. It may be useful to offer additional motivators to keep him or her on course.
<p>Problem #3 Child fails to bring assignments home.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State clearly that you expect all homework assignments to be brought home. If he or she completes assignments during free time at school, you expect that it be brought home so that you can see. 2. Work with the teacher to make sure you know what has been assigned. 3. Institute mandatory homework time. He will not be as likely to leave it at school if he knows he is going to have to spend time on academic work whether he brings his work home or not. 4. Provide praise and positive support when your child brings home all his homework: «It’s great to see you remembering to bring home all your homework. I knew you could do it! ». 5. If your child remains unmotivated about bringing his homework home, offer him small rewards or special privileges. 6. If all else fails, work with the teacher to provide more severe consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Such support lets your child know that home and school are working together to ensure that he behaves responsibly.

<p>Problem #4 Child takes all night to finish homework</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State clearly that you expect all homework to be done during daily homework time. You will not tolerate his taking all evening to do his homework. 2. Make sure the homework is being done in a proper study area. You may wish to consider changing the location of his study area if distractions are present. 3. Make yourself available for help only during daily homework time. The minute that the agreed upon time period is over, your assistance will no longer be available, no matter how much difficulty he is having. Your child must learn that there are limits to your availability for help. 4. Provide praise and positive support when children do their homework on time. Tell him promptly: «Great job! I'm really pleased to see that you got your homework done on time. I'm so proud of you!». 5. Some children require additional incentives to help them develop the habit of getting their homework done without procrastinating. A good incentive for solving this particular problem is the «Beat the Clock» game. 6. Back up your words with action.
<p>Problem #5 Child will not do homework on his own.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State clearly that you expect your child to work on his own. Tell him firmly and assertively that he is required to do his homework on his own:«We expect you to do your homework without our help. We are not responsible for doing your worksheets or writing your reports. We will not sit with you or do your homework for you. We will not be available to answer your questions every five minutes. 2. Help your child only after he has genuinely tried to solve the problem on his own. Of course, there will be some times when something is legitimately too hard for him to understand. But be sure that you don't step in until he has made a genuine effort to do the work himself. 3. When you do help your child, break an assignment down into small components that you know he can handle successfully. Work with him in a manner that will help him recognize his ability to do the work. Be sure to encourage him whenever he takes even the smallest step toward independence. 4. Monitor your child as he does his homework. When you see him working on his own, go to him promptly and let him know you like what he's doing : «I'm really proud of the way you're doing all this work on your own. I knew you could do it!» 5. Some children need additional incentives to keep them working on their own. A good incentive for solving his particular problem is the «Trade Off» game. 6. Back up your words with action. If the five steps do not succeed in getting your child to do his work on his own, it's time to get tough. Make sure your child knows that you will not help and that he will have to sit at his work space until his homework is done, even if it means he will remain there all evening. Be prepared for your child to use anger, tears, or indifference to try to manipulate you into backing down. Let him know beyond a doubt that such tactics will not work. He will still have to do his homework on his own, and you will follow through with the consequences until he learns to do so.

<p>Problem #6 Child waits until the last minute to finish assignments</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State clearly that you expect long-range project to be planned and completed responsibly. This waiting until the last minute must stop. 2. Each time your child is given a long-range assignment, help him plan his work. Insist that he tell you about each such assignment on the day it is given. Sit down with him and decide together when each step of the project is to be completed. 3. Monitor your child to make sure each step of the project is completed on time. 4. Each time your child completes a step of a long-range project, let him feel your approval: «I think it’s wonderful that you picked out the book for your book report so quickly! I really like how you finished reading the book before the date you scheduled! Keep up the good work!». 5. Provide additional motivators when appropriate. 6. Back up your words with action. If the first five steps fail to motivate your child to do long-range projects responsibly, it’s time to impose restrictions. If the child fails to read a book selected for a book report by the agreed-upon date, take away a privilege (e.g. playing outside, watching TV) until he has read the book. Unless you set limits, he’s not going to know that you mean business.
<p>Problem #7 Child will not do homework if you’re not home.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State clearly that you expect homework to be done whether you’re home or not. 2. Make sure that the person responsible for child care knows where your child is expected to do homework (in his study area), when he is to do homework (during daily homework time), and how he is to do it (on his own). The involvement of the care-giver will depend upon the age of your child. It is a good idea to sit down together with your child and the person responsible for your child to communicate your expectation that homework will be done just as though you were home. 3. Monitor your children when you’re not home to make sure homework is done. Telephone at the beginning of daily homework time to make sure he has begun his work. Call back, if possible, at the end of daily homework time to make sure he has finished. Have him leave his homework out for you to check when you return home. You may phase out this monitoring when your child demonstrates that he’s doing his work. 4. Praise your child whenever he does his homework in your absence. When you call at the start of daily homework time, tell him: «I really like the way you got started so promptly, even without my being there. » When you get home and find that his work has been completed, let him know that you are pleased: «Great! You’re doing such a good job on your homework when I’m not here. Keep up the good work!». 5. You may have to give your child additional incentives to get him to do his homework when you’re not home. One idea is to give him a homework contract under which he earns a point toward a reward each time he does his homework in your absence. Special incentives may be necessary at first to get your child into the habit of doing homework without your supervision. 6. Back up your words with action. If the first five steps do not work, it’s time to get tough. Tell your child that he is required to sit at his study area until his homework is finished, whether you are home or not. Tell your child:«You have a choice. You can do your homework during daily homework time or you can choose not to have privileges. If you choose not to do your homework, you will lose these privileges. The choice is yours.»

Taking care of yourself!

As a parent, it is important to take care of yourself. You must stop for some breathing room. A parent who is rested and not stressed is better able to adequately guide his child.

Here are some ideas for you!³



Accept help from others! When someone offers a helping hand, it is important to accept it. It is also important to ask for help. Your spouse, a relative, a friend, a neighbour, a teacher, a support group or a professional can all lend a helping hand.

An affectionate gesture, a good listener, domestic help! Someone who helps the child with his homework, takes him out for an activity!



Regularly plan a special moment for yourself: an activity, an outing by yourself, something just for you! The parent must remember that "the most important is not necessarily the most urgent." The goal is to do something you enjoy, no matter what it is: movie, handicrafts, massage, walking, aerobic classes, window-shopping, dinner with friends, etc.



Take a time-out! When there is too much pressure, go to another room and take a deep breath: read, listen to music, call a friend, it doesn't matter. Give yourself time! Watch out for signs of stress and defuse the situation – "Better to escape than to escalate!"



Eliminate negative thoughts! Focus on the positive. Keep your successes in mind. Avoid being all doom and gloom!

You are not just a parent! You are a person with needs, strengths and limits. Believe in yourself!

³ Taken and adapted from Lavigne, S. (1998). *Ces parents à bout de souffle*. Outremont: Les éditions Québecor.

Quelques ressources!

Lecture suggérée :



Vivre en harmonie avec un enfant qui s'oppose par Gilles Cloutier, aux éditions Gily.



Ces parents à bout de souffle par Suzanne Lavigueur, aux éditions Québecor.



Devoirs sans larmes par Lee Canter et Lee Hausner, aux Éditions de la Chenelière.

Lignes téléphoniques :



Éducation-coup-de-fil 1-866-329-4223 ou www.education-coup-de-fil.com

Un service anonyme et gratuit de consultation professionnelle par téléphone qui a pour mission de contribuer, dans une optique de prévention et de soutien, au mieux-être des familles, en aidant à comprendre et à solutionner les difficultés liées à l'éducation et aux relations entre parents et enfants dans la vie quotidienne.



Ligne Parents 1-800-361-5085 ou www.ligneparents.com

Un service téléphonique d'intervention et de soutien pour les parents d'enfants de 0 à 18 ans, 24 heures par jour, 7 jours par semaine. Gratuit, confidentiel et anonyme.



Allô Prof 1-888-776-4455 ou www.alloprof.ca

Services gratuits d'aide aux devoirs



L'AQETA Outaouais 819-777-3126 ou www.aqetaoutaouais.qc.ca

L'AQUETA exerce son leadership en matière de troubles d'apprentissage afin d'assurer l'égalité des chances des personnes qui ont un trouble d'apprentissage, de leur permettre de développer pleinement leur potentiel et de contribuer positivement à la société.



Le Centre d'aide 24/7 819-595-9999 ou www.centredaide247.com

Offre aux personnes et à leurs proches qui vivent une situation de crise et de détresse, des services d'accueil, d'aide, de soutien et d'accompagnement visant à désamorcer la crise et à amorcer un processus de résolution de problème et ce, en se fondant sur une approche communautaire qui vise le maintien ou le retour de la personne dans son milieu de vie naturel.

Centre jeunesse de l'Outaouais

819-776-6060 ou www.cjoutaouais.qc.ca